

**THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF PRAYER IN
TERTULLIAN'S *DE ORATIONE* AND ORIGEN'S *PERI EUCHES***

by

Gregory Ross Doyle

B.A. Carleton University, 1995

M.Div. Acadia University, 1998

Thesis

**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts (Theology)**

**Acadia University
Spring Convocation 2000**

©Gregory Ross Doyle 2000



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-51994-5

Canada

CONTENTS

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| ABSTRACT | vii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | viii |
| Chapter | |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF PRAYER IN TERTULLIAN'S <i>DE ORATIONE</i> AND ORIGEN'S <i>PERI EUCHES</i> | 11 |
| I. Background Factors for Tertullian | 11 |
| A. Tertullian's Concept of Scripture | |
| B. Tertullian's Hermeneutics | |
| C. Tertullian's Philosophy | |
| II. Background Information for Origen | 24 |
| A. Origen and Scripture | |
| B. Origen's Hermeneutics | |
| C. Origen's Philosophy | |
| 3. THE LORD'S PRAYER INTERPRETED BY TERTULLIAN AND ORIGEN | 38 |
| I. Introduction to the Lord's Prayer | 38 |
| II. "Our Father which art in heaven" | 40 |
| III. "Hallowed be thy name" | 46 |
| IV. "Thy kingdom come" | 50 |
| V. "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" | 52 |
| VI. "Give us this day our daily bread" | 56 |
| VII. "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" . | 62 |

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| | VIII. “And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” | 66 |
| | IX. Concluding Thoughts | 70 |
| 4. | COMMON TOPICS IN TERTULLIAN’S AND ORIGEN’S DISCUSSION ON PRAYER | 72 |
| | I. Opening Remarks | 72 |
| | II. Opening Remarks to Prayer | 72 |
| | III. Emotional Attitude Needed in Prayer | 77 |
| | IV. The Physical Characteristics of those who Pray | 81 |
| | V. The Spiritual Meaning and Efficacy of Prayer | 86 |
| | VI. Concluding Remarks | 93 |
| 5. | UNIQUE TOPICS IN TERTULLIAN’S AND ORIGEN’S DISCUSSION ON PRAYER | 95 |
| | I. Opening Remarks | 95 |
| | II. Unique Topics in Tertullian | 95 |
| | A. Women and Public Prayer | |
| | B. Liturgical Practices Involving Prayer | |
| | C. Frequency of Prayer | |
| | D. Concluding Remarks | |
| | III. Unique Topics in Origen | 104 |
| | A. Prayer in General | |
| | B. Problems with Prayer | |
| | C. Types of Prayer | |
| | D. Concluding Remarks | |

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 6. | CONCLUSION | 115 |
| | BIBLIOGRAPHY | 126 |
| | Appendices | |
| A. | THE ORDER OF <i>DE ORATIONE</i> AND <i>PERI EUCHES</i> | 133 |

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores three factors which contributed to the concept and practice of prayer in two ancient Christian writings, *De Oratione* by Tertullian of Carthage and *Peri Euches* by Origen of Alexandria. This thesis examines their concept of Scripture, their hermeneutic theory and their philosophical presuppositions. Further, this thesis demonstrates how these three factors contribute to the concept and practice of prayer in the works in question. The second chapter is devoted to a background discussion of these factors as they pertain to *De Oratione* and *Peri Euches*. The third through fifth chapters examine these authors' expositions of the Lord's Prayer along with topics they treat in common and in isolation from each other. This thesis also compares and contrasts the two authors' works in such a way that the differences between the two are explained based upon the varying presuppositions with which each author worked.

This study is important since these two writings are the earliest treatises devoted to prayer. Tertullian's was the first while Origen's was an early comprehensive treatise on prayer. Tertullian and Origen are contrasted since each represents a distinct strand of ancient Christianity. Tertullian lived in the western portion of the Roman empire while Origen lived in the east. They were influenced by different philosophical traditions and used different hermeneutical methods. They were near contemporaries. These reasons lend support to the notion that a comparison of the two authors and their writings on prayer would be important.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who have played a large role in the formation of this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank my wife Patti whose support throughout this thesis writing process has been invaluable.

My gratitude also extends to Dr. Roy Williams who is not simply a theology professor, but a godly man who has instilled in me a love for learning and a love for the Christian discipline of prayer. He has been a mentor and a good friend.

I would also like to acknowledge the role of the rest of the faculty at Acadia Divinity College who have provided a first class theological education. I thank them for the willingness to let me explore my interest in Patristics.

The kind staff at Vaughan Memorial Library have been a great help to me. I would like to acknowledge the invaluable role of the people working in Inter-Library Loans who brought in a vast assortment of books and articles for my research. The libraries at Dalhousie University and King's College have good Patristic collections which were also a boon in my research.

**To all those who
have ever prayed for me**

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I. Prefatory Remarks on Prayer and the Fathers

Prayer is a spiritual exercise. Christian prayer is an exercise in Christian spirituality. In the first sentence of the introductory chapter of his book, *Invitation to Christian Spirituality*, John Tyson describes Christian spirituality as “the relationship, union, and conformity with God that a Christian experiences through his or her reception of the grace of God, and a corresponding willingness to turn from sin and (to use a Pauline phrase) ‘to walk according to the Spirit.’”¹ Prayer as a spiritual discipline is much more than a rational process—although it certainly must involve the thinking agent. It is a divine mystery by which those who are mired in the finite realm of creation can interact with a being who transcends all that is. It is a continuing act of grace on God’s behalf that allows people to communicate with God even though they have rebelled against their creator. Christian prayer is more than communication with the divine, it is communion with the divine.² It is not simply a conversation but a process by which those who pray experience the holy glory of a loving heavenly father and are changed from

¹ John R. Tyson, ed. *Invitation to Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Anthology*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1.

² So Pannenberg writes, “We have already shown above that the love of God in which believers share by the Holy Spirit has an element of mutuality, the mutuality that has its basic eternal form in the mutual perichoresis of the trinitarian persons....But a primary expression of love for God as a response to his love for us is prayer. In this we express the filial relation that we have received from God as a gift of his love.” See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology: Volume 3*. Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 204.

lives marked by sin to lives of those empowered by the indwelling of this very same God in the person of the Holy Spirit. Christian prayer is informed by the teachings of its master, Jesus Christ. Christ, however, is not simply an exemplar of how to pray. It is through his own death, resurrection, and ascension that the Christian can be sure that a God, who may be characterised as otherwise transcendent, becomes imminent for his creation. Christian prayer, then, is intensely trinitarian.³ Christian prayer, like Christian spirituality, can affirm something that other forms of spirituality cannot—the importance of the individual before his or her creator. Christian prayer does not ask that one’s own identity be lost in some great divine pool. Instead, the God to whom Christians pray values individuals. This God does not wish that people are somehow taken up into some ecstasy that destroys the individual consciousness.⁴ The Bible does offer views of ecstatic visions, but never do those taken into glorious visions lose their own sense of self.⁵ Prayer certainly includes the rational individual but it must reach beyond meagre human understanding.⁶

³ E. P. Clowney defines Christian prayer in this way: “Prayer is communication with God in worship. Prayer is possible because the triune God is personal, and has so revealed himself that men and women, made in his image, may address him by name. Because God is holy, sin breaks the fellowship in which prayer is acceptable to him. God’s gracious work of salvation restores and renews that fellowship through Jesus Christ.” See E. P. Clowney, “Theology of Prayer” in Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright and J. I. Packer, eds. *New Dictionary of Theology*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 526.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 527. Clowney writes, “An opposite danger is formless and wordless prayer that seeks mystical absorption into deity rather than living and personal fellowship with the Father through Jesus Christ. The witness of the Spirit grants inexpressible joy to Christians in prayer, yet prayer does not seek to gain ecstasy for ourselves, but to give joy and glory to God.”

⁵ Isaiah’s vision in the Temple (Is. 6:1-6); Ezekiel’s visions (i.e. Ezekiel 1:1-28); John on Patmos (Rev. 1:10); and Paul’s talk of someone taken up into the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) are examples.

⁶ Oscar Cullmann’s book, *Prayer in the New Testament*, is a recent book that has alerted the present author to many of the contemporary issues pertinent to a discussion of prayer. The book addresses such issues as: philosophical problems with prayer; the desire of God for human prayer; the subjects of prayer; the Lord’s Prayer; Prayer in the Pauline corpus; Prayer in the Johannine writings; and prayer in other New Testament writings. Most of the ideas noted by Cullmann are addressed in *De Oratione* and *Peri Euches*. See Cullmann, *Prayer in the New Testament*, Trans. John Bowden, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), v-viii.

Why is another thesis on prayer important? Would not the average lay-person (and perhaps most pastors) simply affirm that less talk of prayer is needed and more prayer is? Certainly this perspective has some credibility. However, one may well respond that both processes can exist at the same time. Simply because one examines prayer as an intellectual exercise does not neuter prayer of all its spiritual efficacy. One can now find numerous books on Christian spirituality such as the one mentioned above edited by John Tyson.

This study is also examining prayer with respect to ancient Christian authors. Tertullian of Carthage and Origen of Alexandria (and later Caesarea) both wrote treatises on prayer. In essence these treatises were expositions on the Lord's Prayer, but they also offer much more information on these two great thinkers' views on prayer as well.⁷ The next question that one may justifiably ask is: why does one need to study the Fathers? Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox traditions have maintained an active converse with the early Fathers of the Church, but in recent memory, Protestants have begun to rediscover early Church history.⁸ One finds in the writings of the Church Fathers ample testimony to men and women who have devoted their entire lives to God in the service of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The perspectives that the Fathers betray may not resonate with the modern mind, but the examples of their faith serve as an inspiration to those who

⁷ See Appendix A for a breakdown of Tertullian's *De Oratione* and Origen's *Peri Euches*. Notice that each author only devotes approximately half of his treatise to the Lord's Prayer.

⁸ Well known scholars such as P. Schaff, K. Latourette, H. von Campenhausen, and H. Chadwick are but a few examples.

try to articulate their Christian faith in a meaningful way to the non-Christian world around them.⁹

Thomas Oden, in his book, *Requiem*, puts out a call for “young-fogies” to rediscover the wisdom of the ancient church in opposition to the claims of the Enlightenment’s accounting of faith and reason. Oden’s book is a critique of the direction that some seminaries have followed as they adopted the critical methods of biblical scholarship as formed in the nineteenth century. Oden highlights some pertinent issues when he writes, “Young mod-surpassing evangelicals are those who, having entered in good faith into the disciplines of modernity, and having become disillusioned with its illusions, are again studying the word of God made known in history as attested by prophetic and apostolic witnesses, whose testimonies have become perennial texts for this world-wide, multicultural, multigenerational remembering and celebrating community.”¹⁰ Oden calls people to rediscover Christian foundations. Not only is the Bible important for determining Christian identity, but so are those who have built upon the foundation laid in Jesus Christ. The history of the Christian Church is important. The Fathers are especially important since they were the first writers to grapple with the issues raised by their trust in the apostolic teaching, which—for the most part—is located in Scripture. Oden finishes with this appeal to “young fogies”:

Center yourself in the text of the primitive apostolic witness. Listen to Scripture *with* the historic church. You will then be more ready to receive the empowerment of the Spirit to hold fast to the oneness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the community of Faith amid cultural contingency. Thus

⁹ As will be discussed in following chapters, philosophical influences such as Platonism and Stoicism can be seen in the writings of Origen and Tertullian. These philosophical systems would not attract many adherents nowadays. As well, Origen’s allegorical hermeneutics is not generally viewed as a viable method of scriptural interpretation.

¹⁰ Thomas Oden, *Requiem: A Lament in Three Movements*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 137.

prepared, the Holy Spirit will give you new freedom to resist accommodating to systems of syncretistic secularizing spirituality that have already miserably failed.¹¹

A knowledge of the Fathers is a mooring upon which Christians can have a sure anchor. This is not a claim for homogeneity in thought. It would be foolhardy to try to support the claim that every Christian thinks in exactly the same manner and always arrives at identical conclusions as other Christians. The Fathers offer an anchor because they demonstrate a shared faith. One's appreciation of the Fathers has an ecclesiological focus. It stresses the trans-chronological nature of God's Church. It stresses the communion of saints, both triumphant and militant. The Fathers show real people with their own particular—and sometimes, peculiar—understandings in a life fraught with danger who learned to express not only their intellectual assent to certain notions about God but also a deep piety. The Fathers are part of the great chain of Church history which subsequent ages dare not ignore.

An appropriate theme statement for the underlying presupposition in this thesis would be found in Anthony Thiselton's apt summary of Roger Lundin's section of the book they co-wrote with Clarence Walhout:

Roger Lundin has exposed the fragile brittle foundations on which the philosophy of the *orphaned individual* rests in Descartes and in the pervasive legacy of Cartesian and Enlightenment rationalism. He traces the persistence of individualist strand through Kantian notion of *autonomy* and the expressionism of much romanticist literature and art. By contrast, hermeneutics does not place the individual human self at the center of the stage in heroic or illusory self-isolation. It substitutes a paradigm of listening to the Other in give-and-take, or, more strictly, a triadic relation between the Other, the self, and a content that emerges from the dialogue

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

and from the self-transformation or self-transcendence which results from it.¹²

Here one can discern a rejection of the individualism that has characterised Western society. This thesis is assuming that a knowledge of the Fathers is an effective counter to individualism since it places the believer within the greater context of the Church. Thiselton's explanation of hermeneutics as a "listening to the Other in give-and-take" is also an helpful definition of Christian Prayer. Although the particulars of this thesis have not yet been presented, the above discussion was thought necessary as a theoretical justification for the study of prayer in the Fathers.

II. Tertullian and Origen

This study will focus on the factors that contributed to the concept and practice of prayer in Tertullian's *De Oratione* and Origen's *Peri Euches*. The reasons these two treatises were chosen for a comparative study are threefold. First, space prohibits an examination into the entire corpus of work of Tertullian and Origen to determine their overall notion and practice of prayer. Second, both of these works offer commentary on the Lord's Prayer so they seemed likely candidates for a comparative study. Third, these two works are important as original endeavours in their own rites. Tertullian's *De Oratione* is the first known treatise concerning the Lord's Prayer. Origen's *Peri Euches* is the "oldest scientific discussion of Christian prayer in existence."¹³

¹² Roger Lundin, Clarence Walhout and Anthony Thiselton, *The Promise of Hermeneutics*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 133.

¹³ Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, Volume 2. *The Ante-Nicene Literature After Irenaeus*. (Allen, Texas: Christian Classics, 1983), 66.

Tertullian lived at the end of the second and beginning of the third century in Carthage. He is the most well known convert to the Montanist sect although this *De Oratione* predates his subsequent Montanist alliance. Unfortunately the scope of this thesis precludes any discussion on Montanism and Tertullian's understanding and practice of prayer. Quasten places its composition somewhere between C.E. 198-200.¹⁴ Tradition supposed that he was well-trained in rhetoric and was involved in the practice of law. These views have been called into question by David Barnes who sees that Tertullian's rhetorical ability reflects an education but not necessarily a legal one.¹⁵ These problems notwithstanding, Tertullian lived in the western portion of the Roman empire, he wrote in Latin, was indebted to Stoic philosophy (as will be discussed in Chapter 2), and had a certain mode of exegetical procedure somewhat analogous to the critical techniques developed in the nineteenth century (*cf.* Chapter 2).

Origen wrote his treatise on prayer, *Peri Euches*, around the year C.E. 233-4.¹⁶ Origen was born in Alexandria around C.E. 185 and for a time was head of the catechetical school there. Due to difficulties with his own bishop, Demetrius, Origen fled to Caesarea in 231. In 253 he died from wounds he received through torture during the Decian persecution. Origen was well known as a grammarian, a philosopher, the compiler of the Hexapla, and an able expositor. He lived in the eastern portion of the Roman Empire. He wrote *Peri Euches* in Greek. He is cited as the prime example of one

¹⁴ Quasten, 296.

¹⁵ See Timothy Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 22-29.

¹⁶ Quasten, 66.

who used allegory in his exegesis and showed a definite platonic influence in his thinking (cf. Chapter 2).

These two individuals offer a compelling opportunity for comparison. In distinction from John Oulton and Henry Chadwick who wrote, “The purpose and scope of the two treatises are so different that any attempted comparison between them is certainly very difficult and may seem to be even misleading,”¹⁷ the present author thinks a comparative study is useful. As indicated above, Tertullian and Origen came from two different portions of the Roman empire, they wrote in different languages, diverged in exegetical practices, and were influenced by differing philosophical traditions. Furthermore, they lived at a time when the canon of Scripture was not considered closed. As well, Tertullian’s Bible was Latin while Origen’s was Greek. Despite all these differences, the two treated the same subject. As will be seen below, they sometimes agreed on points but more often they differed. This thesis is an examination in how factors such as Scripture, hermeneutics, and philosophical presuppositions shaped a concept and practice of prayer in Tertullian’s *De Oratione* and Origen’s *Peri Euches*. It also assumes that a comparison of these two near contemporaries will be helpful in defining the position of each one. The similarities and differences in their approaches and conclusions will serve to bear testimony to the multifarious nature of the Christian faith even at such an early date in its history. One will be able to see two Christians who were equally capable of pondering prayer who nonetheless shared diverging world-views.

¹⁷ John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, eds. and trans., *Alexandrian Christianity*, Vol. 2. Library of Christian Classics, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954), 224.

Most significant is that both men are considered important figures within the history of Christianity and both are regarded as men of the utmost devotion to their common faith.

This thesis contains six chapters with the first as an introduction and the last as a conclusion. The second chapter will be a background study of Tertullian and Origen. It will examine their attitudes toward Scripture, their hermeneutics, and their philosophical presuppositions. Much could be said of any of these subjects; however, discussion will be limited to ideas which are pertinent to their notions and practices of prayer in the two works being consulted in this thesis. Chapter 3 will compare Tertullian's and Origen's clause by clause analysis of the Lord's Prayer. Chapter 4 will compare other topics related to prayer that both authors treat in common. The fifth chapter will focus on topics which one author addresses while the other does not. The conclusion will then offer a brief summary of the thesis, restating the notion that these three presuppositions were important determinants in forming their understandings and practices of prayer in the works in question.

III. Sources

The most recent critical editions of each ancient document will be followed. Tertullian's *De Oratione* is found in the Corpus Christianorum Latin Series, Volume 1. It was edited by G. Diercks and published in 1954.¹⁸ An English translation of this particular edition was supplied by Sister Emily Joseph Daly.¹⁹ This translation is

¹⁸ Tertullian, "De Oratione", in *Tertulliani Opera*, Pars 1. Opera Catholica. Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. (Turnholt: Brepols, 1954), 257-274.

¹⁹ Tertullian, "Prayer," trans. Emily Joseph Daly in *Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works*, (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1959), 153-188.

generally used; although, the Latin itself is constantly under scrutiny. Origen's text of *Peri Euches* is edited by Paul Koetschau and dates from 1899. This is the most recent critical edition of this particular work by Origen.²⁰ The English translation of this edition is supplied by Oulton and Chadwick. Origen's work on prayer is variously referred to as *Peri Euches* or *De Oratione*. However, since Tertullian's work has the same title as the latter, it was deemed best to refer always to Origen's work as *Peri Euches* in order to avoid confusion.

Before continuing into the main body of the thesis, a reminder of the aim of this thesis should be given. This thesis will explore the factors of the Bible, hermeneutics, and philosophy in Tertullian's *De Oratione* and Origen's *Peri Euches* and show that they were indeed important factors for each author in formulating their concept and practice of prayer. A comparison of the two authors will also further this goal by emphasising to their treatment of the Lord's Prayer, their common topics, as well as the unique topics treated by each of these authors.

²⁰ Origen, *Die Schrift vom Gebet*, in Paul Koetschau, ed. *Origenes Werke*. 2 band. Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte, (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1899), 295-403.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF PRAYER IN TERTULLIAN'S *DE ORATIONE* AND ORIGEN'S *PERI EUCHES*

This chapter will briefly examine the factors of Scripture, hermeneutics, and philosophical presuppositions which contribute to Tertullian's notion of prayer in *De Oratione* and Origen's notion of prayer in *Peri Euches*. Although much could be said about each author's presuppositions with relation to the Scriptures, hermeneutics, and philosophy; this chapter will focus on understandings in these three categories which are relevant to the concept and practice of prayer in these particular works. This chapter will not engage in a detailed discussion on how these factors influence Tertullian's and Origen's theory and practice of prayer. Instead it will simply make the reader aware of the sort of discussion that will appear in the following chapters.

I. Background Factors for Tertullian

A. Tertullian's Concept of Scripture

Since Tertullian's extant writings were composed in Latin one may well suppose that he had access to a Latin text of the Bible. The Scripture with which Tertullian was familiar falls within the *Vetus Latina* tradition.¹ *Vetus Latina* itself was not a monolithic

¹ So says Adhémar d'Alès, "Le texte original...des Écritures, n'étant accessible qu'à un petit nombre de fidèles, spécialement dans l'Afrique occidentale, de bonne heure s'occupa de la traduire pour l'usage

translation of Scripture. Instead it is a designation for the various translations of Scripture into Latin that occurred in the Christian west—chiefly that is, Carthage in Africa and Italy in Europe. T. P. O'Malley notes that Tertullian made use of the *Vetus Latina* tradition; however he notes a mixture of African and European vocabularies in Tertullian's writings.² If one were to think that Tertullian's notion of Scripture was so simplistic then one would be mistaken. Tertullian was also fluent in Greek. Sometimes his biblical citations reflected a Septuagintal flavour.³ Sometimes his biblical citations seem to be neither.⁴

As far as a text is concerned, one can assume that Tertullian had access to a Latin text of the Bible as well as access to the Septuagint from which he also made direct translations. There are only a few places in *De Oratione* in which the choice of scriptural text is pertinent to the discussion of Tertullian's concept and practice of prayer. Those instances are concerned with his text of the Lord's Prayer. This being the case, they will be discussed in the appropriate sections of chapter 3.

commun. Tertullien est l'un des premiers témoins de ce travail, et cite largement les versions primitives." Adhémar d'Alès, *La théologie de Tertullien*, 2e éd. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1905), 231.

² O'Malley, T.P. *Tertullian and the Bible: Language—Imagery—Exegesis*. (Utrecht: Dekker & Van de Vegt N.V. Nijmegen, 1967), 1. O'Malley cites such words as: *sermo/uerbum; tinguere/baptizare; claritas/gloria; felix/beatus; saeculum/mundus*.

³ See d'Alès, 232.

⁴ Paul and France Monceaux note that Tertullian cites works differently in different genres of writings. In his apologetic writings, Tertullian seems to cite from memory. In his theological or polemical writings he appears to refer more precisely to the text. In his writings that have the flavour of commentary, he looks as though he has the text before him. The Monceauxs also indicate that Tertullian would be more apt to use the Greek text of the Bible when discussing issues in the Carthaginian church. See Paul and France Monceaux, *Tertullien et les origines*, Tome 1. Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion arabe. (Paris: E. Leroux, 1901), 109-111. Johannes Quasten refers to the work of J. Quispel who concludes that in Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem*, "the biblical quotations, whether Marcionite or Catholic, were turned by Tertullian himself and do not depend on some previously existing versions." See Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*. Volume 2. The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus. (Allen, Texas: Christian Classics, 1983), 275. O'Malley supports such a view when he writes, "[Tertullian's] very numerous citations of, and allusions to the scriptures show a great freedom and variety." (p. 2)

Tertullian was one of the first authors to designate an “Old Testament” and a “New Testament”.⁵ This fact does not mean that he had a crystallised notion of what was contained in each testament.⁶ Gerald T. Sheppard’s notion of “canon 1” and “canon 2” is a helpful distinction.⁷ The Scripture that Tertullian used would have been a mixture of the two types of canon. His Old Testament would have had a fixed nature to it in some respects. The Pentateuch and the Prophets would have enjoyed a “canon 2” status. The controversy arises with the Hagiographa.⁸

As far as the New Testament is concerned, Tertullian appears to give greater credence to the Gospels of John and Matthew since they were written by apostles; whereas Mark and Luke were written by followers of apostles.⁹ This notion is important since Tertullian would favour Matthew’s account of the Lord’s Prayer since it had been written by an apostle; whereas, Luke was only a follower of an apostle (see Chapter 3.I).

According to the citation apparatus of the Corpus Christianorum edition of *De Oratione* there are 242 biblical citations or allusions. Of these, only 38 come from Old Testament books (including one from Tobit). The remaining references come from New

⁵ Tertullian writes in *Adversus Praxean* 15, “If I fail in resolving this article [of our faith] by passages which may admit of dispute out of the Old Testament, I will take out of the New Testament a confirmation of our view,…” See Tertullian, “Adversus Praxean” in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. *The Writings of Tertullian (Vol. 2)*. Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Vol. 15. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), 365. In fact, Irenaeus is the first known writer to make such a distinction ca. 180 (*cf. Adv. Haer.* 4.28.1-2)

⁶ O’Malley writes, “The canon of Scripture is not sharply defined.” (p. 2)

⁷ Sheppard sees “canon 1” as a rule or standard that is followed. “Canon 2” refers to writings that became fixed or standardised. As referred to in Lee M. McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*. Revised and expanded edition. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996, 2nd printing), 20.

⁸ Some scholars, notably R. T. Beckwith, argue for an early fixing of the Old Testament Canon (first century C.E.). See for example, R. T. Beckwith, “A Modern Theory of the Old Testament Canon” in *Vetus Testamentum* 41, No. 4, (1991): 385-395. Others, notably Lee McDonald would argue that the Old Testament canon was fixed relatively late (fourth century C.E.). See McDonald, particularly pages 127 to 133 and 251.

⁹ See *Adv. Marc.* 4.2.5.

Testament literature (including three references from the *Didache* and one from the *Shepherd of Hermas*). Matthew is by far the most quoted book with 49 references. This is explainable by the nature of this tract. Tertullian is writing about the nature of prayer and spends the first eight chapters reflecting on the Lord's Prayer as it is found in Matthew's gospel. The relative infrequency of Old Testament quotations in comparison to New Testament quotations is important. In the following chapters, one will see that Tertullian sees a discontinuity between prayer under the old covenant and under Christ. This opinion naturally leads Tertullian to base many of his remarks about Christian prayer in Scripture on New Testament passages.

The editors of Corpus Christianorum also placed what they viewed as direct quotations from Scripture in italics. These direct quotations account for 35 of the 242 references. Interestingly only three quotations are introduced with some cognate of *scriptus*, the Latin word for Scripture.¹⁰ Seventeen of these direct quotations purport to be the words of Jesus himself. They are related to gospel passages but hold their authority from the notion that they were the words of Christ himself.¹¹ Six quotations are the words from the Lord's Prayer and are generally introduced with a first person plural verb,¹² implying that the wording for the Lord's Prayer was fairly well known. This is important to his theory of prayer since the use of first person verbs indicates the communal

¹⁰ These references are found in *De Oratione* 2.1 and 22.5 and 6. 2.1 quotes from John 1:12. 22.5 and 6 both refer to Genesis 6:2. J. E. L. van der Geest notes that "L'expression *scriptum est* est très fréquente chez Tertullien." See J. E. L. van der Geest, *Le Christ et l'Ancien Testament chez Tertullien. Recherches terminologique*, (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1972), 49. See also van der Geest, 7 for a discussion of *scriptura* which occurs in *De Orat.* 22.1.

¹¹ See *De Oratione* 1.3; 2.4; 3.1 (3 times); 4.5; 6.1, 2, 3 (2 times), 4 (2 times); 7.3 (2 times); 8. 5; 10.1; 28. 2.

¹² See *De Oratione* 2.1; 3.4; 4.1; 5.1; 7.1; 8. 1

dimension of the Lord's Prayer. It is a prayer which contributes to the unity of the Church.

B. Tertullian's Hermeneutics

Although, as Maureen Tilley points out,¹³ Tertullian never wrote a theory of exegesis; one can surmise that Tertullian approached the biblical text with some definite ideas about biblical interpretation. Tilley traces two major influences on Tertullian's hermeneutics, his rhetorical training and the practice of the church in interpreting scripture.¹⁴ Tilley discusses some of the following influences of rhetoric on Tertullian's hermeneutics:

- Knowledge of sources;
- The ordinary sense of words;
- The use of internal evidence for explaining the meaning of words followed by external evidence;
- The testing of interpretations by playing out their possible results;
- In the case of two divergent interpretations the interpretation should be chosen which preserves the honour of the people involved;
- Evaluating documents by the date they were written; reconciling two contradictory documents through some *tertium quid*.¹⁵

R. P. C. Hanson also notices these elements in Tertullian's hermeneutical approach. He writes, "Its characteristics are common sense, realism, and restraint." Later he adds, "Perhaps the most remarkable evidence of Tertullian's ability as an expounder of the Bible is his insistence that a passage must be taken in its original sense, and interpreted according to the situation in which it was uttered or written."¹⁶ However, Hanson points

¹³ Maureen Tilley, "The use of scripture in Christian North Africa: An examination of Donatist hermeneutics" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1989), 17.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁵ Tilley, 20-22. Tilley cites from Cicero's *De Inventione* and then proceeds to give references of similar reasoning in Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* 4.11.12.

¹⁶ R. P. C. Hanson, "Notes on Tertullian's Interpretation of Scripture" in *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 12, 1961, 277-8.

out that Tertullian is not opposed to traditional Christian allegory though he concludes, “he [Tertullian] often rejects the practice and his writings leave a general impression that he was suspicious of allegory.”¹⁷ T. P. O’Malley points out that Tertullian’s major hermeneutical principle is seeing Christ in the Old Testament. He writes:

The best tradition of allegorical interpretation will in fact be occupied with the prefiguring of Christ in the Old Testament: Christ and the Church. And Tertullian is already in this tradition. *Gal.* 4.22-25 is the great text, to which later authors will appeal to found a Christian theory of allegory.¹⁸

O’Malley quickly points out one of the inconsistencies in Tertullian’s hermeneutic when he writes, “It is surely a paradox that Tertullian defends allegory, against Marcion, by showing the absurdity of a literal interpretation; and that it is precisely this literalism which makes him usually prefer the *simple* reading.”¹⁹ This certainly seems a conundrum. Many scholars recognise that Tertullian’s highest principle in his polemical treatises is victory, so much so that he is rarely able to concede a point to his opponents.²⁰

Tertullian was also influenced by the importance of the Hebrew Scriptures for Christians and the use of typology.²¹ The Hebrew Scriptures were important for early Christians, for they spoke about the Messiah whom they regarded as coming in the person

¹⁷ Hanson, 274.

¹⁸ O’Malley, 128.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ So Hanson writes, “Indeed Tertullian’s interpretation of Scripture, where he is not using any and every argument in order to indulge in special pleading, leaves a very favourable impression on the modern reader.” (p. 275) In all fairness, O’Malley points to Tertullian’s arguments against Marcion in which Tertullian shows that Marcion in his avowal of a literal interpretation has inadvertently used allegory himself (*Adv. Marc.* 4.17.12). O’Malley concludes about Tertullian’s attitude to allegory, “Tertullian employs it with most confidence in his polemic with Marcion, and in that controversy, he justifies its use from the text of Marcion-Paul, to show the unity of the two testaments. To appreciate his use of allegorical terminology, this distinction should be made; the application of, and attitude to allegory is very different from the one work to the other. His principle, that allegory obtains when the ‘literal sense’ results in nonsense, has its reverse side: allegory is not present where the Scripture is confirmed by actual events.” (pp. 157-8)

²¹ Tilley, 25 and 33.

of Jesus of Nazareth. Tertullian, along with Justin and Irenaeus, tries to appropriate the Hebrew Scriptures for Christians while disallowing their use by Jews (who they perceived misused them), heretics, and pagans.²² Thus the importance of establishing the homogeneity of the Old Testament with the New Testament becomes apparent.²³

Conversely, it will be demonstrated in the following chapters that when the concept and practice of prayer is considered, Tertullian prefers to dwell on the discontinuity in prayer as portrayed in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Hanson notes that Tertullian did not simply do away with the law but recognised the moral commands in it that were forever binding.²⁴

O'Malley notes the preponderance of the Latin word, *figura*, and its cognates in Tertullian's writings.²⁵ Tertullian's usage of the word shows the typology by which the early church approached the Hebrew Scriptures. O'Malley refers to E. Auerbach's argument for historical existence of the *figura* as 'Realprophetie' when he writes:

This is nowhere more evident than in the well-known commentary which Tertullian makes upon *Ezechiel* 37.1-14 (*de resurr.* 29.2ff quotes the text; 30.1 ff. comments). Tertullian's argument, which sounds strange to us, is: unless the bones in the valley were really re-united, and unless they really rose again, the vision of Ezechiel could not itself be revelatory of the resurrection, or of the restoration of Israel.²⁶

One must remember that the difference between allegory and typology should be maintained. Typology always draws upon a historical figure or event as a type or figure by which a later person or circumstance is interpreted. An allegory uses the details of a

²² See Tilley, 27-32.

²³ See *Adv. Marc.* 4 and 5. In these books Tertullian argues that contrary to Marcion's opinion, the Old Testament agrees with the New Testament.

²⁴ Hanson, 277. See *De Pud.* 6.4. Hanson further notes on page 278 that Tertullian still observed at least one ritual observance, "the refusal to eat flesh from which the blood had not been drained." (*Apol.* 9.13)

²⁵ O'Malley, 158.

story to represent something else. There need not be any historical referent in an allegory. The lines between allegory and typology are often blurred. Tilley points out that “Tertullian’s allegories operated as extended typologies.”²⁷ Typology is also an exegetical tool that helps inform Tertullian’s understanding and practice of prayer in *De Oratione* (see Chapter 4.III).

As well, Tertullian also saw that passages of Scripture had to be interpreted from the context in which they were placed. Furthermore, he was aware that certain rhetorical units had to be read in certain ways.²⁸ So if a passage contained a parable then it should be read differently than if it was an historical narrative. As well, Tertullian wanted people to be aware of the original audience when reading Scripture. Tilley points out the following example, “The command ‘Seek and you shall find’ applied to the Jews seeking the Messiah, not to the heretics seeking novelty.”²⁹ These methods of interpretation were not to be applied in isolation but were to rely on the custom of the Christian community and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.³⁰ The idea that interpretation should also consider the context of a scriptural passage being investigated is present in *De Oratione* (see Chapter 4.IV). It is an idea which influences his concept and practice of prayer.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 162-3.

²⁷ Tilley, 41.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 37. O’Malley also concurs. He notes that for Tertullian the context of a scriptural statement is important. So too are its historical and stylistic contexts. (p. 131) *cf. Praescr. haer.* 14.3.

²⁹ Tilley, 38-9. *cf. Praescr. haer.* 8.1-16.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 39. O’Malley points to the *regula fidei* as the control over any interpretation (p. 133) O’Malley notes a paradox in Tertullian’s hermeneutic, “Paradoxically, the desire of Tertullian for clarity, and his latent rationalism drive him towards a non-rational source for certitude, which he found in Montanism. This revelation would solve all those ambiguities in Scripture which Tertullian had always felt. From his rules on taking Scripture as a whole, from his attention to historical and stylistic context, Tertullian comes to limit the sense of the scriptures. Using the tools which his wide learning afforded him, he opts for the simpler reading. He shows a certain scepticism which tends to deprive the Scripture of its primacy. A very different attitude is found in his catechetical works; but the rationalism which wishes simple and clear

C. Tertullian's Philosophy

Much that has been taken for granted with respect to Tertullian's life has been called into question. At one time it was thought Tertullian was the son of a soldier and a man trained as a jurist. Subsequently, Barnes has shown that there were in fact two Tertullians mentioned in literature around the end of the second and the beginning of the third century.³¹ Many scholars have seen the presence of a legal form of argument in Tertullian's writings thus concluding that Tertullian was a jurist. Rankin offers a study which concludes that Tertullian's use of legal language as a proof of his juristic status as "somewhat inconclusive."³² At most, Rankin is willing to admit that Tertullian shows some knowledge of the law so that he could have been trained as an advocate but doubts whether Tertullian was a professional jurist.³³ The fact that Tertullian has some training in law also implies similar training in rhetoric. Schools of rhetoric were undoubtedly influenced by the writings of Seneca and Cicero, both of whom espoused a Stoic philosophy. Tertullian, himself, was influenced by and used Stoic philosophy in his own writings.

Ferguson discusses the three major foci of Stoic thought: physics, logic, and ethics. His organisational structure will be very helpful in addressing Tertullian's Stoicism.³⁴

statements finally drives him to take refuge increasingly in non-scriptural norms; in the rule of faith, in tradition, and finally, in the certitude which the Montanist Paraclete offered." (p.133)

³¹ Timothy D. Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), Chapter 4.

³² David I. Rankin, "Was Tertullian a Jurist?" in Elizabeth Livingstone, ed. *Studia Patristica. Volume XXXI. Papers presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1995.* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 342.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Everett Ferguson, *Background of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 333-347.

1. Physics. An important premise in Stoicism is that everything is material. This notion is seen at numerous points in Tertullian's theological statements. Sell notes that Tertullian's Stoicism manifests itself in his remarks about the corporeality of God and of the soul.³⁵ He points to two such statements in which Tertullian espouses a material nature for God and the soul. In *Adversus Praxean* 7 Tertullian writes, "How could...He who is incorporeal have made things which have a body?...God is Spirit...Spirit has a bodily substance of its own kind, in its own form."³⁶ In *De Anima* 5 he writes, "I call on the Stoics also to help me, who, while declaring almost in our own terms that the soul is a spiritual essence (inasmuch as breath and spirit are in their nature very akin to each other), will yet have no difficulty in persuading [us] that the soul is a corporeal substance."³⁷ Osborn lists the four categories for the Stoics as: substance, quality, disposition and relative disposition. Substance designates everything which exists as a material entity. For the Stoic, the term *substantia* meant something akin to the generic English term "stuff." This term has been taken up into the subsequent trinitarian and christological debates of the third and fourth centuries, but for Tertullian he generally meant the basic stuff that composed material objects, in which soul and God also were found.³⁸

Tertullian was one of the first Christians to begin to struggle with the philosophical nature of the Trinity and the dual nature of Christ. Both of these issues were dealt with in his Stoic system. Tertullian discussed the relationship of the Father to

³⁵ Alan P. F. Sell, "Theology and the Philosophical Climate: Case Studies from the Second Century A.D." in *Vox Evangelica* 13, (1983): 58.

³⁶ Tertullian, "Against Praxeas" in ANCL. Volume 15, 345-6. (*Adv. Prax.* 7)

³⁷ Tertullian, "On the Soul" in ANCL. Volume 15, 419. (*De Ani.* 5)

the Son via the Stoic category of relative disposition. Osborn summarises Tertullian's argument:

Tertullian takes over this category and uses it in his own way (*Prax.* 10). Father and son have their existence in their disposition alone; therefore, when that disposition is denied, they cease to be. Father and son are no more identical than day and night. Neither can be both. A father makes a son and a son makes a father. Their relative disposition means that the father cannot relate to the father as he does to the son, nor can the son relate to the son as he does to the father. God establishes and guards relations. These relations make me what I am when I come to possess them. When they are reflexive (father-father, son-son), the members cease to exist. Since, for Praxeas, monarchy makes father identical with son, and son identical with father, both father and son are no more.³⁹

As will be seen, this notion of relative disposition appears in *De Oratione* and does influence Tertullian's notion of prayer (see Chapter 3.II)

2. Logic and Epistemology. Tertullian's views on the knowledge of God also showed Stoic influence. Osborn refers to the Stoic notion of God being a balance between positive and negative theology. He writes, "Stoics were philosophers of the divine existence, of a God who was immanent and yet whose transcendence was maintained by a negative tradition."⁴⁰ Tertullian much like other Stoic philosophers saw proof of God's existence in two ways. First of all, God is proved from his works "by which we are preserved, sustained, and covered with delight and wonder."⁴¹ Secondly, there is a natural knowledge of God inherent in all people. For the Stoic this was awareness of the divine *logos* which indwells every living thing; whereas, for Tertullian

³⁸ Eric Osborn, *Tertullian First Theologian of the West*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 131.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 78. In his *Apologeticus*, Tertullian writes, "Would you have the proof from the works of his hands, so numerous and so great, which both contain you and sustain you, which minister at once to your enjoyment, and strike you with awe...?" (ANCL, Vol. 11, 87; *Apol.* 17)

the testimony of the soul bears testimony to the existence of God.⁴² Ideas related to natural theology are present within *De Oratione* (cf. *De Orat.* 29)

As far as logic is concerned, R. H. Ayers has ably demonstrated that Tertullian used Stoic logic in his writings. Part of the Stoic method of arguing is by using the common meaning of words.⁴³ One may recall from the discussion of Tertullian's hermeneutics that he advocated that the Bible be understood simply without investing uncommon meanings in words.⁴⁴ This idea will appear in the following chapters (for example in Chapter 3.VII). Ayers analysis is deficient in one respect. He fails to pay proper attentions to the Stoic love of paradox. For a discussion of this, one must look to Osborn's discussion of Tertullian who claims that "For Tertullian almost anything worth saying can go into a paradox."⁴⁵ In another work, he lists the six key Stoic paradoxes which helped define the tenor of Tertullian's work.⁴⁶ Examples of paradox in *De*

⁴² Eric Osborn, *Beginning of Christian Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 85.

⁴³ Robert H. Ayers, *Language, Logic, and Reason in the Church Fathers: a Study of Tertullian, Augustine, and Aquinas*, *Altertumswissenschaftliche Texte und Studien. Band VI*, (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1979), 17-24. He discusses the Stoic system of argumentation with five different argument types (*modus ponens*, *modus tollens*, *modus ponendo tollens*, *modus ponendo tollens*, and *modus tollendo ponens*) and demonstrates how these elements are present within Tertullian's work.

⁴⁴ See footnote 15.

⁴⁵ Osborn, "Was Tertullian a Philosopher?", 328.

⁴⁶ Osborn, *Tertullian First Theologian of the West*" 63-4. These six are found in Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*:

1. Only what is morally good is noble.
2. Possession of virtue is sufficient for happiness.
3. Transgressions are equal and right actions are equal.
4. Every foolish man is mad.
5. Only the wise man is free and every foolish man is a slave.
6. The wise man alone is rich.

These were paradoxes because they ran counter to universal opinion in the ancient world. One can readily see how such paradoxes could be adapted to a Christian context. For example #6 talks about the wise man being alone rich. Many would wonder about those with plenty of material things not being considered rich. However, the Christian understands the fleeting nature of material wealth and recognises that abiding virtues like wisdom render their owner wealthy.

Oratione will be provided in following chapters. One will see that use of paradox helped to form Tertullian's concept of prayer.

3. Ethics. Stoics centred their ethics around virtue. The goal of life was to be a virtuous person. As Ferguson points out, Stoicism viewed human beings as rational, thus the virtuous person lived according to reason.⁴⁷ Anyone familiar with Tertullian's writings is aware of the rigorous discipline with which he approached life. Osborn sees Stoic ethics as ruled by conscience, law, and nature.⁴⁸ For Tertullian these notions are present as well. Conscience is a common ground through which discussion can happen. It provides notions such as God's existence, the immortality of the soul, and the difference between good and evil.⁴⁹ Tertullian also laid great importance on the law as recorded in Scripture. He dismissed the ceremonial aspects of the Old Testament law but insisted on the ongoing validity of the moral laws therein recorded.⁵⁰ Tertullian also insisted that "natural law is the source of common wisdom and discipline and it is free from the historical limitations of the law of Moses."⁵¹

Tertullian's account of sin is also Stoic in influence. As much as the early Stoics viewed a wrong choice as an irrational decision made by the individual, so too Tertullian stresses the personal responsibility of the one who has sinned. In *De Exhortatione Castitatis* he writes, "It is our will, when we will the evil which is contrary to the will of

⁴⁷ Ferguson, 337.

⁴⁸ Osborn, *Tertullian First Theologian of the West*, 238-9.

⁴⁹ For example in his work *De Resurrectione Carnis*, Tertullian writes, "One may no doubt be wise in the things of God, even from one's natural powers, ... For some things are known even by nature: the immortality of the soul, for instance, is held by many; the knowledge of God is possessed by all." Tertullian, *De Resurrectione Carnis* in ANCL. Volume 15, 220. (*Res. Carn.* 3.1)

⁵⁰ Tertullian describes the *Decalogue* as the *prima lex dei* and the *sanctissima lex* (*De Pud.* 5.1 and 5).

God who wills the good. If you ask whence comes this will by which we will something contrary to the will of God, I shall say: from ourselves.”⁵² This notion of sin being a personal responsibility appears in *De Oratione* and influences his theory and practice of confession (see Chapter 3.VII).

The preceding pages have given a brief overview of areas in which Tertullian’s thought seems indebted to Stoicism. The ideas listed above will be highlighted in the following chapters in order to demonstrate that the Stoic philosophical notions appear in Tertullian’s concept and practice of prayer in *De Oratione*.

II. Background Information for Origen

A. Origen and Scripture

Both Lee McDonald and E. Earle Ellis notice that Origen in his commentary on Psalm 1 lists twenty-two books recognised as authoritative by the Hebrews.⁵³ Ellis says that Origen allows the use of other materials such as Maccabees, Tobit, and others; however, he does not view them as authoritative in the same sense as the recognised Hebrew Scriptures.⁵⁴ It will be seen in the following chapters, however, that Origen uses

⁵¹ Osborn, *Tertullian First Theologian of the West*, 240. In *Adversus Iudaeos* 2.1-14 Tertullian advances the notion that God gave a primordial law to Adam which consisted of love for God and neighbour as well as the moral commandments of the *Decalogue*.

⁵² *De Exhortatione Castitatis* 2.5 as quoted in *Ibid.*, 168.

⁵³ McDonald, 110-111 and E. Earle Ellis, “The Old Testament Canon in the Early Church” in Martin Jan Mulder, ed., *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 661. These books are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges-Ruth, Kingdoms (1,2), Kingdoms (3,4), Chronicles (1,2), Esdras (1,2), Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah-Lamentations-Letter, Daniel, Ezekiel, Job, and Esther. This list only has twenty-one items. It would appear that the Minor Prophets were accidentally omitted by Origen.

⁵⁴ Ellis, 664. Ellis cites Origen’s commentary on Matthew 23:37-39 in which Origen asserts that these books cannot be used for purposes of establishing doctrine.

non-Hebrew books in the same way as he uses Hebrew-based books (i.e. to establish various doctrinal points about prayer).⁵⁵

With respect to delimiting what Origen considered authoritative in a New Testament context, McDonald points out, “The main problem with a supposed canon of Origen is that we have no solid evidence from him as to what that canon might have been. Kalin is probably right when he concludes that Rufinus’ translation of Origen’s *Homily on Joshua 7* presents us more with Rufinus’ canon than it does Origen’s.”⁵⁶ This problem of Rufinus’ translation of Origen is perennial.

According to the scriptural citation footnotes provided by Oulton and Chadwick in their translation of *Peri Euches*, Origen made great use Scripture. Aside from a preponderance of quotations from the Hebrew-based Scriptures, the following books are used: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Susanna, and 2 Maccabees. In all, Oulton and Chadwick note 289 Old Testament quotations. The single-most used Old Testament source is Psalms (63 references—21.7% of all Old Testament citations). The five books of the Pentateuch represent a significant number of biblical references (93 times—32.2%). Other books that are referred to more than ten times are: Job (18 times—6.2%); Proverbs (12 times—4.2%); and Jeremiah (16 times—5.5%). A much higher proportion of Old Testament to New Testament quotations is found in *Peri Euches* than in *De Oratione*. Whereas, Tertullian wishes to stress the radical newness of Christian prayer;

⁵⁵ This is in agreement with McDonald’s argument that Origen allowed for a wider canon. He cites Origen’s homily on Numbers “in which he recommends that a Christian’s intellectual diet should begin with the OT Apocrypha...and then proceed to the Psalms and the Gospels.” See McDonald, 111.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 204.

Origen desires to show a continuity in the notion and practice of prayer between the Old Testament and New Testament.

With respect to the New Testament, references number 551 according to Oulton and Chadwick's translation. Part of the reason this number is so large is multiple listings for references from the Synoptic Gospels. Thus, if Origen refers to a story that appears in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, then the footnotes will detail the reference from each of the three Gospels. Matthew is the most prevalent book (114 references—20.7% of all New Testament quotations). This is explainable since Origen prefers Matthew's account of the Lord's Prayer over Luke's. Luke, however, is referenced 66 times (12%). References to Mark number only 11 (2%). The Gospel of John appears 67 times in the footnotes (12.1%). Since Origen seems to have had a strong mystical side, it should hardly be surprising that the fourth Gospel—generally regarded as the most spiritual Gospel—should have a prominent place in Origen's writing on prayer; prayer being a spiritual discipline (see Chapter 3.II and VI). Other New Testament works quoted more than twenty times include: Acts (21 times—3.8%); Romans (50 times—9.1%); 1 Corinthians (62 times—11.3%); 2 Corinthians (22 times—4%); and Hebrews (24 times—4.4%).

Although this data may be interesting in that one can see how prevalent the use of Scripture is in *Peri Euches*, the use of passages from non-Hebrew based books will be highlighted in the following chapters in order to show that Origen's broader sense of what is authoritative influences his theory and practice of prayer in *Peri Euches*.

B. Origen's Hermeneutics

When one considers Origen's theory and methodology for interpreting the Bible one concept comes to mind—allegorical interpretation. There is no doubt that Origen

approached the Bible with a view to determining its hidden or spiritual meaning. Hardly anyone would even doubt the influences under which he laboured. One can see Philo's approach to biblical interpretation very clearly in Origen's writings.⁵⁷ Origen favoured an allegorical method of interpretation because it helped him arrive at his goal of seeing the spiritual sense of Scripture.⁵⁸

Karen Jo Torjesen's book, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Structure in Origen's Exegesis*, is quite helpful. She makes explicit what others have dealt with tacitly. The overriding principle for Origen is the presence of the *Logos* in Scripture.⁵⁹ The presence of the *Logos* in Scripture ensures the following suppositions in Origen's exegetical writings:

- The *Logos* in Scripture defines its spiritual sense;
- The teaching activity of the *Logos* is in Scripture;
- The single content of Scripture is seen in various forms;
- The origin of Scripture is from the *Logos*;

⁵⁷ Fearghus Ó Fearghail, "Philo and the Fathers" in Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey, eds., *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*, (Cambridge: Four Courts Press, 1995), 55. Ó Fearghail writes, "Indeed while direct borrowings from Philo are not lacking, it is in Origen's application of Philo's method that his debt is most evident." Points of similarity with Philo include: belief in the inspiration of Scripture and Scripture could have both literal and allegorical senses.

⁵⁸ The theme statement for Origen's approach to Scripture is seen in *De Principiis* 4.2.4, where he writes: "Therefore, a person ought to describe threefold in his soul the meaning of divine letters, that is, so that the simple may be edified by, so to speak, the body of Scriptures; for that is what we call the ordinary and narrative meaning. But if any have begun to make some progress and can contemplate something more fully, they should be edified by the soul of Scripture. And those who are perfect are like those whom the Apostle says, 'Yet among the perfect we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this world or of the rulers of this world, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification' (1 Cor. 2:6-7). Such people should be edified as by the Spirit of Scripture. Thus, just as a human being is said to be made up of body, soul, and spirit, so also is sacred Scripture, which has been granted by God's gracious dispensation for man's salvation." See Origen, *An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, First Principles: Book IV, Prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs, Homily XXVII on Numbers*, trans. Rowan A. Greer (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p.182.

⁵⁹ Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Structure in Origen's Exegesis*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986), 108. Torjesen's work focuses on Origen's commentaries and homilies as exegetical works, but the present study sees her research as helpful to the full breadth of Origen studies.

- Scripture is used pedagogically by the *Logos* in its interpretation for the people of Origen's day.⁶⁰

With such a view of the Bible, one can see why Origen would go to great lengths to invest every part of the Bible with a deeper spiritual meaning. As it turns out, allegory is most helpful in investing spiritual meaning into a text, especially when the text's literal reading is nonsensical or contradictory to other biblical passages. Scalise explores Origen's "allegorical flights of fancy" and gives three reasons for Origen's justification of such a system:

(1) an overly narrow understanding of *sensus literalis* of Scripture, (2) a move from typology to allegory in a quest for "spiritual meaning," and (3) a forced allegorism developing from a plenary verbal view of biblical inspiration.⁶¹

This theme of the *Logos* being present throughout all Scripture is very important to Origen's hermeneutics. Torjesen sees the locus of this importance in the pedagogical activity of the *Logos*. She writes,

What we see here is that Scripture is invested by the Holy Spirit with a divine intentionality both as historical narrative and as repository of mystical doctrine. This divine intentionality seeks and addresses the reader with the purpose of educating and spiritually advancing him, as he is capable of being educated and advanced. This is the significance of the inspiration of Scripture by the Holy Spirit. The emphasis does not lie on its divinely attested truthfulness, but rather on the intention of this truth to reach and instructively aid the reader.⁶²

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* Robert Daly also brings attention to the ramifications of an incarnation of the *Logos* in Scripture, with similar conclusions. See Robert Daly, "The hermeneutics of Origen: Existential Interpretation in the Third Century" in Richard J. Clifford and George W. MacRae, eds. *The Word in the World: Essays in Honor of Frederick L. Moriarty*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Weston College Press, 1973), 137.

⁶¹ Charles J. Scalise, "Allegorical Flights of Fancy: The Problem of Origen's Exegesis" in *Greek Orthodox Review* 32, (Spring 1987): p.71.

⁶² Torjesen, 125.

Wataru Mizugaki cites *De Principiis* 4.2.9 as a place in which the *Logos* is equated with the Spirit as the agent for the formation of the Bible.⁶³ Torjesen sees Origen setting out a program of exegesis; although she does note that his exegetical approach is not identical for all types of literature. However, there are overarching ideas that occur in Origen's writing. First, Torjesen sees that Origen begins by placing the hearer within the text. This is done by explaining the grammatical and historical elements as they appear in the text. Origen's goal is the placement of the hearer in a position in which they are in sympathy with the author's world view. Torjesen then briefly describes how this placing of the hearer in the text takes on different forms when applied to Psalms, prophets, historical writings, wisdom literature, and Gospel.⁶⁴ Once the grammatical-historical sense is established, Origen moves his discussion to the spiritual sense of the text itself.

There is a progression in Origen's exegesis from a literal reading to a spiritual reading not only within the context of an entire passage but also on a verse by verse basis.⁶⁵ It is when Origen moves from a grammatical and historical explanation to a

⁶³ Wataru Mizugaki, "Spirit and Search: The Basis of Biblical Hermeneutics in Origen's On First Principles 4.1-3)" in Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata, eds., *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, (Detroit : Wayne State University Press, 1992), 570. Mizugaki focuses on the work of the Spirit in his article on Origen's hermeneutics, whereas Torjesen is concerned with the presence of the *Logos* within Origen's concept of Scripture and hermeneutics. If one recalls that Origen does not generally distinguish carefully between the work of the Spirit and the work of the *Logos* then no great problem arises. Mizugaki's reference to *De Principiis* 4.2.9 shows the two being equated.

⁶⁴ Torjesen, 131-3. Torjesen points out that Origen viewed the New Testament as one genre, that of Gospel. She writes, "It is not the narratives concerning the coming of Christ which make a writing gospel, but rather the educational intention (ὁ λόγος προτρεπτικός) which makes a report of the works of Christ truly gospel."

⁶⁵ Torjesen, 133-134. In fact, Gerard Watson points out that Origen invested a lot of attention to individual words. Watson says, "But the fact that each word in the Bible was chosen by the Holy Spirit meant, as Origen saw it, that we must often look further than the obvious meanings might already be.... The result is that events recorded in, say, the Gospels, which may sound entirely credible as they stand to us, are subjected by Origen to further analysis which gives the original story at best a secondary place." See Gerard Watson, "Origen and the Literal Interpretation of Scripture" in Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey, eds., *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*, (Cambridge: Four Courts Press, 1995), 81.

spiritual explanation that he moved from particular observations to general principles.⁶⁶

Origen used two methods of moving from the particular to the universal. Allegory is his usual method by which elements in the text are symbols for an eternal reality. The other method is historical generalisations. Origen reasoned that the *Logos* was always the same so the pedagogical activities of the *Logos* were equally free from the constraints of particular historical situations.⁶⁷

Origen was not content to leave his audience within the realm of the text. Instead he sought to move his hearers from “the doctrine of the Logos within the world of Scripture to the doctrine of the Logos present within the world of the hearer.”⁶⁸ Like many preachers either ancient or modern, Origen wanted to elucidate the biblical text in such a way that his hearers would be changed into more spiritual believers. An eternal truth expressed in Scripture is little help if the hearer does not see a present useful application. Origen’s notion of spiritual growth may be different from most modern day theologians, but the goal is the same—the maturing of believers.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Mizugaki, 568.

⁶⁷ Torjesen provides an example of historical generalisation in Origen’s exegesis of Psalm 37, she writes: “This form of transposition from the historical to the universal is also what we observed in the Psalms. The historical situation was studied for the answer to the question, how is the Logos dealing with the Psalmist? The answer to this question provides a universal description for the dealing of the Logos with sinners, since the Logos remains identical with himself in his manner of correcting and educating.” See Torjesen 143.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 146.

⁶⁹ Although this paper looks at the principles and methods of Origen’s biblical interpretation, Mizugaki’s paper which stresses the Spirit’s role in interpretation is a helpful reminder that Origen did not believe that spiritual growth was simply a human endeavour. Instead, as Mizugaki summarises, “The Spirit who inspires the scriptures is at the same time the ‘most searching one’ who plumbs the depths of God and who is the principal interpreter of scripture” (Mizugaki, 579). James McEvoy also supports the notion of the Spirit being active in exegesis. He writes, “He [Origen] believes, that practically all of Scripture contains a hidden sense, placed there by its author, the Spirit, and accessible only to the reader in whom the Spirit is actively working to uncover for him the spiritual sense of what he is reading.” See James McEvoy, “The Patristic Hermeneutic of Spiritual Freedom” in Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey, eds., *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*, (Cambridge: Four Courts Press, 1995), 14.

Origen used allegory in *Peri Euches*. This should come as no surprise to those who have read any of Origen's surviving writings. Origen explicitly stated in places that allegory must be used in order to interpret a saying. For example in *Peri Euches* 26.3 he discusses the clause of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth," and as part of his discussion he further writes, "Anyone, however, will easily resolve the question by allegorizing 'heaven,' and saying that it is Christ, and that the Church is 'earth'."⁷⁰ Instead of focusing on the allegorising in Origen, Torjesen's thesis on Origen's technique of moving from the literal world of the biblical text (both grammatical and historical) to the spiritual level of meaning found therein will be used with respect to *Peri Euches*.

Origen does not go about a verse by verse exegesis—except, of course, in his commentary on the Lord's Prayer. One should remember that *Peri Euches* is a topical discussion and so will not take on the same sort of form as a strictly exegetical work. Be that as it may, the reader of *Peri Euches* will see the same sort of progression in thought whenever Origen examines an idea. He first addresses the literal meaning of the text and then proceeds to the text's spiritual meaning. Sometimes he dismisses the literal meaning as inaccurate (as in his discussion of "Our Father which art in heaven", see Chapter 3.II) and sometimes the spiritual meaning expands the scope of the literal meaning (as in his discussion of answered prayers in the Old Testament, see Chapter 4.V). One will see below that Origen's hermeneutic does influence his concept of prayer.

⁷⁰ Origen, "On Prayer," in John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, eds. *Alexandrian Christianity*, trans. Henry Chadwick, Library of Christian Classics. Vol. 2. (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954), 292. (*P.E.* 26.3)

C. Origen's Philosophy

There are various facets of philosophical thought present in Origen's *Peri Euches*. They will be discussed in the following chapters; however, it would prove helpful to see from what philosophical perspective Origen was writing. Daniélou endorses the theory that Origen was a Middle Platonist. This theory wins Daniélou's endorsement for a number of reasons. As Daniélou writes:

On the one hand there was his personal knowledge of some of Plato's works, and at the opposite end of the scale came the oral teaching of Ammonius Saccas, the scope of which it is difficult to determine. But the essential factor seems to lie between these two and to consist of Origen's contacts with the philosophers and commentators of the previous generation.⁷¹

Ferguson defines Middle Platonism as "Platonism influenced by Stoic ethics, Aristotelian logic, and Neopythagorean metaphysics and religion."⁷² Daniélou claims that Origen's chief debt to Stoicism was the system of allegorical interpretation. Ronald Heine has also observed in Origen the Stoic conception of freewill.⁷³

The Platonist school is the single largest influence on Origen. This is not the Platonism of Plato and his immediate successors, but instead it is a Middle Platonism which can be traced back to Antiochus of Ascalon who kept the general outlook of the Platonic system but not all the details. Daniélou characterises this Platonism as an

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 79. Daniélou cites Hal Koch's *Pronoia und Paideusis* who lists the influential philosophers on Origen as: Gaius, Albinus, Atticus, Maximus of Tyre, Celsus, and Numenius. These were all connected with the Middle Platonic school.

⁷² Ferguson, 364. See also Joseph Wilson Trigg, *Origen*, (London: Routledge, 1998), 12. Trigg sees Origen as a Middle Platonist who was influenced primarily by Ammonius Saccas. Strangely enough, Trigg does not label Ammonius Saccas a neo-Platonist as Daniélou had done over forty years earlier. The two scholars do agree that it is nearly impossible to discern anything specific about Ammonius Saccas. Trigg sees this philosopher as *the* influence on Origen, while Daniélou believes Origen to have gathered his ideas from other sources as well.

“eclectic, mystical kind” of Platonism.⁷⁴ The first philosopher who seems to have influenced Origen was Plutarch (50-125 C.E.) who stressed God’s transcendence but also emphasised God’s activity in and care for the world. Plutarch also laid great stress on demonology and like him Origen emphasised the activity of angels and demons in his writings including *Peri Euches*.⁷⁵

Numenius is another important philosopher who influenced Origen. Origen asserts that Numenius thought of God as incorporeal.⁷⁶ This idea is prominent in *Peri Euches* and helps form Origen’s conception of prayer. Numenius’ theory of the three gods also influenced Origen.⁷⁷ For Numenius the three gods were: the father, the creator, and the cosmos. As Daniélou writes:

It [the theory of the three gods] doubtless had something to do with the way Origen conceived the Logos. If he condemned the idea that the cosmos was the third god, he was influenced, all the same, by the concept of the second god. That this was the case becomes quite evident when we find Numenius...calling the first god $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{o}\varsigma$ and saying that the demiurge is good only in so far as he imitates the first god. He is no good of himself, his goodness is derived from the first god. The same statement is found textually in Origen as well.⁷⁸

⁷³ Trigg, 28. Trigg points out that Origen substitutes a loving personal God for the Stoic notion of inexorable, impersonal fate.

⁷⁴ Daniélou, 87.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 87-8. It will be noticed below that angels do figure prominently in Origen’s concept of prayer. For example in *Peri Euches* 11 Origen discusses how angels pray for and with people.

⁷⁶ Origen writes in *Contra Celsus*, “How much more impartial than Celsus is Numenius the Pythagorean, who has given many proofs of being a very eloquent man, ...; for, in the first book of his treatise *On the Good*, speaking of those nations who have adopted the opinion that God is incorporeal, he enumerates the Jews also among those who hold this view.” Origen, “Against Celsus” in *The Writings of Origen (Vol. 1)*. ANCL. Volume 10., (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869), 412. (*Con. Cels* 1.15)

⁷⁷ Numenius writes, “The First God, existing in his own place, is simple and, consorting as he does with himself alone, can never be divisible. The Second and Third God, however, are in fact one; but in the process of coming into contact with Matter, which is the Dyad, He gives unity to it, but is Himself divided by it, since Matter has a character prone to desire and is in flux. So in virtue of not being in contact with the Intelligible...by reason of looking towards Matter and taking thought for it, He becomes unregarding (*aperioptos*) of Himself. And He seizes upon the sense realm and ministers to it and yet draws it up to His own character, as a result of this yearning towards Matter.” As quoted from Fragment 11 in John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1969), 367-8.

⁷⁸ Daniélou, 92. *cf. De Prin.* 6.3.

The relationship between the Father and the Son finds echoes in Origen's treatment on the proper addressee of prayer (*cf. P. E. 15.1*). It will indeed help define his notion of prayer.

Origen's thought shows some resemblance to Maximus of Tyre's thought.⁷⁹ One will see in the discussion below that the philosophical problems of prayer that Origen lists are similar to those of Maximus. As well, Maximus' twofold account of the origin of evil is also found in Origen's writings.⁸⁰ Both of these issues help form Origen's understanding of prayer.

Albinus' work, the *Didaskilos*, deals with principles (i.e., matter, ideas, the Good). The Good is the author of the universe and is incorporeal.⁸¹ This notion that the supreme God is incorporeal is similar to Origen's notion of the Father—an idea important in his thinking about prayer. As well, humanity belongs to the class of mortal creatures which are specially endowed with souls by the first God. The perfection of individual human beings is in the contemplation of the first God. Daniélou finishes his discussion by listing further parallels between Albinus and Origen:

The Logos sets the world in order in Origen, just as the soul of the world does in Albinus; the Logos envelops and supports the world as the souls does the body....[H]is general views...were the same as Albinus': he too considered the heavenly bodies were living, intelligent beings. All he asked was that they should not be worshipped....With regard to the creation of man, we find him maintaining the idea of the pre-existence of

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 93. Daniélou parallels Maximus' discussion of the erecting of statues and Origen's discussion of outward worship in Christianity in *Contra Celsum*.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 94. Maximus attributes evil first to the ἐξουσία ψυχῆς and then as an inevitable consequence of the reception of the good. Origen regards evil as resulting from freewill but also as a consequence of the good willed by God (*Con. Cels. 6.55*).

⁸¹ Albinus writes in *Didaskilos* 10.3, "[God] is Father by reason of the fact that he is cause of all things and orders the heavenly Mind and the Soul of the World in accordance with himself and with his thoughts." As quoted in Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 283.

the soul and its descent into the body, as well as the theory that the passions are bound up with the nature of the body and are superadded to it.⁸²

Origen's doctrine of God and the pre-existence of souls are two notable ideas that bear further discussion. In his discussion of *De Principiis* 1.3.5, John Dillon, instead of taking Rufinus' translation of the work at face value, opts to follow Jerome's critique of Origen's views on the Trinity as more representative of Origen's actual thought. Dillon describes Origen's views:

The Father alone extends his power "to lifeless things and to absolutely everything that exists," whereas the Son's power extends to all living things, both rational and irrational. The influence of the Holy Spirit, in turn, extends only to that class of rational beings which Origen's Gnostic predecessors classed as "pneumatics," those "saved" individuals endowed not only with soul but *pneuma*.⁸³

Dillon parallels this doctrine to Proclus' theory. Dillon's idea is not to show that Origen influenced Proclus—who lived two centuries later—but tentatively to demonstrate that both Origen and Proclus espoused theories about God that came from a common Platonic source. The article cannot offer a conclusive result mainly because it is difficult to reconstruct the theories of many ancient philosophers who left no written works. Dillon concludes that, "Origen's theory and Proclus' theory are applications of the same

⁸² Daniélou, 98. Trigg sees that Origen uses the pre-existence of souls as a way to explain apparent injustices in the way providence operates (Trigg, 28-9). A. van de Beek also notes that Origen used the idea of the pre-existence of souls as a way to deal with apparent discrepancies with which some are born. For example, the Bible shows God favouring Jacob over Esau before they were even born! Origen explains this as God rendering judgement on these two because of some prior act before they were born as mortal human beings (*De Prin.* 2.7-9). Van de Beek claims that Origen did not make this conclusion because of any Platonic influence but because he wished to protect the just will of God. Van de Beek's argument is hardly compelling since one cannot hope to extricate Origen from a notion which had its origin in Platonic thought. See A. van de Beek, "Origen as a Theologian of the Will" in *Reformed Review*, Vol. 51, No. 3, 1998, 249.

⁸³ John Dillon, "Origen's Doctrine of the Trinity and Some Later NeoPlatonic Theories," Chapter XXI in *The Golden Chain: Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity*, (Brookfield, Vt.: Gower, 1990), 20.

doctrine, and that this doctrine was not invented by Origen. Further than that, at the moment, I cannot go.”⁸⁴ Origen believed that if God was a creator, he must be so eternally. The implication of this idea is that the present world may be only one world in an infinite succession of created worlds.⁸⁵ The pre-existence of souls is intimately tied to Origen’s views on their fall from a state of perfection. Dillon sees Origen’s account of the Fall as both objective necessity and subjective willfulness.⁸⁶ The Fall is an objective necessity since God’s necessity to create causes some intellects to “fall” to creation. The Fall is also subjective willfulness in that some intellects simply become negligent. They do not hold perfection dearly enough and thus have it taken away from them. As Lampert writes, “Souls become negligent (1.4.1), Origen says, and because of this vanity receive bodies (1.5.3) as punishment (1.8.1) and thus begin a history of decline which descends to complete evil and materiality if not reversed by another act of will (1.8.4).”⁸⁷ The “Fall” also occurs because some have been commissioned by God to help lead the human race back to perfection.⁸⁸ The notion of pre-existent souls, their Fall, and their subsequent restoration to perfection is an influence on Origen’s concept of prayer.

Middle Platonism influenced Origen in many ways. The preceding discussion will alert the reader of Origen’s *Peri Euches* to those influences which may be discernible in this work. Furthermore, these Middle Platonic notions do indeed influence his

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸⁵ Christopher Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 87. See also Lampert, 655. Lampert refers to *Peri Archon* 1.2.10 and 2.3.5. Stead also notes that Origen may have supported the notion that human souls have previously inhabited other bodies not in this world but in previous worlds. See Stead, 88.

⁸⁶ Dillon, “Origen and Plotinus,” 25.

⁸⁷ Lampert, 657.

⁸⁸ Dillon, 25. He cites the prophets and John the Baptist as exemplars of this role.

understanding and practice of prayer in *Peri Euches*. Proof of this assertion will occur in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

THE LORD'S PRAYER INTERPRETED BY TERTULLIAN AND ORIGEN

I. Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

The previous chapter dealt with Tertullian's and Origen's notion of Scripture, their hermeneutical approach, and their philosophical presuppositions. This chapter, along with the following two, will be a comparison and contrast between Tertullian's *De Oratione* and Origen's *Peri Euches*, especially concentrating on how Scripture, hermeneutics, and philosophical presuppositions influenced each author's understanding and practice of prayer.

One of the first things to notice concerning the way in which the two authors dealt with the Lord's Prayer is in their choice of texts. Although, dissimilar from the modern Vulgate, one can see that Tertullian's text of the Lord's Prayer is based on the Matthean account of the prayer. The following table shows Tertullian's text of the Lord's Prayer as compared to the Vulgate's version. The words in boldface type indicate differences between the two texts. The significance of these differences will be discussed in the appropriate sections of this chapter.

| Tertullian's text for the Lord's Prayer | Vulgate |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Pater qui in caelis es, sanctificateur nomen tuum.</i> | <i>Pater noster qui in caelis, es sanctificetur nomen tuum.</i> |
| <i>Fiat voluntas tua in caelis et in terra.</i> | <i>Fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra.</i> |
| <i>Veniat regnum tuum.</i> | <i>Veniat regnum tuum.</i> |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie.</i> | <i>Panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie.</i> |
| <i>Dimitte nobis debita nostra [sicut] nos quoque remittimus debitoribus nostris</i> | <i>Et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimisimus debitoribus nostris</i> |
| <i>Ne nos inducas in temptationem, sed devehe nos a malo.</i> | <i>Et ne inducas nos in temptationem, sed libera nos a malo.</i> |

Tertullian does not specifically indicate a preference for Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer over Luke's at any place in this work; however, discussion in the previous chapter did draw attention to Origen's preference for apostolic writings over non-apostolic writings.¹ Origen, on the other hand, devotes the better part of four chapters to demonstrating his choice of text for the Lord's Prayer as being that one found in Matthew's Gospel.² Both of these authors chose to explore Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer. What is the reason? Is there something that Origen and Tertullian would share in common which would lend itself to favour Matthew's text. One explanation involves the practice of the Church. It has long been recognised that Matthew's account of the Lord's Prayer was the version most often used in the liturgy of worship.³ As well, as indicated above, the apostolic authorship attributed to Matthew would be a contributing factor. Thus, it is hardly surprising that both Tertullian and Origen would choose Matthew's account since it would be the version of the Lord's Prayer with which their readers would be more familiar.

¹ As well see Tertullian *Adv. Marc.* 4.2.5. "Of the apostles, therefore, John and Matthew, first instil faith into us; whilst of apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards." Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, Trans. Peter Holmes. Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Volume 7. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), 180.

² Origen's text for the Lord's Prayer is identical to that found in UBS 4th edition. In fact, manuscript evidence seems to show little variation in the wording of the Lord's Prayer. This may indicate that the wording for this prayer was standardised very early in the Gospel tradition.

³ Oscar Cullmann, *Prayer in the New Testament*, trans. John Bowden, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 39. Cullmann points out that in the *Didache* (8.2f), the text of the Lord's Prayer is Matthean with the addition of a doxology.

Despite the fact that Origen favours a study of Matthew's text, he is unwilling simply to abandon Luke's. Thus, Origen will use Luke's account throughout his treatise to help shed light on Matthew's account of the Lord's Prayer. As well, Origen's background as a grammarian is certainly evident in his opening remarks on the Lord's Prayer. After establishing Matthew's text as the one which he will favour, he then devotes chapters nineteen through twenty-one to deal with the context in which Matthew's account of the Lord's Prayer is found.⁴ Interestingly, Origen connects the "vain repetitions" in prayer against which Christ inveighed to the contrast between simplicity and multiplicity (*cf.* Matt. 6:5). His Platonic heritage championed simplicity while multiplicity was bad.⁵ Thus, "vain repetitions" reflected multiplicity and were, therefore, bad (*Peri Euches* 21.2). In this instance, one can see Origen using philosophical categories in commenting on Christ's injunction for brevity in prayer.

II. "Our Father which art in heaven"⁶

Both Tertullian and Origen identify the notion of the fatherhood of God in their

⁴ Thus, he points to Matthew 6:5-9 in *Peri Euches* 19.1: "When ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee. And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner pray ye." (Origen, "On Prayer," in John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, eds. *Alexandrian Christianity*. Library of Christian Classics. Volume 2. (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954), 276)

⁵ Plato wrote in *Republic* 4.445C, ἐν μὲν εἶναι εἶδος τῆς ἀρετῆς, ἀπειρα δὲ τῆς κακίας ("there is one form of excellence, and that the forms of evil are infinite"). See Plato, *Plato V. Republic I*, Trans. Paul Shorey. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982 reprint), 423.

⁶ Tertullian: *Pater qui in caelis es* (*De Orat.* 2.1). Origen: Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὃ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (*P.E.* 22.1)

commentary of the phrase, “Our Father which art in heaven”. Their discussions also touch upon Christ’s status as Son and the believers’ adoption as sons of God. Tertullian’s *De Oratione* 2 discusses this clause. He begins with the claim that this phrase shows adoration to God and believers’ faith in God. He then cites John 1:12 showing believers being made sons (or daughters) of God. Tertullian points out that Christ often spoke of God as Father. Father is also a title that can be ascribed to God. Finally, Tertullian uses Stoic categories of relative disposition showing that by calling God Father, believers also address the Son, since a child is implied if a father is addressed.⁷ He further specifies that in considering the Father and the Son, a mother must be understood. He understands the believer’s mother to be the Church. This description of the Church falls within the Stoic notion of relational disposition wherein the characteristic of a certain thing is described in relation to something else rather than some quality inherent within the object itself.⁸ Here we see Tertullian’s very high view of the Church within the context of the lives of believers. This work predates Tertullian’s subsequent Montanist allegiance; however, even as a Montanist Tertullian would not have denigrated the importance of the Church in

⁷ One may with some justification argue that this notion is not Stoic so much as it is an idea present in the New Testament (i.e., Jesus addressed God as Father in prayer, Mk. 14:36; Paul, Rom. 8:15); however, the notion that the Church is the believer’s mother goes beyond the scope of the New Testament familial relation and seems to indicate some Stoic overtones in Tertullian’s description of the relational disposition between Father and Son.

⁸ E. Zeller defines relative disposition (*πρός τι πως ἔχον*) as “those features and states which are purely relative—such as right and left, sonship and fatherhood, etc.” See E. Zeller, *The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, Trans. Oswald Reichel (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892), 108. Zeller cites extensively in his footnotes from Simplicius who discussed this concept in his commentary on Aristotle’s *On Categories* (cf. Simplicius, *Cat.* 16, d and 42, e). Plotinus lists this concept among the four Stoic categories in his *Ennead* 6.1.25. Plotinus, being a Neoplatonist, does not view these categories favourably. J. M. Rist offers a lucid discussion on these categories in his book. In his discussion of relative disposition, he writes, “Relative dispositions are the relations of an individual thing to other individual things which are associated with it in the world, but on which its continuing existence as an entity does not depend.... We can recognize a man’s existence without knowing that he is a father. If his children die, he ceases to be a

the lives of believers.⁹ As his mind turned to ever more legalistic routes, it was the Church that was the primary body of discipline to ensure holy living.¹⁰

Origen does not draw the Church into his discussion of the first phrase in the Lord's Prayer. In fact, even on points in which he and Tertullian seem to address the same issue, his approach is different. Whereas Tertullian reminds his readers that Christ often referred to God as Father, Origen instead examines the Old Testament for evidence of God being addressed as Father in prayer. Thus in his *Peri Euches* 22.1, he writes, "It is worth while examining with unusual care the Old Testament, as it is called, to see if it is possible to find anywhere in it a prayer in which someone calls God 'Father.' He writes, "Though we searched to the best of our ability, up to the present we have found none."¹¹ Origen, in apparent contradiction, then proceeds to mention that God is referred to as Father at numerous places in the Old Testament but a clear "firm and unchangeable affirmation of sonship" (22.2) is lacking from the Old Testament. Origen then cites John 1:12, among other passages, as an indication of a new permanent sonship to those who believe. Origen describes the adoption of believers in a very Platonic way; although he does use biblical passages. He writes, "The saints, therefore, being 'an image' of an

father (fatherhood being a relative disposition). He does not cease to exist, but, instead of being a father, he is an ex-father." J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 170.

⁹ David Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chapter 2. Rankin argues that the Montanist movement was more of a faction within the overall Church, at least in North Africa. He compares it to the modern charismatic movement which engenders smaller groups within a larger congregation. Rankin not only shows places in Tertullian's Montanist works in which he still refers to members of the Catholic Church inclusively (*cf. De Exhor. Castit.* 12.1, 5). He also points out that Cyprian, "the arch-foe of schismatic and heretic alike", would probably not regard Tertullian as his "Master" had Tertullian broke with the Catholic Church.

¹⁰ For example, Tertullian's *De Pudicitia*, written after his subsequent allegiance to Montanism, makes mention of the three unforgiveable sins (*peccata irremissibilia*)—idolatry, fornication, and murder (*De Pud.* 2); whereas his earlier work, *De Paenitentia*, made no distinction between forgivable and unforgiveable sins.

¹¹ Origen, "On Prayer," 280. (*P.E.* 22.1)

image (that image being the Son), acquire an impression of sonship, becoming ‘conformed’ not only ‘to the body of glory’ of Christ, but also to him who is ‘in the body’.”¹² Such Platonic language helps define the new sort of relationship between God and believers—thus providing a rationale for Christian prayer. Origen finishes chapter 22 with a very practical call to prayer as it is related to life in general. He cites 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (praying without ceasing) as an encouragement for all believers that their whole lives should say “Our Father which art in heaven” as an indication of their citizenship in heaven (22.5).

This reference to heaven then leads Origen into a discussion of what is meant by ‘heaven’. Chapter 23 of *Peri Euches* is a place in which Origen dismisses the anthropomorphisms attributed to God in the Bible showing his hermeneutic of moving from the literal meaning of a text to its spiritual meaning. In 23.1 he notes the problem of saying that the Father is in heaven. He writes, “But when ‘the Father’ of the saints is said to be ‘in heaven,’ we are not to suppose that he is circumscribed in bodily fashion and dwells ‘in heaven’; otherwise, if the heaven contained him, God would be found less than, because contained by, the heaven.”¹³ Origen sees the literal meaning of the text to be nonsense. God does not have a body nor can God be spatially localised. The notion that God is immaterial is also present in *Peri Euches*. In 22.3 Origen is discussing

¹² *Ibid.*, 282. (*P.E.* 22.4) These references to images (εἰκῶν) and a hierarchy of beings seems to reflect a certain Platonic notion of God, the demiurge, and the created world (*cf.* Numenius’ theory of the three gods, see chapter 2 above). The ideal is that those in the created realm are seeking to return to their pristine state by being transformed into the image of God. This notion should not be overemphasised, at least in this place, since there are some very biblical notions of being perfected—or sanctified—as one grows in the maturity of one’s faith as one becomes more Christlike. This may simply be a place where biblical ideas of sanctification have certain parallels with Platonic notions of the ascent of the soul. The difference between the two, however, is the Platonic denigration of the material realm; whereas, the biblical view would affirm the goodness of all of creation as God had intended it.

whether God can be said to be in a location spatially. Origen reasons that if God can be in a place he must have a body as well. He argues against such a notion since it leads “to most impious opinions, namely, to suppose that he is divisible, material, corruptible.”¹⁴ For Origen, God must be simple. Henri Crouzel notes in *Peri Euches* 21.2 that Origen extends a preference for simplicity from the sphere of God’s essence to morality. Crouzel writes, “Pour Origène comme pur Plotin l’unité est la marque du bien, la multiplicité celle du mal et de l’erreur.”¹⁵ This desire to affirm God’s immateriality and simpleness is another example of Middle Platonic doctrines in *Peri Euches*. The notion that God is immaterial and simple is an important idea for Origen as it relates to his idea and practice of prayer in *Peri Euches*. The way in which one conceives of God influences how one will address him in prayer. God’s simpleness implied a certain steadfastness in his nature and his immateriality implied his strictly spiritual nature.

Origen expounds upon this idea that God cannot be spatially located by referring to Jesus’ words that he was going to the Father (e.g. John 14:28; 16:5). Origen then defines what he thinks Jesus intends when he is saying that he is returning to the Father. He writes:

These sayings do not conceive of a local departure of the Father and the Son to him who loves the word of Jesus, nor are they to be taken in a local sense. But the Word of God, condescending for our sakes and being ‘humbled,’ as concerning his own dignity, when he is among men, is said to ‘depart out of this world to the Father,’ in order that we also may behold

¹³ *Ibid.*, 283. (*P.E.* 23.1)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 284. (*P.E.* 22.3)

¹⁵ Henri Crouzel, *Origène et la Philosophie*, (Paris: Aubier, 1962), 109. Origen writes, “Virtue is one, vice is many; truth is one, falsehood is many; the wisdom of God is one; the wisdoms ‘of this world,’ and ‘of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought’ are many; the word of God is one, those who are estranged from God are many.” (Origen, “On Prayer,” 279—*P.E.* 21.2) See also Peter Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 16.

him there in his perfection, returning again to his own 'fulness,' after the emptiness wherewith he 'emptied himself' when he was with us."¹⁶

Origen thus uses the idea of Christ returning to his proper glory as an indication of what will be the reality for believers. They, too, will be made full and delivered from their emptiness. Finally, Origen relates what he sees as the proper import of Jesus' return—and consequently the Christian's—to the Father when he refers to John 20:17:

'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father,' let us seek to conceive of it in a mystical sense: the ascent of the Son 'unto the Father,' when conceived of by us with holy insight in a manner befitting Deity, is an ascent of the mind rather than of the body.¹⁷

So Origen started with a literal reading of a text. He found that the literal meaning did not render a satisfactory conclusion. He then proceeded to examine what Jesus may have intended by referring to his return to the Father concluding that Jesus intended his return to his divine fullness. Origen further determined that such an ascension was not one of the body but of the mind. So Origen has moved from the world of the text to the world of the hearer and has provided a spiritual interpretation of the individual's return to the Father. In subsequent sections Origen further discusses what is intended when one says God is in heaven. He moves on to a more spiritual interpretation whenever the Bible speaks in human terms of God. In 23.5 he writes:

So we have added from the Old Testament also a few sayings which are considered to show that God is in a place, in order that we may persuade the reader by every means 'according to the power' given unto 'us' to understand the divine Scripture in a loftier and more spiritual sense, whenever it seems to teach that God is in a place. And it was fitting to examine these passages in connection with the words: 'Our Father which art in heaven'—words which separate the essence of God from all created things. For to those who do not partake [of his essence] there appertains a

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 283-4 (P.E. 23.2)

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 284. (P.E. 23.2)

certain divine glory and power, and—so to speak—an effluence of his deity.¹⁸

So here is a place in which Origen's hermeneutic is shown. He discusses the literal meaning of a text. Ultimately he rejects this meaning as absurd and then proceeds to a spiritual understanding. Origen concludes that by affirming that God is a Father in heaven, people who say the Lord's Prayer are actually using words "which separate the essence of God from all created things."¹⁹ Origen thus affirms the transcendent nature of the Father. His hermeneutic has revealed God's real nature. As well, one should note that *Peri Euches* 23 has nine references to John's Gospel. This spiritual Gospel seems to be a favourite choice of Origen's for discussing a spiritual interpretation of Christ's ascent and the non-material nature of God all of which contribute to his concept and practice of prayer. Once believers amend the way they think about God, they are better able to pray and more prepared for the elevation of their minds back to perfection.

III. "Hallowed by thy name"²⁰

Tertullian and Origen place great significance on the idea of God's name. For Tertullian, the name that God revealed to Moses is altogether different from the name with which Christians have come to know God. Tertullian sees God's name as "Father." Again, using the notion of relative disposition Tertullian writes, "Before the Son [came] the name of the Father did not exist."²¹ Using such texts as John 17:6 ("I have manifested

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 286. (*P.E.* 23.5)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 286. (*P.E.* 23.5)

²⁰ Tertullian: *Sanctificetur nomen tuum* (*De Orat.* 3.4). Origen: Ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου (*P.E.* 24.1)

²¹ Tertullian, "Prayer," trans. Emily Joseph Daly in *Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works*, (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1959), 160. (*De Orat.* 3.1)

thy name to men”), Tertullian shows that Christ has revealed God’s name as Father. Origen also sees God’s name as important since a person’s (or being’s) name manifests a quality of the person being named. He cites the name changes in the Bible which show a change in individual quality—Abraam becomes Abraham, Simon becomes Peter, Saul becomes Paul (*Peri Euches* 24.2). With respect to naming God, Origen seems to show some parallels with Middle Platonic thought. Widdicombe notes that from Philo onwards the τὸ ὄν of Plato’s *Timaeus* is equated with ὁ ὄν (“he who is”) as a reference to God. He further specifies that “Origen frequently uses ὁ ὄν to describe God, and he uses it exclusively of God.”²² So in *Peri Euches* 24.2 Origen writes, “In the case of God, however, who is in himself unchangeable, and remaining always unalterable, there is always one name, by which, as it were, he is called, the ‘I am’ spoken of in Exodus, or something of similar import.”²³ This quotation from *Peri Euches* also shows the Platonic notion of the immutability of God. This notion of immutability seems to be in stark contrast to Tertullian’s idea that God has revealed himself anew in Jesus Christ with the new name of Father.

Are these two seemingly contradictory statements reconcilable? The perspective of each author helps in determining a partial solution. Tertullian is trying to name God as human beings relate to him. Thus, he is absolutely correct in asserting that God has the new name of Father for those who have been adopted by him. Origen is not making a statement about how God relates to people. Instead, he is showing the permanent nature of God’s individual quality. Within the notion of God’s name not changing, Origen is

²² Widdicombe, 28-9.

affirming the Platonic notion of God's immutability.²⁴ The unchanging nature of God is an ethical statement just as his discussion of biblical characters and their name changes seem to indicate an ethical change in those individuals. So Tertullian is addressing his reader's progress in knowledge of God while Origen is addressing the nature of God himself. This contrast of continuity and discontinuity will be a frequent theme in the comparison of *Peri Euches* and *De Oratione*. Origen's stress on God's unchanging nature influences his theory of prayer. Tertullian, conversely, in highlighting that God has revealed a new name for himself also makes an impact on his understanding of prayer.

Next, both authors address the nature of what it means to "hallow" God's name.²⁵ Tertullian recognises the absurdity of the notion that mere mortals need wish God well as if God lacked something upon which he relied for humanity to supply him. Tertullian implicitly highlights a point which Origen draws out more fully. In Tertullian's *De Oratione* 3.2, he writes, "*non quod deceat homines bene Deo optare.*"²⁶ Origen in his *Peri Euches* 24.5 points out that some writers, notably Tatian, have taken the imperative mood expressed in prayers to reflect the more ancient practice of expressing wishes using the optative mood.²⁷ Origen decries such a notion that God would *wish* for something

²³ Origen, "On Prayer," 287. (*P.E.* 24.2)

²⁴ John Sanders affirms that Origen supported the traditional Platonic notions concerning God as being impassible, immutable, uncreated, simple, all-powerful and all-knowing. See John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 143.

²⁵ The Latin word is *sanctificetur*, the Greek word is ἀγιασθήτω.

²⁶ Tertullian, *De Oratione*, in *Opera Catholica*. Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. Vol. 1, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954), 259. Daly's translation of this sentence is "not that it would be the proper thing for men to wish God well," 160.

²⁷ The optative mood occurs fewer than 70 times in the New Testament. Its use in the Hellenistic world had become drastically curtailed as its functions were assimilated mostly by the subjunctive mood, although there were elements of the optative usage reflected in occurrences of the imperative. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 480.

rather than *command* something to be. So in the creation account when God said “let there be light”, God was not expressing a desire that there should be light because he was in darkness but instead was making a divine fiat. So both Tertullian and Origen reject the notion that when those who pray ask God to hallow his name, they do not intend that God lacks anything nor wishes for anything. God does not pray (express wishes), God commands. What then is the intention when one asks that God’s name be hallowed? Tertullian writes concerning this question, “We are asking that it be sanctified in us who are in Him, as well as in all other men for whom the grace of God is still waiting.”²⁸ Tertullian is thus focusing on an internal manifestation of God’s holiness in his people. Since Tertullian’s writing seems to be addressed to the Church, the gathering of believers, he is probably not intending an individualistic understanding of God’s holiness being made manifest. However, the statement is wonderfully ambiguous so that it could be understood corporately as well as individualistically. Origen, on the other hand, gives a decidedly existential orientation to God’s name being hallowed.²⁹ Origen links hallowing God’s name with exulting his name. Thus Origen writes in 24.4:

For this is to “exult the name” of God “together,” when a man partaking of an effluence of deity “exalts” that very power of God which he has partaken inasmuch as he has been raised up by God and has conquered his foes, who are unable to exult over his fall. This is indicated in the twenty-ninth psalm by the words: “I will exalt thee, O Lord, because thou didst raise me up, and not make my foes to rejoice over me.” And a man “exalts” God when he has dedicated for him a house within himself, as the

²⁸ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 161. (*De Orat.* 3.4)

²⁹ The present author realises that the term *existential* is anachronistic when applied to Origen. However, Robert Daly’s article has much to commend its conclusion that Origen did offer existential interpretations. See Robert Daly, “The Hermeneutics of Origen: Existential Interpretation in the Third Century” in Richard J. Clifford and George W. MacRae, eds. *The Word in the World: Essays in Honor of Frederick L. Moriarty*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Weston College Press, 1973), 135-143

title of the psalm has it: "A Psalm: A Song at the Dedication of the House"; A Psalm of "David."³⁰

This notion of hallowing God's name in Origen's *Peri Euches* is decidedly individualistic and internal to the believer. Origen's individualism shows a concern for individual prayer and the relationship of a believer with God. This is a strong statement on his concept and practice of prayer.

IV. "Thy kingdom come"³¹

In Tertullian's account of the Lord's Prayer, he reverses the order of this clause with the one that usually follows it, "Thy will be done in heaven and on earth." Tertullian gives no indication that such a reversal has taken place. There are, therefore, two options left to explain this apparent error. Tertullian could have simply metathesised these two lines, forgetting which order they usually followed. The second explanation may involve the text upon which Tertullian was basing his discussion. Perhaps in the versions of the Bible available to him, these two lines had been switched. Whatever the reason, the discussion will follow the order of "Thy kingdom come" followed by "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth".

In the discussion of this clause, Tertullian has a decidedly eschatological focus. He begins with the notion of God's kingdom coming in his people referring to Proverbs 21:1, "For, when does God not reign, 'in whose hand is the heart of every king'?"³² Notice that Tertullian is defining God's kingdom not in spatial terms but in ethical terms.

³⁰ Origen, "On Prayer," 287-8. (*P.E.* 24.4)

³¹ Tertullian: *Veniat regnum tuum* (*De Orat.* 5.1). Origen: Ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου (*P.E.* 25.1)

³² Tertullian, "Prayer," 163. (*De Orat.* 5.1)

God's kingdom is where his rule is made manifest. Tertullian turns this inward "now" experience to an eschatological focus when he claims, "we direct our hope toward Him, and we attribute to Him what we expect from Him."³³ What is that which believers expect of God? It is the coming of his kingdom which "tends toward the consummation of the world" (*De Oratione* 5.1). Thus, Tertullian sees the Christian's hope in God's kingdom coming sooner rather than later. Tertullian's focus on the kingdom being made manifest in some end time bears slender parallels with the Stoic notion of a final conflagration. The chief difference between the two is that the Christian notion of the end still retains the individuality of persons and the continuation of creation, albeit in a modified form; whereas, the Stoic conflagration meant the destruction or melting down of the created order. This conflagration entailed the destruction of any personal consciences.

Origen's view on this clause is different. Instead of an eschatological focus, Origen focuses on Christ's statements in Luke 17:20-21 about the kingdom of God being within believers. Thus, Origen defines the coming kingdom in this way, "And I think that by God's kingdom is meant the blessed state of the reason and the ordered condition of wise thoughts; while by Christ's kingdom is meant the words that go forth for the salvation of those who hear them and the works of righteousness and the other virtues which are being accomplished."³⁴ Origen's discussion on the coming kingdom is fraught with Platonic notion of the ascent of the soul from its fallen state back to perfection. Although Origen views the kingdom as decidedly immanent and spiritual he does not

³³ *Ibid.*, 163. (*De Orat.* 5.1)

³⁴ Origen, "On Prayer," 289. (*P.E.* 25.1)

believe that it is fully realised in believers. He writes in *Peri Euches* 25.2, “As we advance unceasingly ‘the kingdom of God’ that is in us will reach its highest point, when that which was spoken by the apostle is fulfilled, that Christ, when all enemies ‘have been subjected unto him,’ shall ‘deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.’”³⁵ So one sees the two foci of the kingdom which are held in tension by theologians to the present day: the kingdom is already here; yet it is not fully realised. Origen stresses its present/future nature while Tertullian focuses more upon its consummation. Origen’s notion of the kingdom certainly affects his concept of prayer in that the individual believer can seek through prayer to have Christ’s reign in his or her own life brought to complete fruition. Tertullian’s notion of an eschatological kingdom also shows influence on his understanding of prayer in that he sees this clause of the Lord’s Prayer directing believers towards future fulfilment.

V. “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth”³⁶

Since Tertullian places this clause before the previous one in his account of the Lord’s Prayer, he misses the point to which Origen draws attention. Origen sees the clause “as in heaven, so on earth” as applying to the first three petitions. Thus, Origen writes, “Hallowed be thy name, as in heaven, so on earth; Thy kingdom come, as in heaven, so on earth; Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.”³⁷ There are two major

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 290 (*P.E.* 25.2)

³⁶ Tertullian: *Fiat voluntas tua in caelis et in terra*. Origen: Γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς.

³⁷ Origen, “On Prayer,” 292. (*P.E.* 26.2)

issues in this petition. The first concerns the nature of the will of God. The second addresses what the phrase “as in heaven, so on earth” actually means.

One should recall that the Stoics placed great importance on virtue, as did Tertullian. It should hardly be surprising then that Tertullian makes reference to following the teachings of Christ. In *De Oratione* 4.2, one reads, “Now, what does God will but that we walk according to His teachings?”, the fullness of which is the salvation of all those God “has adopted as His children.”³⁸ Tertullian also holds up Christ as one who perfectly lived within the Father’s will. Furthermore, when believers ask that God’s will be done they are wishing well on themselves since God’s will is perfect. Tertullian concludes that God’s will does not exclude those living in it from adversity—Christ, in fact suffered terribly though he was in God’s perfect will—instead this petition calls believers to “patient endurance” (*De Oratione* 4.5). Also Osborn has noted Tertullian’s fondness for paradox and sees an example of it in *De Oratione* 4.5.³⁹ For example Tertullian writes, “He [Jesus] Himself was the will and power of the Father, yet He surrendered Himself to the will of His Father to indicate the patient endurance which is rightly due.”⁴⁰ This is indeed a paradox, the one who had divine prerogatives became subject to the divine. Is this an example of Stoic influence or the sort of paradox reflected by Philippians 2:5-11? Ultimately, one has to determine whether the Philippians passage is indebted to Stoic paradox or is simply a parallel of the sort of Stoic love of paradox common throughout the ancient world. Whatever one concludes on this particular point, overall it becomes apparent that Tertullian’s understanding of God’s will affects his

³⁸ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 162. (*De Orat.* 4.2)

³⁹ Osborn, *Tertullian First Theologian of the West*, 144.

notion of prayer since he tells believers to pray for endurance in suffering rather than deliverance from it.

Origen provides what he sees as the nature of God's will when he writes:

[E]very member of the Church ought to pray that he may so achieve 'the' Father's 'will' as Christ achieved it, who came to 'do the will' of his Father and 'accomplished' it in its entirety. For it is possible by being 'joined unto' him to become 'one spirit' with him, in this way achieving 'the will,' in order that 'as' it has been accomplished 'in heaven,' so it may also be accomplished 'on earth.'⁴¹

So for Origen, the will of God is that people become Christlike. Origen's language connotes more of a mystical joining of the believer to Christ rather than a mimetic relationship of the believer to Christ. Origen would have believers ask for union with Christ rather than the forbearance to endure and follow in Christ's way.

Both Tertullian and Origen engage in allegory to explain what the Lord's Prayer means by "as in heaven, so on earth." Tertullian thus writes, "For, by a figure of speech, under the symbol of flesh and spirit we represent heaven and earth."⁴² He, however, is quick to note that even a literal reading would give a similar meaning to the petition. In this place in *De Oratione*, O' Malley points out that Tertullian sometimes offers a deep interpretation and then proceeds to show that the simple reading of a text is preferable.⁴³ Thus in discussing the meaning of "thy will be done in heaven and on earth", Tertullian reasons that "even if this [phrase] is to be understood literally, the sense of the petition is the same, namely, that the will of God be done in us on earth, in order that it may be done [by us] also in heaven. Now what does God will but that we walk according to His

⁴⁰ Tertullian, "Prayer," 162. (*De Orat.* 4.5)

⁴¹ Origen, "On Prayer," 292-3. (*P.E.* 26.3)

⁴² Tertullian, "Prayer," 161. (*De Orat.* 4.1)

teaching?”⁴⁴ This is the plain, sensible reading of the dominical phrase. This passage is a good example of Tertullian’s literal exegesis in that he shows a preference for the literal sense of Scripture over its spiritual sense. Tertullian sees heaven and earth as referring to two aspects of human beings, the mundane and the spiritual.

On the other hand, Origen’s problem with God’s will being done in heaven as on earth stems from the notion that heaven itself still contains “spiritual hosts of wickedness.”⁴⁵ So Origen adopts an allegorical interpretation to make sense of what seems a nonsensical understanding of this petition. He allegorises *heaven* to mean Christ and *earth* to mean the Church. So now the petition makes more sense when understood this way. As God’s will is done in Christ, so it should be done in the Church. This interpretation does not fit within Origen’s typical individualistic interpretations and so it should be noted. In further reflection, Origen also notes that in this petition Christ is urging believers not to pray for earthly things which are inferior, but that earthly things should be made better. His logic is very interesting at this point. It betrays a certain Stoic flavour to it. One should recall the first Stoic argument of logic: if the first, then the second; the first, therefore, the second.⁴⁶ In this case the first proposition is “the will of God on an earthly thing”, the second proposition is “the transformation from earthly to heavenly”. The following quotation shows a few such deductions:

⁴³ O’Malley, 169.

⁴⁴ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 161-2 (*De Orat.* 4.2) The words used by Tertullian to designate a literal understanding are *simpliciter intellegendum*.

⁴⁵ Origen, “On Prayer,” 292. (*P.E.* 26.3). In this Origen refers to Ephesians 6:12 which states, “For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (NRSV)

⁴⁶ Robert H. Ayers, *Language, Logic, and Reason in the Church Fathers: A Study of Tertullian, Augustine, and Aquinas*, *Altertumswissenschaftliche Texte und Studien*. Band VI. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1979), 17. Ayers labels this Stoic argument *modus ponens*.

For if, according to this interpretation, the ‘will’ of God is so ‘done on earth as is in heaven,’ the earth will not remain earth. To take a clearer example. If the ‘will’ of God were to be ‘done’ for the licentious as it had been ‘done’ for the temperate, the licentious will be temperate; or if the ‘will’ of God were so to be ‘done’ for the unjust as it had been ‘done’ for the just, the unjust will be just. Therefore, if the ‘will’ of God is ‘done on earth as in heaven,’ we shall all be ‘heaven’: for ‘the flesh,’ which does ‘not profit,’ ‘and blood,’ which is akin to it, ‘cannot inherit the kingdom of God,’ but they would be said to inherit it, were they to change from flesh and earth and dust and blood to the heavenly substance.⁴⁷

So Tertullian and Origen conceived of heaven and earth in different ways. Tertullian saw these two notions reflecting two parts of human nature (the material and the spiritual) whereas Origen saw heaven reflecting both Christ and Christlikeness while earth represented the Church as well as inferior, material things. Origen’s hermeneutic and philosophical understandings have influenced his concept of prayer. He sees praying for God’s will in heaven as on earth as a request for transformation from the earthly to the heavenly. In contrast, Tertullian’s hermeneutic has played a major part in determining the meaning of this passage. Consequently his understanding of prayer is influenced in that heaven and earth are simply states-of-being that believers must be concerned about in prayer.

VI. “Give us this day our daily bread”⁴⁸

Of any section in the Lord’s Prayer, this petition seemingly shows the greatest diversity in treatment by Origen and Tertullian. Tertullian deals with this section in a

⁴⁷ Origen, “On Prayer,” 294-5. (P.E. 26.6) One should recall that Middle Platonism is an amalgam of various philosophies. Stoic allegory influenced Origen as did Stoic logic (See Ronald Heine’s “Stoic Logic as Handmaid to Exegesis in Origen’s Commentary on the Gospel of John”)

⁴⁸ Tertullian: *panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie* (*De Orat.* 6.2); Origen: τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον (P.E. 27.1)

compact, laconic manner. Origen, on the other hand, seems to exercise his training as a grammarian here in a comprehensive manner. Whereas Origen seems to want to plunge into the depths of the curious word ἐπιούσιον; Tertullian passes over its Latin equivalent, *quotidianum*, without comment. This Greek word, which is very rare, has been problematic to many scholars.⁴⁹ Tertullian was most likely aware of the Greek version of this prayer—given his fluency in Greek⁵⁰—why does he not deal with the thorny issue of this word? Perhaps he does. In *De Oratione* 6.2 he writes, “Therefore, when we ask for our daily [*quotidianum*] bread, we are asking to live forever in Christ and to be inseparably united with his body.”⁵¹ There is most likely some importance attached to the wording of the prayer here wherein Tertullian uses *quotidianum* rather than *supersubstantialis*. *Quotidianum* appears to stress the ongoing provision by God for the needs of his people. Tertullian seems to be saying that he understands Christ as the source of eternal life and the bread mentioned in this petition is Christ himself. Hanson also notes Tertullian takes “Give us this day our daily bread” to mean Christ who is the bread of life.⁵² This is a clear example of allegory. Is this understanding fundamentally different from Origen?

Origen links ἐπιούσιον with the word οὐσία (*Peri Euches* 27.7). Stead has noted that Origen’s discussion of *ousia* in *Peri Euches* 27.8 parallels that of Philo and

⁴⁹ ἐπιούσιον is a *hapax legomena*. Its etymological derivation is questionable. Cullmann discusses the meaning of this word in his book (52–4). He concludes that the word most likely means “for tomorrow” but notes that Jerome translated it as *supersubstantialis* (i.e. supernatural). The notion of supernatural bread took on a Eucharistic connotation. See Cullmann, 52–4.

⁵⁰ Adhémar d’Alès. *La Théologie de Tertullien*. 2e éd. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1905), 231. d’Alès writes about Tertullian, “Il possédait fort bien le grec, puisqu’il était capable d’écrire des livres en cette langue; et il s’en servait pour l’étude de l’Écriture sainte.”

⁵¹ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 164. (*De Orat.* 6.2)

Middle Platonist writers.⁵³ Origen contrasts two different notions of *ousia*. The first he mentions is the Platonic notion of forms. He writes, “The word ‘substance’ (*ousia*) in its proper sense is commonly used of incorporeal things by those who maintain that the reality of incorporeal things is primary, such things having stable existence, not admitting of addition nor suffering diminution.”⁵⁴ However, Origen also points to the Stoic notion of the *ousia*—that being a material notion. Origen thus writes about such a concept of *ousia*:

[For them] substance is the prime matter of existents, and the source of existents; the matter of bodies, and the source of bodies; of things named; or it is the first substrate, without quality, or the antecedents of existents; or that which receives all changes or alterations but it is itself subject to no alteration according to the proper notion of the term; or else that which persists through all alteration or change.⁵⁵

Stead points out that in the discussion in *Peri Euches* 27.8, Origen does not use *ousia* in its normally understood sense but instead uses it as a “mass term.” So Stead writes, “One is considering, on the one hand, the realm of intelligible realities taken as a whole, and on the other, corporeal reality, taken again as a whole.”⁵⁶ Does Origen prefer one or the other of these ideas here? One must recall that Origen tends to favour the spiritual meaning of a text. In fact, he refers to some passages in John 6 which he claims that Christ urges his audience to seek bread from heaven.⁵⁷ So in *Peri Euches* 27.9 Origen

⁵² Hanson, “Notes and Studies”, 274.

⁵³ Christopher Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 164.

⁵⁴ Origen, “On Prayer,” 298. (*P.E.* 27.8)

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 299. (*P.E.* 27.8)

⁵⁶ Stead, 164.

⁵⁷ Origen refers to John 6:24-58 in *Peri Euches* 27.2-4. In this story the crowds who have been fed by Jesus seek to make him their king. Jesus replies that they need bread from heaven, which he equates with himself. This passage juxtaposes the spiritual concerns expressed by Jesus with the material concerns of the crowd. Origen thus adopts Jesus’ spiritual interest when he discusses this clause from the Lord’s Prayer.

writes, “we have shown that the different meanings of *ousia* are to be distinguished, and since in the preceding discussion we saw that the ‘bread’ for which we are to ask is ‘spiritual’, we must needs form a conception of the *ousia* which is akin to that of the ‘bread.’”⁵⁸ Origen tends to favour an immaterial understanding of spirit as was shown above with respect to his conception of God, thus one may tentatively conclude that Origen leans more toward the Platonic notion of *ousia* here.⁵⁹

For Origen, the ἐπιούσιον bread nourishes those who partake of it spiritually. Origen writes in *Peri Euches* 27.9 about this bread, “it provides at once health and vigour and strength to the soul and imparts a share of its own immortality (for the word of God is immortal) to him who eats it.”⁶⁰ Thus far, Tertullian and Origen seem to be in agreement in that both see this ἐπιούσιον bread as providing eternal life. Does Origen also see Christ as this ἐπιούσιον bread? It would appear that Origen affirms this notion as well because he quotes John 6:58 with approval in *Peri Euches* 27.4. One difference that is apparent in their treatment of this petition is their understanding of *daily* (*hodie/σήμερον*). Tertullian does not really mention this word at all, but it seems to have a temporal significance (i.e., a twenty-four hour period). Origen, however, connects *today* with the notion of the present age.⁶¹ Although his discussion on the present age

⁵⁸ Origen, “On Prayer,” 299. (*P.E.* 27.9)

⁵⁹ Although Henri Crouzel points out with regard to this issue: “Origène ne se prononce pas ici clairement entre ces deux conceptions. See Crouzel, 22. Peter Widdicombe thinks that Origen leans towards the Platonic notion of *ousia* here (See Widdicombe, 17).

⁶⁰ Origen, “On Prayer,” 300. (*P.E.* 27.9)

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 302. (*P.E.* 27.13) Here Origen writes, “It is a frequent custom in the Scriptures to call the whole age ‘today’.”

invariably leads him to discuss coming ages;⁶² it is clear that Origen connects *today* with the nourishment from ἐπιούσιον bread, which is sufficient for eternal life and union with Christ.

Now that these details have been discussed, one should consider the overall interpretation of this petition by Tertullian and Origen. Tertullian sees divine wisdom in the ordering of this prayer so that heavenly concerns are thus followed by earthly concerns. One need not assume that the emphasis on earthly concerns necessarily presumes a material focus. Tertullian writes that this petition should be understood “in a spiritual sense.”⁶³ This spiritual sense was mentioned above; namely, that this request for daily bread is actually a request for eternal life and the indivisibility from Christ’s body. Christ’s body probably refers to the Church.⁶⁴ Although he interprets this passage spiritually, his discussion of some parables show a literal reading of the Bible. Thus he writes in *De Oratione* 6.3 concerning the way in which this petition is to be understood:

Christ commands that we ask for bread, which, for the faithful, is the only thing necessary, for the pagans seek all other things. Thus, too, He impresses his teaching by examples and He instructs by parables, saying, for example: “Does a father take bread from his children and cast it to the dogs?” And again: “If his son asks him for a loaf, will he hand him a stone?” He indicates what children expect from their father. That caller, too, who knocked upon the door in the night was asking for bread.⁶⁵

⁶² See *Peri Euches* 27.15. One should recall the Platonic notion of future worlds here. Origen seems to be raising this idea. Perhaps, though, Origen is simply referring to different stages in God’s relationship with humanity (i.e. the Mosaic dispensation followed by the age of Christ).

⁶³ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 164. (*De Orat.* 6.2)

⁶⁴ The reason for this supposition finds its support in *De Oratione* 2.6 where Tertullian mentions the Church as a Mother. Tertullian is using another common image of the Church as the body of Christ. Rankin’s book argues for Tertullian’s strong theology of the Church. He writes in the concluding chapter of his book, “We have seen how he maintained a consistent position on the necessary unity, holiness and apostolicity of the authentic church—the question of catholicity is perhaps another matter—employing a number of images which, *inter alia*, underlined these notes of the true church.” (Rankin, 199)

⁶⁵ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 164-5. Tertullian is referring to the parables recorded in Matthew 15:26; 7:9; and Luke 11:5.

One must recall that for Tertullian, the literal reading meant that he would read certain genres with certain expectations. Thus Tertullian refers to a number of Jesus' teachings and parables.⁶⁶ Tertullian recognises that parables were stories intended to convey a deeper meaning. The reason that this should be regarded as a simple reading is that Tertullian does not read a spiritual meaning into a text, he simply recognises that this genre will have a deeper meaning. Tertullian's hermeneutic and text are both important factors in his concept of prayer. *Quotidianum* rather than *supersubstantialim* indicates a daily relying on God. His allegorical interpretation of the phrase bolstered by parables—which by definition reflect a deeper meaning—support a renunciation of a material sense to this petition.

Origen views a materialistic interpretation of this petition with disapproval. In *Peri Euches* 27.1 he writes, “Since some suppose that we are told to pray concerning material bread, it is right to refute here their false opinion and to establish the truth concerning ‘the daily bread’.”⁶⁷ Thus, the spiritual interpretation of this petition as detailed above is hardly surprising. For Origen, it is not the body which needs nourishment, but the soul. He writes, “But what is more nourishing to the soul than the Word, and what is more precious to the mind of him who makes room for it than the

⁶⁶ *De Orat.* 6.3: He [Jesus] impresses His teaching by examples and He instructs by parables, saying for example: ‘Does a father take bread from his children and cast it to the dogs?’ And again: ‘If his son asks him for a loaf, will he hand him a stone?’ He indicates what children expect from their father. That caller, too, who knocked upon the door in the night was asking for bread. Moreover, He has rightly added: ‘Give us this day’ in view of what He had previously said: ‘Do not be anxious about tomorrow, what you shall eat.’ To this idea He also referred in the parable of that man who, when his crops were plentiful, laid plans for an addition to his barns and a long-range program of security—though he was destined to die that very night.”

⁶⁷ Origen, “On Prayer,” 295. (*P.E.* 27.1)

Wisdom of God? And what is more appropriate to the rational soul than truth?”⁶⁸ This is a place in which Origen’s philosophical presuppositions influence his notion of prayer. People do not pray for material benefit but for spiritual feeding.

VII. “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”⁶⁹

Tertullian deals with this petition in a very straightforward manner; whereas Origen considers it from various aspects. Tertullian points out that the word *debt* (*debita*) is a biblical analogy for sin since, “when a man owes something to a judge and payment is exacted from him, he does not escape the just demand unless excused from the payment of the debt.”⁷⁰ Origen focuses on the notion of debts meaning that people owe things to various people. Thus, Origen sees that the believer owes a debt to fellow Christians (*P.E.* 28.2); to fellow citizens (*P.E.* 28.2); to all people (*P.E.* 28.2); to himself or herself (*P.E.* 28.2); to God (*P.E.* 28.3); to Christ (*P.E.* 28.3); to the Holy Spirit (*P.E.* 28.3); to one’s own personal angel (*P.E.* 28.3); and, to the whole world (*P.E.* 28.3). Furthermore, Origen specifies certain debts which various offices in the Church and familial roles owe. He then cites widows, deacons, presbyters, and bishops as owing debts. As well, he sees that husbands and wives owe debts to each other. He concludes by writing, “in life there is not an hour of the night or the day that we do not owe something.”⁷¹ It becomes apparent in this discussion that Origen has conflated the idea of

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 296. (*P.E.* 27.2)

⁶⁹ Tertullian: *Dimitti nobis debita nostra, [sicut] nos quoque remittimus debitoribus nostris* (*De Orat.* 7.1 and 2). Origen: Καὶ ἄφεσ ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν (*P.E.* 28.1).

⁷⁰ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 165. (*De Orat.* 7.2)

⁷¹ Origen, “On Prayer,” 307. (*P.E.* 28.4)

sin as debt with obligations which people have with society around them and with God.

For Origen a debt is expected behaviour because of who one is. Thus, in respect to a person's debt to the three persons of the Trinity, Origen writes:

And above all, since we are the 'workmanship' and 'thing formed' of God that surpasses all else, 'we owe' it to maintain a certain disposition towards him, and that love which is 'with all the heart, and with all the strength, and with all the mind'; which things if we do not rightly perform, we remain 'debtors' to God, sinning towards the LordMoreover, since Christ bought us 'with his own blood,' 'we are debtors,' even as every servant is the 'debtor' of him who bought so much a sum of money as was given for him. We also incur a debt to 'the Holy Spirit,' which is paid when we do not 'grieve' him.⁷²

Origen's concept of debt being behaviour that one owes to someone else seems to dwell more upon the complex tangle of societal obligations rather than the grace of God.

The second part of this petition is similarly addressed by Tertullian and Origen. Here is an example of a simple reading of Scripture reflecting the style and context of a passage being brought to bear on its interpretation. They cite the parable of the servant freed from his debt who in turn refuses to forgive the debt owed to him (Matthew 18: 25-35). One will recall that a servant owed his master a great sum of money for which he begged forgiveness from his master. The master acted graciously but soon afterward, this servant refused to show the same mercy to a fellow servant who owed him a much smaller sum of money. In response, the master thus reinstated the debt and threw the unmerciful servant into prison. Tertullian sees the point of this parable to be that Christ intended for people who have tasted of divine forgiveness similarly to extend forgiveness to those who have wronged them (*De Oratione* 7.2). Origen agrees with Tertullian's interpretation. They both point out that one ought to forgive a person for the same

offence if need be. In this way he demonstrates that he is cognisant of the stylistic issues involved in the interpretation of parables.⁷³ As well, Tertullian sees Jesus' injunction to Peter to forgive seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22) as an improvement over the Old Testament law which recorded vengeance wrought on Cain's behalf seven times over and on Lamech's behalf seventy times seven (Genesis 4: 15, 24). So Tertullian was placing the injunction to forgive within the context of all Scripture. He was also contrasting the teachings of Jesus with the Law and showing Jesus' teaching to be superior. Tertullian's version of the Lord's Prayer differs from the Vulgate in this clause. Whereas the Vulgate has *dimisimus*; Tertullian has *remittimus*.⁷⁴ The words are roughly synonymous as can be seen in the fact that Tertullian uses *dimitte* in the first clause of this petition. However, *remittimus* is a present tense verb while the Vulgate's *dimisimus* is a perfect. This distinction is important in Tertullian's concept of prayer since he sees the Christian's task of forgiving one's debtors as an ongoing process while the Vulgate's choice of words indicates an action that is already complete.⁷⁵ The only addition that Origen offers to this discussion is an interesting psychological insight: "It is not we who are harsh towards those who do not repent; rather, such persons are wicked to their own hurt: for 'he that refuseth correction hateth himself.'"⁷⁶

This petition seems to be one in which the two authors seem most in agreement.

Strangely, Origen lays greater stress on proper living than Tertullian. It is not that Origen

⁷² *Ibid.*, 306. (P.E. 28.3)

⁷³ See the discussion above in section VI. footnote 63 as well as the discussion concerning the parable of the unmerciful servant in this paragraph.

⁷⁴ See footnote 1 of this chapter.

⁷⁵ The Greek word used is ἀφηκόμεν. This verb is in the aorist tense. Its aspect is undefined. It would appear that Latin translators had to decide whether a present verb or a perfect verb would best render the intended meaning of the verb here.

is some great antinomian. In fact Origen himself was known for an ascetic life;⁷⁶ however, Tertullian was much better known for his moralistic rigor. In the final section in his chapter on this petition, Origen discusses briefly the notion that some sins are unpardonable. He decries those people who arrogate the priestly power to pronounce forgiveness for such sins. Modern readers may be surprised that this list includes: idolatry, adultery, and fornication. Tertullian's literal hermeneutic stresses the scriptural idiom of debt meaning sin. He urges his audience to confess to God in prayer and show equal forbearance to those who have grieved them. Origen's understanding of debt is more concerned with how one ought to be disposed towards God. With such an understanding, a prayer for forgiveness is more of an acknowledgement of not being in union with God.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 308. (P.E. 28.7)

⁷⁷ Eusebius has written about Origen's lifestyle: "Many years he continued to lead this life of philosophy, completely removing all the incentives to youthful passions from him, during the whole day undergoing no trifling amount of laborious exercise, and at night devoting himself the most of the time to the study of the holy Scriptures, and restraining himself, as far as possible, by a most rigid and philosophical life. Sometimes he was exercised in the discipline of fasting; then, again, at night, he limited his times for sleep, which, in consequence of his great zeal, he never enjoyed on his bed, but upon the bare ground. But, most of all, he thought that the evangelical precepts of our Saviour should be observed, in which he exhorts that we should not have two coats, nor make use of shoes, nor pass our time in cares for the future. But indulging, also, an ardour greater than his years, he persevered in cold and nakedness; and advancing to the greatest extremes of poverty, astonished, most of all, his nearest friends....In presenting such specimens of ascetic life to the beholders, he naturally induced many of his visitors [sic] to pursue the same course." Eusebius Pamphilius, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Christian Frederick Cruse, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995 reprint), 221-2. (*Eccl. Hist.* 6.3.9ff) As well, Louis Bouyer points to Origen's 27th Homily on Numbers as demonstrating the basis for Origen's asceticism. In this homily Origen sets out the justification for the ascetic life as an imitation and participation in the life of Christ. Only as one renounces earthly desires can this goal be realised (*Hom. Numb.* 33.1-3). See Louis Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*. A History of Christian Spirituality. Volume I. Trans. Mary P. Ryan. (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), 287-9.

VIII. “And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”⁷⁸

Tertullian offers a short interpretation of this petition in the following words, “‘Lead us not into temptation,’ that is, do not allow us to be led by the Tempter.”⁷⁹ Tilley sees *De Oratione* 8 as an example of Tertullian recognising that a figure of speech should not be taken literally.⁸⁰ Tertullian quickly dismisses the notion that the Lord is the one who tempts his people. He attributes temptation to the Devil; whereas, events like God commanding Abraham to sacrifice Isaac are not temptations but proving grounds for faith. This section not only shows a literal reading encompassing the style of a particular idiom (i.e., a figure of speech) but also demonstrates Tertullian’s ability to put events into a context when he is discussing them. Tilley, again, points to *De Oratione* 8.5 as an indication of contextualisation wherein Tertullian writes, “This passage He confirms [by His words to His Apostles] later when He says: ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’ They were so tempted to desert their Lord because they indulged in sleep instead of prayer.”⁸¹ Here, Tertullian’s hermeneutic influences the idea that prayer is a way to avoid temptation. One should also note that Tertullian uses *deuehe* in this petition as opposed to the Vulgate’s *libera*. Both verbs are present imperatives and have similar semantic connotations. *Deuehe* in this phrase would mean something like “take us away from evil.” *Libera* would mean “free us from evil.” Tertullian’s choice of word here seems to draw more attention to a removal from evil rather than the Vulgate’s emphasis

⁷⁸ Tertullian: *Ne nos inducas in temptaionem, sed deuehe nos a malo* (*De Orat.* 8.1 and 6). Origen: Καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ (*P.E.* 29.1).

⁷⁹ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 166. (*De Orat.* 8.1)

⁸⁰ Tilley, 37.

⁸¹ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 167 (*De Orat.* 8.5)

on power over evil. One should not place too much importance on the difference of wording here.

Origen, on the other hand, writes voluminously on the omnipresence of temptation for people. His thesis is that all of life upon earth is a temptation.⁸² He then examines how poor people, rich people, healthy people, sick people, famous people, aristocratic people, as well as those of a meaner station all can succumb to temptation (*Peri Euches* 29.6-8). He further specifies that even those who spend their time studying Scripture can fall to the temptation of heretical ideas (*Peri Euches* 29.10). Therefore, since all of life is filled with temptation, Origen concludes, “We ought therefore to pray, not that we may not be tempted (for that cannot be), but that we may not be encompassed by temptation, a thing that happens to those who are held fast by it and overcome.”⁸³

Origen then raises the problem of those passages in the Bible in which God seems to be leading people into temptation.⁸⁴ In effect, Origen argues that when people seem to have desires that will lead them to a place in which they are tempted, God gives them what they want. Origen’s argument seems to stem from Middle Platonism’s ideas surrounding the “fall” of souls from some pre-mundane state to the material realm. Harl sees the expression *κόρον λαβεῖν* (to be satiated) in *Peri Euches* 29.14 as indication of Origen’s doctrine of the fall of souls. This portion of *Peri Euches* concerns God granting meat to the children of Israel in the desert for an entire month. Harl notes that Origen

⁸² See *Peri Euches* 29.2-9. Origen is referring to Job 7:1, “πότερον οὐχὶ πειρατήριον ἔστιν ὁ βίος τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπὶ γῆς. (*P.E.* 29.2) In *Peri Euches* 29.3, Origen quotes from Judith 8:26-7 in order to establish his point that Scripture has a bewildering way of talking about God tempting people, in this instance, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are said to be objects of God’s tempting.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 314-5. (*P.E.* 29.11)

reasons that the hyper-abundance of meat was God giving so much meat to eat that the object of their desire (meat) was no longer what they desired.⁵⁵ One should recall that one reason Middle Platonists gave for the fall of souls was a neglect or a satiety of those rational beings. Origen is using the same idea to show that God sometimes gives the object of desire in such an amount that it no longer is desired by the soul. Thus, Origen concludes, “you may then, having come to hate that which you did desire, be able to retrace the paths towards beauty and that heavenly food, which you once despised when you yearned after evil things.”⁵⁶ As well, in *Peri Euches* 29.13 Origen also shows the doctrine of the fall of souls. He writes, “I verily believe that God orders every rational soul with a view to its eternal life, and that it always maintains its free will, and of its own motion either mounts ever higher and higher until it reaches the pinnacle of virtue, or on the contrary descends through carelessness to this or that excess of wickedness.”⁵⁷ It should hardly be surprising that the notion of the fall of souls if it were to appear in this writing would appear in Origen’s discussion on “Bring us not into temptation.” So Origen sees temptation as a useful tool since it also reveals the true nature of a person.⁵⁸ The Platonic notion of the fall of souls has an impact on Origen’s understanding of prayer in that Origen shows that if people ask God for what is not fitting, God may provide it to

⁵⁴ He cites from Romans 1:22-28 in which God is said to have abandoned people to their evil desires as well as the problem of God hardening Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 9:12, 35; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10).

⁵⁵ Marguerite Harl, “Recherches sur l’origénisme d’Origène la ‘satiété’ (κόπος) de la contemplation comme motif de la chute des âmes” in *Le déchiffrement du sens: études sur l’hermeneutique chrétienne d’Origène à Grégoire de Nysse*, (Paris: Institut d’études augustiniennes, 1993), 202.

⁵⁶ Origen, “On Prayer,” 317. (*P.E.* 29.14) This entire section is fraught with language that indicates a fall into evil or desire.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 316. (*P.E.* 29.13)

⁵⁸ Job was tempted to curse God but did not thus revealing a truly righteous man. Cain yielded to the temptation to murder his brother, Abel, thus revealing his wickedness (*cf. P.E.* 29.18).

such a degree that they will soon despise it and seek after the spiritual blessings that God wants to give. Here Origen shows what is appropriate to ask from God.

When Origen finally discusses the clause, “Deliver us from the evil one” in *Peri Euches* 30, one can see that he also sees this clause as an elucidation of the first one in much the same way as Tertullian perceived it. He refers approvingly to Luke’s rendering of the Lord’s Prayer which omits this clause. However, instead of Tertullian’s focus on the Devil as the originator of temptation, Origen remains focused on life as a temptation. He writes, “But God ‘delivers us from the evil one,’ not when the enemy that wrestles against us in no way attacks us by any of his methods whatsoever or by the ministers of his will, but when we conquer bravely, taking a firm stand against circumstances.”⁸⁹ Origen finishes his discussion in a philosophical mode. He believes that the best way to overcome temptation is through “inspired and saving thoughts, which are stamped by the contemplation of the truth upon the soul of him who trains himself to be spiritual.”⁹⁰ Even though this petition asks God to deliver those who pray from evil and not to lead them into temptation, Origen still sees a very large role for humanity in the equation. It appears that the truly spiritual person can train himself or herself rationally to stand up to temptation and overcome it. Perhaps this reflects the Platonic notion of the ascent of the soul to perfection. A reader of these two works is no doubt struck by Origen’s effluence of words especially compared to the relative paucity of words expressed by Tertullian. Origen’s concept of prayer with respect to temptation is certainly influenced by his

⁸⁹ Origen, “On Prayer,” 321. (*P.E.* 30.1) The familiar refrain, “The Devil made me do it” would find no sympathetic ear with Origen. Even if the origin of the temptation was demonic, Origen still sees it as the individual’s responsibility to bear up under temptation.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 322. (*P.E.* 30.3)

philosophical presuppositions, especially with his focus on individual responsibility in spiritual discipline.

IX. Concluding Thoughts

In *De Oratione* 9 and *Peri Euches* 34, Tertullian and Origen conclude their writing on the Lord's Prayer. Tertullian offers a brief outburst of praise for the beauty of the words of the Lord's Prayer and the teachings of Christ that have been elucidated in his discussion. Origen's concluding thoughts are matter of fact. As well, he is hoping to be able to return to the question of prayer at another time in order to give it a more comprehensive treatment.

Most importantly, however, are the questions being explored in this thesis. Do Origen's and Tertullian's presuppositions affect the way in which they treat the Lord's Prayer especially with respect to their understanding and practice of prayer? The petition by petition comparison of the Lord's Prayer has revealed that Origen repeatedly had recourse to philosophical notions common to Middle Platonism. One saw that the idea of the ascent of the soul to perfection is a common underlying theme. There were instances in which Origen seemed to use Stoic logic in his argument. Furthermore, the ideas of the descent of souls—that is, their Fall—can be seen at one point in this treatment of the Lord's Prayer as well as a general Platonic denigration of the material realm. Various examples of Origen's spiritual interpretation were highlighted. This portion of *Peri Euches* is filled with biblical references. The Gospels are well used in this section, particularly Matthew and John (71% of all occurrences of Matthew in *Peri Euches*; for Mark, 36%; for Luke, 45%; and for John, 75%). With respect to the Old Testament,

Psalms are by far the most commonly cited book (46% of all occurrences). The apocryphal books (by modern Protestant standards) of Tobit and Judith are used in his discussion of the Lord's Prayer.

Tertullian's propensity towards the literal meaning of Scripture is reflected in his discussion. His commentary is much shorter than Origen's. He clearly did not feel compelled to deal with the topic voluminously since the scriptural passages which he cited could generally speak for themselves. There are a few occasions where Tertullian feels compelled to adopt an allegorical interpretation (i.e. his treatment of heaven and earth and the question of daily bread), but these are the exception rather than his preference. Little Stoic influence is present in his discussion of the Lord's Prayer. Tertullian's use of Scripture is not nearly as prolific as that of Origen's yet in his discussion of the Lord's Prayer, the Gospels are well represented (63% of all references to Matthew occur in *De Oratione* 2-9; 63% of all references to Mark; 70% of all references to Luke; 59% of all references to John). This comparison of Tertullian's and Origen's treatment has yielded interesting results. Their presuppositions seem to have influenced the way in which they commented on the Lord's Prayer as they relate to their understanding and practice of prayer.

CHAPTER 4

COMMON TOPICS IN TERTULLIAN'S AND ORIGEN'S DISCUSSION ON PRAYER

I. Opening Remarks

Less than half of Tertullian's *De Oratione* and Origen's *Peri Euches* is devoted to a discussion of the Lord's Prayer. What are the other areas of interest for these two authors? This chapter will explore topics related to the practice of prayer which the two authors share in common. The next chapter will examine aspects of their discussions which are unique to each author. It should not be surprising that there is some overlap in a topical discussion of prayer, nor should one be startled that each author has his own particular topics for discussion. This chapter will focus on four areas which the authors treat in common: opening remarks to prayer; the emotional attitude needed in prayer; the physical characteristics of those who pray; and, the spiritual meaning and efficacy of prayer.

II. Opening Remarks to Prayer

Tertullian's opening remarks on prayer stress the disjunction between the old and new covenants. He claims that whatever was the standard in old days was abolished (like circumcision), completed (like the Law), fulfilled (like prophecies), or perfected (like

faith).¹ He contrasts the new spiritual age with the older carnal age. He immediately cites the Lord's Prayer as demonstrating the threefold grace of God in Christ—that is, “the Spirit of God and the Word of God and the Reason of God.”² Tertullian, after showing the superiority of Christ to John the Baptist with respect to prayer, sees three important rules that Christ gave concerning prayer. First, prayer must be in secret so that by faith those who pray may believe that God hears prayers from every place. As well, prayer in secret ensures that modesty prevails and homage is rendered to God alone (*De Oratione* 1.4). Second, prayer must be laconic. The reason Tertullian provides seems to be concerned with God's knowledge as well as care for his creatures.³ Third, the Lord's Prayer shows the proper duties attendant on prayer, worship and supplication addressed to God (*De Oratione* 1.6). As well, these opening comments indicate that Tertullian engaged in spiritual interpretation of Scripture. He writes, “Yet, that concise phrase which forms the third point of His teaching rests for support upon a profound and effective figure of speech: the thought compressed within such few words carries a flood of meaning to the mind.”⁴ So Tertullian sees the entire Lord's Prayer as a figure of speech summarising the entire Gospel. His primary claim centres around a deeper meaning connected to the words of the Lord's Prayer. In fact, this deeper meaning to the words of the Lord's Prayer is a justification for any commentary that he would offer on it.

The question of Tertullian's audience is most appropriately addressed here.

Tertullian's audience would have been a local body of people. He was addressing typical

¹ See Tertullian, “Prayer,” trans. Emily Joseph Daly, in *Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works*, (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1959), 157. (*De Orat.* 1.1)

² *Ibid.*, 158. (*De Orat.* 1.2)

³ *Ibid.*, 159. (*De Orat.* 1.5) Tertullian writes, “We should not think that the Lord is to be approached with a barrage of words since we are certain that of His own accord He has regard for His creatures.”

Christians with certain understandings of prayer. The present author sees no reason to disagree with Robert Sider's assessment of this work. Sider sees a homiletical structure in *De Oratione*. The structure of the work is imprecise. So Sider writes, "A subject originally delivered as a homily has been published not only with traces of its homiletical spontaneity but possibly with additions not fully assimilated into the original text."⁵ One thing that appears somewhat strange in this introduction concerns a shift in focus in which Tertullian seems to be thinking more of individual devotional prayer; whereas, he later addresses issues much more appropriate to liturgical practices of the Church.

The reader of Origen's first two chapters of *Peri Euches* will notice a decidedly different focus from that of Tertullian. Origen begins with a discussion on the utter unknowability of the mind of God. He then quotes from 1 Corinthians 2:11 as an indication that the Spirit is needed to discern the mind of God.⁶ So it is humanly impossible to pray but God's grace in his Spirit makes it possible. The issue for Origen is the lack of commerce between the material realm—of which humanity is a part—and the spiritual realm wherein God is found. What can bridge the gap? Although one may be tempted to name Christ as this mediator between God and humanity; Origen actually sees the Spirit as the common currency bringing together the fleshly realm with the spiritual. One should notice that Origen's discussion does not focus on humanity in general and the prayers it addresses to God. Instead, Origen is focusing on the relationship in prayer between believers and God. His specific audience was two people: Ambrose, his patron,

⁴ *Ibid.*, "Prayer," 159. (*De Orat.* 1.6).

⁵ Robert D. Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 40.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 2:11 states, "For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God." (NRSV)

and Tatiana, an otherwise unknown woman. One can well imagine that Origen's thoughts on prayer were not solely for these two, but could be addressed to Christians as a whole. So when Origen considers the seeming impossibility of prayer from human standards, he sees the Spirit of God within believers as the bridge which can inform the believer on how to pray properly.⁷

After overcoming the impossibility of prayer, Origen then proceeds to discuss how one ought to pray. Within this topic, Origen sees two issues. The first is the words concerned with prayer (i.e. for what one ought to pray) and the second is the condition of the one who prays (i.e. as one ought to pray). Origen continues to give numerous examples of how one ought to pray. He then connects the notion of praying appropriately with the help of the Spirit. He writes:

For neither can our understanding pray, unless previously the Spirit prays, hearkening as it were to it, nor likewise can it sing and hymn the Father in Christ with rhythm, melody, measure and harmony, unless the Spirit, who 'searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,' first praise and hymn him, whose 'deep things' he has 'searched,' and, so far as he is able, apprehend.⁸

Thus for Origen, prayer is an intensely spiritual experience. Origen tacitly affirms the continuity of prayer between the two testaments when he refers to Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel, Psalm 16 as a "Prayer of David's", and Psalm 89 as a "Prayer of Moses". He stresses their spiritual nature when he writes, "Such prayers, since they were truly prayers which came into being and were spoken by the Spirit, are filled with the teachings of the

⁷ Origen refers to Romans 8:26 several times in *Peri Euches* 2.1 and 3. Oulton and Chadwick note that "Origen here makes the point that Paul does not simply say ἐντυγχάνει (as in v. 27), but ὑπερεντυγχάνει [intercedes exceedingly]. The English Bible versions do not attempt to reproduce this distinction." See Origen, "On Prayer," in John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, eds.,

wisdom of God.”⁸ The Spirit available to believers who helps them in their prayers is the same Spirit who helped form the prayers of the Old Testament believers.

One can see in their introductions that Tertullian and Origen had different starting points. Tertullian saw the radical new nature of prayer as Christ had taught it. Origen, instead, focused on the transcendence of God and the need of the Spirit for believers to pray. As well, their audiences were different. Tertullian’s audience would have been assembled group of believers, whereas Origen was specifically addressing two individuals who had requested information of him. Origen’s work is of a more occasional cast while Tertullian’s has a formal presentation in mind. Fundamentally their starting points are different. Tertullian sees the advent of Jesus Christ as a new step in humanity’s knowledge of God; whereas, Origen maintains that the perennial problem of mortal inability to know the immortal is only overcome through the mediation of the Spirit. These are not radically different views but they are different. Perhaps one can see in Origen an affirmation of the Platonic view of God who is utterly alien to humanity while Tertullian’s concept of God seems to display the Stoic tension between transcendence and immanence. The theme of continuity and discontinuity is apparent here. Tertullian stresses discontinuity while Origen highlights continuity. The place in which they begin their discussion of prayer reveals much about their understanding of prayer. More importantly, their philosophical presuppositions on the nature of God seem to bear some influence on their understanding of prayer.

Alexandrian Christianity. Library of Christian Classics. Vol. 2. (London: SCM Press, 1954), 242 (footnote 42).

⁸ *Ibid.*, (P.E. 2.4)

⁹ *Ibid.*, 243. (P.E. 2.5)

III. Emotional Attitude Needed in Prayer

In chapters eleven and twelve of *De Oratione*, Tertullian highlights the proper emotional state of one who would pray to God. He is particularly concerned with stressing that anger prevents prayers from being heeded by God. A quarrel with another person hinders prayer from reaching God. Thus Tertullian reasons, “how can one approach the peace of God without peace, or the forgiveness of sin when he nurses a grudge? How will he please his Father if he be angry with his brother, when all anger has been forbidden us from the beginning?”¹⁰ Anger must be expunged from one who hopes that his or her prayer will be heard by God. Tertullian provides the reader with an example of typology. Tertullian introduces the Old Testament character Joseph, “For Joseph, sending his brothers home to bring their father, said: ‘Do not quarrel on the way!’ He was, in fact, admonishing us—for elsewhere our manner of life is called our ‘way’—that on the way of prayer that has been set up we must not approach the Father if we are angry.”¹¹ In this instance, the historical instance of the brothers journeying is a type for the Christian’s life. As well, the fact that Joseph enjoined his brothers not to be quarrelsome in their journey is a type for Christians not be quarrelsome on their journey through life and in particular in prayer. Tertullian uses typology here to draw a contemporary lesson out of an ancient story; thus, his hermeneutic is an influence in his understanding and practice of prayer.

According to Tertullian, not only anger, but “every disturbance of the mind” can hinder prayer. Tertullian then reasons, “For the Holy Spirit does not acknowledge an

¹⁰ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 168. (*De Orat.* 11.1)

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 168. (*De Orat.*, 11.2).

impure spirit, neither is a sad spirit recognized by the Spirit of Joy, nor a spirit that is bound by one that is free. No one extends a welcoming hand to an opponent; no one admits another unless he is a kindred spirit.”¹² Problems arise when one considers Tertullian’s words with respect to the effectiveness of prayer. In fact, the almost Stoic nature with which Tertullian approaches prayer seems to belie biblical practice. There are many prayers in the Old Testament that show a disturbance in the mind of the one who prays. The prayer of Hannah is notable (1 Samuel 1:9-18). The account of her prayer shows that she was so in the depths of despair that Eli, the High Priest, assumed her to be intoxicated. Many of the Psalms of David show a man who was equally despairing.¹³ Since, as has been noted above, Tertullian argued for the discontinuity of prayer between the Old and New Testaments claiming that the prayers recorded in the Old Testament do not reflect the New Testament standard, some New Testament examples of people who were disturbed while praying will be provided. The Gospels record Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane the night before his crucifixion (*cf.* Luke 22:39-44). It would be hard to believe that Jesus was not agitated in some respect. It would seem that Tertullian holds up an impossible and needless standard for those who pray. His reasoning on anger and prayer is not suspect of inaccuracy but his claim that one who prays should be freed from “every disturbance of mind” in order for his or her prayer to be heard is simply not what the biblical record seems to indicate. One may posit that Tertullian was more indebted to the Stoic notion that one should be free from emotions

¹² *Ibid.*, 169. (*De Orat.* 12)

¹³ Some of the Psalms of lament, for example Psalms 56 and 57, are an indication of the disturbed nature of David as he prayed.

rather than see prayer in the scriptural sense as an honest outpouring of thoughts and feelings to God.¹⁴

Origen's discussion of the emotional attitude needed in prayer takes a similar focus. He, too, mentions anger as a hindrance to effectual prayer in *Peri Euches* 2 in his discussion in praying as one ought (citing Matthew 5:23 and 24). He writes:

“If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift.” For what greater gift can a reasonable creature present to God than a sweet-savoured word of prayer, offered by one whose conscience is void of the foul savour that comes from sin?¹⁵

Although there is a similarity in this theme of anger and prayer between Tertullian and Origen, Origen treats it slightly differently. First, Origen focuses not on anger but on sin as the hindrance to prayer. Secondly, Origen sees “sweet-savoured”¹⁶ prayer as the greatest gift that people can offer to God but not the only gift. Origen agrees with Tertullian that God should not be approached carelessly and proper preparation should be undertaken before entering into prayer. He writes that one who would pray “should put aside every kind of distraction and disturbance of mind, and recollect as far as possible the greatness of him to whom he comes, and that is a sacrilege to approach him lightly

¹⁴ So Peter Selby writes about petitionary prayer in particular, “Prayer in the biblical tradition has always been presented as an activity which did not limit the freedom of God...; rather it appears to be thought of as communication between the believer and God which accepts the liberty and integrity of both. There can be no doubt that petitionary prayer more than any other depends upon the view of God which undergirds it.” Peter Selby, “Prayer” in J. G. Davies, ed., *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, (London: S. C. M. Press, Ltd., 1972), 320. For the Stoic view of emotion, see Diogenes Laertius wherein he writes: “Passion, or emotion, is defined by Zeno as an irrational and unnatural movement of the soul, or again as an impulse in excess.” Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Volume 2. Trans. R. D. Hicks, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 217. (*Diog.* 7.110)

¹⁵ Origen, “On Prayer,” 240. (*P.E.* 2.2)

¹⁶ Greek: εὐώδους λόγου εὐχῆς (a fragrant word of prayer—the word εὐώδους is used in Ephesians 5:2 and Philippians 4:18)

and carelessly and with a kind of disdain; and he should cast off all alien thoughts.”¹⁷

Again one cannot help but criticise Origen along with Tertullian for this notion that disturbances of mind should be banished by those who would pray. Origen seems to forget all the examples he gave of those whose prayers seemed to come from a disturbed mind in the Old Testament. Is this an inconsistency on Origen’s part? At least with respect to *Peri Euches*, one has to conclude that it is.

Origen focuses on something else when describing the disposition of one who prays. He sees Paul’s injunction to pray without ceasing in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 as very important. For it is by this ever flowing prayer that “goes forth like a dart from the soul of the saint who prays, sent on its way by knowledge and reason or by faith, and inflicts a wound for the destruction and overthrow of the spirits that are at enmity with God, and desire to cast around us the bonds of sin.”¹⁸ Prayer has the effect of defeating the enemies of God. Another interesting notion here helps one define Origen’s spirituality. Origen has generally been regarded as a Christian mystic. Some will claim that in some instances, his theology went beyond the bounds of what was acceptable.¹⁹ If one conceives of a mystic as one who is alive to the spiritual realm then one can see Origen in

¹⁷ Origen, “On Prayer,” 323. (*P.E.* 31.2)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 261. (*P.E.* 12.1)

¹⁹ John Meyendorff points to Origen’s and Evagrius’ condemnation in 400 by Theophilus of Alexandria and in 553 at Chalcedon II. He indicates Origen’s concept of the fall as that of fallen intellects, and thus humanity’s ultimate destiny as “dematerialization and a return to a union with God’s substance.” See John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, Reprint of revised 2nd edition, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1983), 26. *Peri Euches* was nearly lost in antiquity due to the presence of some ideas later deemed to be heretical: a real subordinationism of the *Logos* to the Father, (*cf. P.E.* 14—prayer proper should only be addressed to the Father) and heavenly bodies are spherical (*cf. P.E.* 31.3). Henri Crouzel offers a defence of Origen, claiming that many of the reasons for which he was condemned were actually the errors of Origenists and not Origen himself. This may be true but one could justly claim that Origen should not be condemned for issues which he could not realistically predict (i.e. the Christological debates of the fourth century). See Henri Crouzel, “The School of Alexandria and Its

this stream. If one thinks that mysticism involves losing one's sense of oneself in some transcendental union with God, then one will not be able to fit Origen within this scheme. Origen's mysticism keenly involved his intellect. One can see in the above quotation that Origen connects knowledge and reason to prayer. One who prays engages not simply his or her emotions but his or her reasoning faculties. Where one's knowledge is deficient, then faith supplies what the reason lacks to make prayers effectual in battling God's enemies. How, then, does Origen view ceaseless praise? Again, Origen answers this question in the following manner:

That man 'prays without ceasing' (virtuous deeds or commandments fulfilled being included as part of prayer) who combines with the prayer the needful deeds and the prayer with fitting actions. For thus alone can we accept 'pray without ceasing' as a practicable saying, if we speak of the whole life of the saint as one great unbroken prayer: of which prayer that which is commonly called prayer is a part.²⁰

So Origen sees the call to prayer as a call to holy living in obedience to God. The disposition needed of such a person is the disposition which a Christian should display to everyone around him or her. So a great circle is completed. For Origen, the relationship one has with others can help or hinder his or her prayers. But that person's whole life is in fact a prayer which should define the way in which he or she relates to other people.

IV. The Physical Characteristics of those who Pray

The discussion in this section can be divided into two parts: the posture of those who pray and the place where one ought to pray. With respect to posture, there are two

Fortunes" in Angelo Di Berardino and Basil Studer, eds., *History of Theology: The Patristic Period*, Volume 1, Trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 177-182.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 261-2. (P.E. 12.2)

major considerations: the hands and the body. Both Tertullian and Origen mention the placement of hands in prayer. Tertullian begins his discussion in *De Oratione* 13 by dismissing the practice of washing hands before prayer since this was the action undertaken by Pilate in handing Christ over for execution. He writes, “We adore Christ, we do not surrender Him. Surely, we ought rather to follow a course of conduct different from that of the traitor and for that very reason *not* wash our hands.”²¹ In *De Oratione* 14, Tertullian likens the raising and spreading of hands in prayer to Christ’s crucifixion.²² His final reference to the positioning of hands appears in *De Oratione* 17 wherein he writes that hands should not be raised ostentatiously but “only slightly and to a proper position.”²³ He argues for this modesty in prayer referring to Christ’s parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (*cf.* Luke 18:9-14). Origen, too, mentions the position of hands in prayer. He writes in *Peri Euches* 31, “That attitude in which the hands are stretched out and eyes lifted up is to be preferred to all others, since the body brings to prayer the image as it were, of the qualities suitable to the soul.”²⁴ The quality suitable to the soul must be none other than its orientation towards God best signified by arms and gaze directed heavenward. Origen is no dogmatist. He recognises that such a position may be impossible for some either because of physical limitation on the part of the person praying or circumstances which will not allow such prayer. For both Origen and Tertullian, their discussion of the placement of hands assumes that those who pray are

²¹ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 170. (*De Orat.* 13.2)

²² For biblical precedents see: 1 Timothy 2:8; Psalm 134:2; and Isaiah 1:15.

²³ *Ibid.*, 172. (*De Orat.* 17.1)

²⁴ Origen, “On Prayer,” 323. (*P.E.* 31.2)

standing. The fact that these two agree in this area indicates the accepted practice of the Church more than it does individual exegetical insights or preferences.²⁵

The discussion of the body's posture in prayer has already begun above with the discussion of standing for prayer. Apparently such a practice was common both in public worship and in private devotion. One can verify that people stood to pray from Tertullian because he mentions that some people sit after they pray (*De Oratione* 16). How can one sit down if one has not been standing? In *De Oratione* 16.2 one reads, "For the phrase, 'When I had offered my prayer and had seated myself on the bed,' was set down simply and solely in the course of the narrative, not as a point of discipline."²⁶ Here Tertullian is making reference to the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Whether he regarded *Hermas* as part Scripture is not pertinent here. He is simply pointing out that basing one's practices for prayer on a narrative misuses the text. The narrative is simply recording what happened. Just because something occurred in the story does not make it normative for the readers. Tertullian further elucidates, "Otherwise, we would not be obliged to offer prayers anywhere except where there was a bed! On the other hand, it would be violating his directions to sit upon a chair or bench!"²⁷ One should notice that Tertullian is bringing out a significant hermeneutical principle here in that he recognises the context of a writing when he is citing from it. His hermeneutic, in this case the recognition of the importance of the context of a passage he cites, influences his idea and practice of prayer.

²⁵ Justin Martyr describes a worship service in his first apology, "When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites [us] to the imitation of these noble things. Then we all stand up together and offer prayers." Justin Martyr, "First Apology" in Cyril C. Richardson, ed. and trans. *Early Christian Fathers* (New York: Touchstone Book, 1996), 287. (*1 Apol.* 67)

²⁶ Tertullian, "Prayer," 171-2. (*De Orat.* 16.2)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 172. (*De Orat.* 16.3-4)

Kneeling is another important posture in prayer. Origen sees that it has a specific purpose—namely, the confession of sin. He writes, “And as for kneeling, that it is necessary when one is about to accuse oneself of his sins before God, supplicating him for forgiveness thereof, it ought to be known that it is a symbol of the man who is abject and submissive.”²⁸ Origen also mentions the notion of “spiritual kneeling” in which “every creature falls down before God ‘in the name of Jesus’ and humbles himself before him.”²⁹ Here, Origen offers a spiritual interpretation since he adheres to the Platonic notion that heavenly creatures have spherical bodies. If a heavenly creature is said to kneel before God yet does not have material knees then it must kneel in a spiritual way.³⁰ Tertullian, too, recognises kneeling as a common practice among those who pray. In fact, he offers advice on days when kneeling should not occur. Kneeling should not occur on Sunday for that is the day on which Jesus rose from the dead.³¹ As well, kneeling should not occur in the season of Pentecost. Why are these times specifically mentioned? For Tertullian, as for Origen, kneeling symbolised an act of confession, contrition and forgiveness. The day of Christ’s resurrection as well as the season in which the gift of the Holy Spirit was celebrated were not appropriate times for confession. Confession could happen at other times but these times were meant to celebrate life in Christ.

As for other circumstances attendant on prayer, Tertullian treats some topics other than Origen does. Tertullian excoriates those who remove their cloaks for prayer (*De Oratione* 15). He regards them as behaving as pagans do before their idols which is sheer

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 324. (P.E. 31.3)

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 324. (P.E. 31.3)

³⁰ The idea of heavenly creatures having spherical bodies was later rejected by the Church and this sentence contributed to the near destruction of *Peri Euches* in antiquity. See the discussion in Oulton and Chadwick, 232f.

superstition. Instead, Tertullian says such a practice has no biblical basis and points out the ridiculous idea that God will not heed those who continue to wear their cloaks when they pray. Tertullian is cautioning his audience in performing outward signs which are meaningless and do not reflect “devout homage” and “rational service” to God.

Origen finishes his discussion on the physical characteristics of prayer with a discussion of its place. He has a twofold concern. Where can one pray? Origen answers that every place is suitable for prayer; however, he thinks that a place should be set aside in every house for prayer. This place should be quiet and free from distraction. As well, Origen urges his readers not to pray in the room where their marriage bed is. For Origen, the place where sexual intercourse occurs is not the most appropriate place for prayer to God. Origen also sees the place where believers gather for worship as a good place for prayer. Not only are the living believers there, but also God’s angels and the spirits of the saints who have died. The gathering of the community of believers then is an eminently appropriate venue for prayer. Origen writes, “We must not despise the prayers that are made there, since they have a singular value for him who joins genuinely in common worship.”³²

Finally, Origen sees an eastward orientation in prayer as the proper position for prayer. Is this because facing east meant facing Jerusalem? That can hardly be justified because Origen either would have faced north to Jerusalem if he was in Alexandria or south if he was in Caesarea. Instead, Origen advocates facing the east in prayer since this is the direction from which the sun rises. Thus, Origen sees facing east in prayer as

³¹ Tertullian also mentions those of Jewish descent who will not kneel on the Sabbath (Saturday).

³² Origen, “On Prayer,” 326. (*P.E.* 31.5)

“symbolically of the soul looking to the rising of the true light.”³³ This custom was common in the early Church although there was no specific biblical warrant for such a view.³⁴ On the whole then, Tertullian and Origen are in agreement on the physical attributes connected with prayer. It seems that both of these authors are governed more by the custom of the Church than they are by anything else.

V. The Spiritual Meaning and Efficacy of Prayer

Tertullian begins his discussion of the efficacy of prayer by discussing its spiritual meaning. He hearkens to Jesus statement in John 4: 23-4, “The hour is coming when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” He then proceeds to describe prayer in analogous terms to pagan sacrifices. Tertullian writes:

We are true worshipers and true priests who, offering our prayer in the spirit, offer sacrifice in the spirit—that is, prayer—as a victim that is appropriate and acceptable to God; this is what He has demanded and what He has foreordained for Himself. This prayer, consecrated to Him with our whole heart, nurtured by faith, prepared with truth—a prayer that is without blemish because of our innocence, clean because of our chastity—a prayer that has received the victor’s crown because of our love for one another—this prayer we should bring to the altar of God with a display of good works amid the singing of psalms and hymns and it will obtain for us from God all that we ask.³⁵

It may seem strange but a spiritual interpretation of prayer as a sacrifice offered to God is absent in Origen’s writing. This is not to say that Origen sees no spiritual significance in prayer. Anyone reading his work will be struck by the very spiritual nature of prayer, but

³³ *Ibid.*, 327. (P.E. 32)

³⁴ See discussion in Oulton and Chadwick, 384f.

³⁵ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 185-6. (*De Orat.* 28.3-4) Daly records in a footnote to this passage the parallels between Tertullian’s language concerning Christian prayer and pagan sacrifice.

he does not describe it in sacrificial terms. Instead he focuses on benefits that accrue to those who pray.

One benefit of prayer which Origen perceives involves the settled nature of the one who prays. To speak in a positive manner, Origen writes that one whose mind is set on prayer “is in some sense profited merely by the settled condition involved in praying, when he has disposed himself to approach God and speak in his presence as to one who watches over him and is present[I]t is profitable to recollect God in whom we have put our trust, who perceives the secret movements of the soul.”³⁶ To speak negatively—in the sense that something is lacking that may otherwise be present—Origen sees another benefit from prayer. He urges his readers to pray often because, “if this [prayer] happens often, how many sins it prevents and how many good deeds it promotes, is known by experience to those who have given themselves continually to prayer.”³⁷ Origen further speaks of benefits which befall those who pray such as a great spiritual blessing when he ponders the words from Psalm 123, “Unto thee have I lifted up mine eyes”, and Psalm 25, “Unto thee have I lifted up my soul, O God”:

When the eyes of the understanding are lifted up, away from converse with earthly things and occupation with material impressions, and when they are elevated so high that they can transcend created things and fix themselves solely upon the contemplation of God and of reverent and seemly intercourse with him who hears, it must needs be that the eyes themselves derive greatest benefit, when “with unveiled face they reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord, and are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.” . . . Moreover, when the soul is lifted up and follows the spirit and severs itself from the body—and not only follows the spirit but also dwells in it, as is indicated in the words: “Unto thee have I lifted

³⁶ Origen, “On Prayer,” 255. (*P.E.* 8.2)

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 255. (*P.E.* 8.2)

up my soul”—it must needs be that laying aside the nature of a soul it becomes spiritual.³⁸

However, both Tertullian and Origen recognise that certain things can happen when people pray. In this discussion one sees again the difference in viewpoint of the two authors. One should recall that Tertullian holds that there is a fundamental disjunction between prayer in the Old Testament and Christian prayer, whereas Origen stresses continuity.

Tertullian points out that prayers of old would save people from all sorts of calamities such as fire, wild beasts, starvation, and enemies (*De Oratione* 29.1). In fact, Tertullian claims that Christian prayer does none of the things mentioned above. Instead, it teaches “patient endurance” to “those who suffer, those who are sensitive, and those who have sorrow.” What is the purpose of Christian prayer? It increases grace so that Christians “may know what comes from the Lord and what [they suffer] for the name of God.”³⁹ As well, Christian prayer, which Tertullian here calls the “prayer of justice” (*oratio iustitiae*), “averts the wrath of God, is on alert for enemies, and intercedes for persecutors.”⁴⁰ Christian prayer can overcome God but only for good. It would seem at this point that Tertullian holds an opinion opposed to the Stoic notion of the

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 256-7. (P.E. 9.2) The notion of severing oneself from the body could indicate Platonic notions since his language here indicates a spiritual/material duality in humankind. The LXX uses the word ψυχή in Psalm 25:1 (24:1 in LXX) which represents שׁפּוּט. Bruce Waltke writes, “Of the 144 times it is used in the Psalms, over 100 of them have the first person suffix, “my soul.” Thus in its most synthetic use, *nepesh* stands for the entire person.” See Bruce K. Waltke, “שׁפּוּט” in R. Laird Harris et al., eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 590. Origen seems to import the Platonic notion of the soul (ψυχή) as separate from the material body; whereas this intention is not present within the Psalm. cf. Gerhard Kittell and Gerhard Frierichs, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Reprint of 1985 edition. Abridged and Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 1346.

³⁹ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 187. (*De Orat.* 29.1)

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 187. (*De Orat.* 29.2)

predetermining of all things. According to him, Christian prayer has power to “heal the sick, exorcise demons, open prison doors, loosen the chains of the innocent,” “remit sins, repel temptations, stamp out persecution, console the fainthearted, delight the courageous, bring travelers safely home, calm the waves, stun robbers, feed the poor, direct the rich, raise up the fallen, sustain the falling, and support those who are on their feet.”⁴¹ If Tertullian was actually using this treatise as a text for a sermon or lesson, one can well imagine the rhetorical fervour with which he engaged at this point. He is nearing the end of this work and is no doubt trying to impress upon his hearers the necessity of their praying. He only has a few sentences remaining in his talk. Either he convinces his audience or they walk away unchanged. Before considering how he finishes his talk, one should turn to Origen’s thoughts on Christian prayer.

One should recall that Origen’s fundamental principle was a continuity between the Old and New Testaments. This principle of continuity extended to his treatment of prayers. In *Peri Euches* 13, Origen cites numerous examples of answered prayer found in the Old Testament. He reminds his readers of Hannah’s prayer, which resulted in the birth of Samuel (13.2; *cf.* 1 Samuel 1:9ff.); Hezekiah’s prayer, which resulted in a prolonged life (13.2; *cf.* 2 Kings 20:1 ff.); Mordecai and Esther’s prayer, which resulted in the Jews being saved from annihilation (13.2; *cf.* Esther 13 and 14);⁴² Judith’s prayer; which resulted in her overthrowing Holophernes, the Babylonian commander (13.2; *cf.* Judith 13:4-10); the prayers of Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, which preserved them from the fiery furnace into which they had been thrown (13.2; *cf.* Daniel 3: 24, 49, 50—LXX);

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 187. (*De Orat.* 29.2)

and Jonah's prayer, which resulted in his being freed from the belly of the great fish (13.2; *cf.* 1:17; 2:1; 3:1-4). These citations from the Bible are taken initially at their literal level. Origen affirms that God answered the prayers of these people in the mundane way in which they were recorded. Origen's next step is one of contextualisation. He claims that many similar prayers are answered in the present (13.3). In 13.4 Origen then further discusses these ancient prayers but changes his focus. He writes, "I consider that, after giving a list of those who have been benefited by prayer, it has been most necessary to add this, in order to turn away from prayer for trivial and earthly things earnest seekers after a spiritual life in Christ, and to exhort the readers of this book to the pursuit of things mystical, of which the aforesaid were types."⁴³ So Origen sees these prayers as types representing true spiritual prayer. With respect to the prayers of Hannah and Hezekiah he writes, "And in our case we must make it our endeavour that the soul be not childless or barren, as we listen to the spiritual law with spiritual ears."⁴⁴ To the prayers of Mordecai, Esther, and Judith, Origen sees the spiritual prayer as one that will deliver those who pray from enemies which plot against believers, including "the spiritual forces of evil." He sees the prayers of Ananias, Azarias, and Misael of delivery from the fiery furnace as representing prayers of deliverance from "every terrestrial place." Origen then further exclaims, "let every one who has escaped from the evil in human life, and has not been set on fire by sin, nor had his heart full of

⁴² These prayers are in the Greek additions to the book of Esther. The MT contains no references to the prayers of Esther and Mordecai.

⁴³ Origen, "On Prayer," 264. (*P.E.* 13.4).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 264. (*P.E.* 13.4).

fire like a furnace, give thanks no less that they did who were tried in a 'fire of dew.'"⁴⁵

With respect to Jonah's prayer, Origen writes:

[I]f at any time he should happen to find himself because of disobedience 'in the belly of the fish'; let him repent and pray, and he shall go forth therefrom; and going forth and continuing to obey the commandments of God he shall be able in 'the kindness' of 'the Spirit' to prophesy the Ninevites that are perishing even now and become for them a cause of salvation, if he is not displeased at the 'goodness of God' and does not seek that his 'severity' should continue towards them that repent.⁴⁶

This is an example of Origen's hermeneutic wherein he begins with some literal statements from Scripture and moves to a spiritual interpretation of them so that his readers can see how ancient scriptural teachings are still applicable in the present context (as the model which Torjesen proposes would indicate).

Given his avowal of the continuity of prayer between Old and New Testaments, one may well wonder if Origen sees any significance in Christ's coming as it pertains to prayer. It can hardly be doubted that Origen did. It seems that with respect to his notion of prayer, Origen saw Christ's advent as a way of interpreting history in a very existential manner. The prayers of the Old Testament that resulted in material reversals now speak about spiritual reversals. Christ's example has not only set a standard in day-to-day living but also in the process of interpreting texts. Because of Christ's resurrection and ascension, Origen sees the interpretation of texts as part of the method in raising the individual from the material realm to the spiritual realm.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 265. (P.E. 13.4). The 'fire of dew' is mentioned in the LXX of Daniel 3:49-50.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 265. (P.E. 13.4)

⁴⁷ *cf.* Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Structure in Origen's Exegesis*. (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 1986), 121-4. She cites numerous examples from Origen's work which indicate the teaching role of Christ (or the *Logos*) in the lives of sinners or contemplatives as they ascend toward perfection (for example: *Con. Cels.* 3.62 and *Job* 1.20).

One final issue with respect to the efficacy of prayer involves the question of those who pray. Tertullian finishes his entire treatise with an expression of natural theology. This hearkening to natural theology may reflect Stoic influence. One may recall that Stoic thought contained notions of a natural theology—that is, the world shows the existence of God.⁴⁸ In *De Oratione* 29.4, one finds:

All the angels pray, too; every creature prays; the beasts, domestic and wild, bend their knees, and as they go forth from their stables and caves they look up to heaven with no idle gaze. Even the birds, upon rising in the morning, mount into the sky and stretch out their wings as a cross in place of hands and say something which might seem to be a prayer. What need, then, is there of further discussion of the duty of prayer?⁴⁹

Tertullian makes the claim that various parts of the created world demonstrate a natural knowledge in that they pray to God. This is in fact the argument by which he finishes this treatise. His claim is that prayer is something natural and that those who are Christians should not neglect the duty of prayer. His last sentence finishes his sermon on a high point. As a final effort to convince his audience that prayer is necessary he claims, “Even our Lord himself prayed, to whom be honor and power forever and ever.”⁵⁰

Tertullian’s discussion on all those who pray, although it may well be true, seems more to be a rhetorical flourish rather than a natural progression from what preceded it. There is little doubt that Tertullian would have wanted to finish with a strong statement. As far as he was concerned—and it is hard to disagree with him—the fact that Christ himself prayed should be the strongest argument for the Christian to pray.

⁴⁸ Of course for early Stoics this natural knowledge of God was so because God was equated with the world. So Diogenes Laertius records, “The substance of God is declared by Zeno to be the whole world and the heaven, as well as by Chrysippus in his first book *Of the Gods*, and by Posidonius in his first book with the same title.” See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Volume 2. Trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965 reprint), 253. (*Diog* 7.148)

⁴⁹ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 187-8. (*De Orat.* 29.4)

Origen, too, discusses who prays; however, Origen begins with Christ and he paints Christ as the High Priest who prays for and with his people (*Peri Euches* 10.2). After discussing Christ, he also asserts that angels pray (*Peri Euches* 11.1). Not only do they pray but they pray along with believers. Interestingly, he proves his point by quoting from Tobit wherein the reader finds the archangel Raphael informing Sarah that he had brought her prayer as a memorial before God (*cf.* Tobit 12:12). Origen's notion of what is authoritative affects what text he will use to support his theories. In this instance one finds Tobit has played a part in shaping his notion and practice of prayer. After considering angels, Origen then considers the prayers of those saints who have already died (*Peri Euches* 11.2). Saints already dead being united to living believers by their common faith are also bound by ties of filial love to those who still struggle. As well, Origen reminds his readers that when a member of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. Thus, those who are in the Lord's presence also pray with those who travail on earth. Here we see a clear expression of the communion of saints. There are saints on earth and there are saints in glory. They are not, or should not be, oblivious to each other. Instead, they continue in their relationship to each other in that mystical body, the church, which transcends life and death, the past and the present. Origen makes no mention of beasts or birds praying. He seems to reserve this privilege for rational creatures.

VI. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has shown four key topics which Tertullian and Origen addressed and in which they have points of agreement. They both seem to have similar views on

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 188. (*De Orat.* 29.4)

the posture and disposition of those who pray. They do have different views when it comes to topics such as the spiritual meaning and efficacy of prayer. Their opening remarks to their treatises are good indications on why they differ in some of their reasoning. Tertullian lays particular stress on the discontinuity of prayer between the Old and New Testaments. Origen does not share this view. His reasoning probably concerns how he views the immutability of God. God does not change, so how can the way in which his creatures relate to him change? The previous discussion has shown that Origen's thought shows indications of Platonic influence and his own hermeneutical procedure which dwells more on symbols and personal meaning than literal meanings and universal truths. Tertullian seems more governed by the form of his address—being homiletical—and his audience—being a congregation of some sort. It would seem that the topics discussed above demonstrate that philosophical presuppositions and hermeneutical theory did in fact influence each author's theory and practice of prayer. The next chapter will consider the topics which each author considers in isolation from the other. What one author omits or includes can be equally helpful in examining their approach to developing a theology of prayer.

CHAPTER 5

UNIQUE TOPICS IN TERTULLIAN'S AND ORIGEN'S DISCUSSION ON PRAYER

I. Opening Remarks

The most fascinating difference between Tertullian's and Origen's treatment of prayer occurs when one considers the topics each author addresses which the other does not even mention. A comparison of *De Oratione* and *Peri Euches* on a chapter by chapter basis reveals three topics by each author which the other fails to treat altogether or only with a passing reference. Tertullian devotes three chapters to the role of women in public prayer, two chapters to liturgical practices involving prayer, and three chapters to the frequency of prayer. Origen, on the other hand, offers three chapters to a discussion of prayer in general, four chapters to the problems involved in prayer, and four chapters defining prayer. The following discussion will not be a comparison so much as an exploration into the possible reasons why Tertullian or Origen may have emphasised these topics.

II. Unique Topics in Tertullian

A. Women and Public Prayer

Tertullian devoted the greatest amount of space to the role of women in worship particularly as it pertained to prayer. He begins his discussion in *De Oratione* 20 in discussing the appropriate attire for women. He points out that customs have changed

since the time that Paul wrote his admonitions on the dress of women (*cf.* 1 Timothy 2:9; 1 Corinthians 11:3ff). Along with the Apostle Peter he urges women not to dress ostentatiously, wear too much jewellery, or put more care into the appearance of their hair than modesty requires (*cf.* *De Oratione* 20.2; 1 Peter 3:3). Up until this point, Tertullian writes in his lucid compact style; however, when he turns to consider whether virgins should be veiled in worship, he goes to great effort to try to convince his audience that virgins are also women and thus should be veiled in worship. He states the problem in the following way:

Those who grant to virgins the right of having their heads uncovered seem to support their position by the fact that the Apostle designated specifically, not that virgins, but that women, are to be veiled; that is, he referred not to the sex, using the generic term ‘females,’ but to one group within the sex, saying ‘women.’ For, if he had specified the [entire] sex by the term ‘females’ he would have laid down an absolute law relating to every woman; but since he designates one group within the sex, he sets it apart by his silence regarding another group.¹

Tertullian begins his discussion with what may be regarded his normal hermeneutical practice—he tries to explore the common understanding of the term *woman* from a biblical perspective. In the creation account, he notes that Eve is referred to both as *woman* and *female*. Since Eve was still a virgin at the point in the story to which Tertullian refers, he concludes that the term *woman* can refer to virgins as well.²

Tertullian is not content to leave his argument at this point. He feels compelled to show that the Apostle Paul also meant all women when discussing that women should be veiled in public worship. He points out that in other contexts, Paul meant the Greek word

¹ Tertullian, “Prayer,” trans. Emily Joseph Daly, in *Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works*, (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1959), 176. (*De Orat.* 21.2-3)

γυναικας to be a gender encompassing term. Thus, he concludes when Paul wrote that every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered disgraces her head (1 Corinthians 11:5), Paul meant the *every* to refer to every member of the female sex. Has not Tertullian supported his argument by this point? Apparently he felt the need for further buttressing.

Now Tertullian considers the wisdom of the Pauline admonition. He contends that women should remain veiled on account of the angels who took wives from the daughters of men (*cf.* Genesis 6:2). As well, Tertullian uses 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 as proof that long hair is meant as a covering for women both married and virgin (*De Oratore* 22.7). So Tertullian argues from these scriptural passages that the term for *wives* (Latin: *uxores*) could refer to virgins or widows. Since the term is not specific to one group of women, the whole sex can be included.

Tertullian does not argue strictly from Scripture. He turns next to an argument from nature. Hair is a covering and an adornment for women. Is it not as well for virgins? Is it not equally disgraceful for a virgin to have short hair? Tertullian, of course, answers in the affirmative (*De Oratore* 22.7-8).³ Thus, Tertullian concludes that the term *woman* refers to all females—although he does exclude prepubescent girls.

Tertullian makes an interesting statement in this paragraph. He writes with respect to women having their hair long, “Finally, Israel has the same regulation. But even if it did not, our law, amplified and supplemented, would demand an addition, imposing a veil

² The Latin word are *mulier* and *femina*. It appears that Tertullian has a Latin text of Genesis in mind here since he refers to Greek terms later in this chapter.

³ One must recognise that Tertullian’s culture held different things as socially acceptable than the modern one does.

upon virgins, also.”⁴ R. P. C. Hanson sees this as one of many indications among Tertullian’s writings that has removed “the burden of a legalistic Old Testament religion” only to replace it with a “legalistic New Testament one.” He writes, “It is characteristic of Tertullian that by far the longest chapter in his book on the Lord’s Prayer should be the twenty-second in which he deals with the insignificant question of whether virgins should be veiled during public prayer.”⁵ The question of women being veiled may be irrelevant in the modern era, but it was not to Tertullian. After all, Tertullian penned two treatises about the attire of women after *De Oratione*, *De Cultu Feminarum* and *De Virginibus Velandis*.⁶ Hanson is surely correct that Tertullian seems to reject the Old Testament law only to impose another strenuous set of rules on his audience.

It appears that one of Tertullian’s concerns apart from the virtue of modesty is tied to social norms and piety. Those who have consecrated themselves to God are no longer available to be married so they should not dress as if they were. Instead, they should dress as mature married women do (*De Oratione* 22.9). One should not dress more scandalously in the place of worship than one does in the marketplace. Tertullian writes, “Why do you expose before the eyes of God what you cover in the presence of men? Will you be more modest in the public street than in church?”⁷ Tertullian also urges

⁴ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 179. (*De Orat.* 22.8)

⁵ R. P. C. Hanson, “Notes on Tertullian’s Use of Scripture” in *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 12, 1961, 279.

⁶ *De Cultu Feminarum* predates Tertullian’s Montanist alliance (early 200’s). This work stresses modesty as a primary Christian virtue. He does not approve of any unnatural adornments for women (cosmetics, jewellery, dyed fabrics). *De Virginibus Velandis*, written about 207, shows some movement towards Montanism. This work stresses the Paraclete’s office as one of “the direction of discipline, the revelation of the Scriptures, the reformation of the intellect, the advancement towards better things.” (*De Virg.* 1) Tertullian’s aim in this work is to ensure that women wore veils in church.

⁷ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 180. (*De Orat.* 22.9)

virgins to remain veiled so that they will not be gazed upon by men.⁸ Tertullian then praises virgins who pass themselves off as married for in fact they are married to Christ. Finally, Tertullian strongly urges those who are betrothed to be veiled. He holds up Rebecca as an example who “when her future husband had been pointed out to her, she covered her head with her veil merely because she knew she was to marry him.” This lengthy chapter is another example of Tertullian’s literal exegesis of Scriptural passages. One could even accuse Tertullian of an over simplistic reading in this case. This chapter is a case where Tertullian’s moralistic thoughts dominate.¹⁰

At this point, the careful reader may perceive an incongruity in Tertullian. The previous chapter noted that Tertullian emphasised the discontinuity between prayer in the Old Testament and the New Testament. As well, Tertullian also stressed that God had given a new name to his people by which they prayed to him. This was discussed in Chapter 3. Hanson has observed that Tertullian also does away with portions of the Old Testament law that were unbearable for their ancestors.¹¹ However, here one sees Tertullian referring with approbation to a custom from the Old Testament which should serve as a model for believers. It would seem that Tertullian may be seen as a progressive in a theological sense, but ultra-conservative in terms of social practices. He is progressive theologically because he is grappling with the implications of the message of Jesus Christ as it pertains to prayer. The Christian movement is still relatively young at his stage in history. The teachings of its founder require a drastic paradigm shift. This

⁸ This exhortation is not unknown in some Islamic areas of the world.

⁹ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 181. (*De Orat.* 22.10)

¹⁰ Hanson, *Notes and Studies*, 279. Hanson includes reference to this chapter when discussing Tertullian’s moral approach. Hanson writes, “Having virtually removed the burden of a legalistic Old Testament religion, he introduces a legalistic New Testament one.”

was the mission of the early church. Tertullian, however, does not see social norms as needing rethinking. They must be adhered to zealously.¹²

B. Liturgical Practices Involving Prayer

Tertullian also offers comments on two practices that occur within the context of the worshipping community. The first involves the kiss of peace. In his day it was common for believers to exchange a kiss of peace following prayer, especially the Lord's Prayer. The problem arose that those who were fasting refused to take part in this practice. Tertullian argued against it in a number of ways. First he reasoned that the kiss of peace is not attached to the reception of the Eucharist but it is a seal after prayer. If the kiss was attached to the reception of the Eucharist then people would be correct in refraining from the practice since a fast precludes the taking of the Eucharist. However, Tertullian asserts that the kiss is attached to prayer. So he writes, "What prayer is complete without the bond of a holy kiss?"¹³ Tertullian further argues that when people refrain from the kiss, they reveal that they are fasting. He is hearkening to Jesus' injunction forbidding those who fast to draw attention to their fasting. As a concession, Tertullian allows that the kiss can be avoided at home where it is impossible to conceal one's fast from one's family members. The only public occasion when one may omit the kiss of peace is on Good Friday when all are fasting and thus there is no need to conceal the fact. Why does Tertullian draw attention to this practice in his treatise? It would

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 279. Hanson refers to passages from *De Monog.* 7.1-2 and 8.1

¹² *De Oratione* 22.9 contains the following sentence, "Many apply their own ideas and persistence in the same to custom established by another. Granted that virgins should not be forced to cover their heads; at any rate, those who are willing to do so should not be prevented." Daly sees this sentence as an indication that Tertullian's bishop at Carthage did not "favour the views held by Tertullian on this subject." (p. 181 fn. 7)

¹³ Tertullian, "Prayer," 174. (*De Orat.* 18.3)

appear that the public practice of prayer should be done in a fitting manner. Tertullian saw that the withholding of the kiss of peace broke the fellowship of the communal prayer of the assembled Church. Daly points out that in early African liturgy, the kiss of peace was associated with the Lord's Prayer.¹⁴ In Tertullian's mind the kiss of peace being omitted by some breaks an important bond of fellowship in prayer. This is a concern not born out of general theological principles but one that proceeds from specific circumstances.

Tertullian's other concern is with those engaging in the days of fasting within the week known as *station days* (*De Oratione* 19). The problem arose that those who were fasting felt that they could not partake in the Eucharist lest they break their fast. It seems that those fasting were even absenting themselves from participation in the prayers attached to the Eucharist. Tertullian urges his audience to partake in the Eucharist in a special way. He tells them to receive the elements as is the custom in the Eucharist but then to save them until after their fast is over. Thus the two duties are kept. The duty of participation in the Lord's Supper is kept and the fast is kept as well. Tertullian finishes his argument by reminding his readers that the notion of *station* is a military term. He recalls that as a soldier's duty must be observed in all circumstances, so too should the Christian's duty be kept in all circumstances.

This would be a pressing issue for conscientious believers who felt their twin duties to God were in conflict. Tertullian offers a path by which both duties can be met without a diminution to either. His interest is pastoral and also theological. Tertullian sees the importance of maintaining the fellowship intact within the context of a praying

¹⁴ Daly, 173 fn. 1 for *De Oratione* 18.

community. One can hardly doubt that communal prayer was intensely important for Tertullian. These two issues show the eminently practical side of Tertullian. This fact need not be surprising since Tertullian seems to have practical application in view in this treatise. He wants people to know how to pray and why to pray.

C. Frequency of Prayer

Whereas Origen stressed that the whole life of the believer should be a prayer; Tertullian seems to think more of specific times and instances when believers should pray. He has a more practical aim. In response to the hypothetical question, “When should one pray?”, Tertullian lists numerous occasions when believers should pray.

First he recognises the injunction to pray at all times and in every place. However, he perceives the problem that arises when he considers Christ’s order not to pray in public (*cf.* Matthew 6:5f). How are these seemingly contradictory statements to be brought into accord? Tertullian uses another biblical passage to bridge the gap between the injunction to pray everywhere and the injunction not to pray in public. He cites 1 Timothy 2:8 and writes that Christians should pray “In every place...which circumstance or even necessity provides.”¹⁵ So Tertullian concludes that any place is an appropriate place to pray.

With respect to times for prayer, Tertullian sees some use in the hours that were recognised as times of community prayer (*Terce*, *Sext*, and *None*). He then marshals biblical evidence supporting these three times. The third hour—*Terce*—was when the disciples were gathered for prayer and first infused with the Holy Spirit (*cf.* Acts 2:15). The sixth hour—*Sext*—was when Peter had the vision of the creatures in the sheet when

he was praying (*cf.* Acts 10:9). The ninth hour—*None*—was when Peter and John went into the temple to pray and subsequently healed a lame man (*cf.* Acts 3:1-7). Tertullian recognises that these incidents he has cited are in no way prescriptive for Christian prayer, but his practical side emerges. He writes, “It would be good to establish some binding force to wrest us violently at times, as by a law, from our business to such an obligation so that we may offer adoration no less than three times a day at least, being debtors to the three divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”¹⁵ Further, Tertullian also expects people to pray at dawn and evening. So Tertullian prescribes five set times during the day for prayer.

Finally, Tertullian sees prayer as an important practice whenever one interacts with fellow believers. Thus, when a believer enters one’s house, one should say a prayer with them (*De Oratione* 26.1). Tertullian also attaches the kiss of peace to this practice. One can see the importance of maintaining not only a good relationship with God through prayer but also the importance of good relationship with fellow believers through the kiss of peace. For Tertullian, prayer is the ultimate expression of Christian unity. One can see by this discussion of the frequency of prayer that Tertullian has maintained a practical edge. Prayer can happen anywhere at any time; however, Tertullian recognising human nature sees that specific times of prayer are helpful for the believer. A believer is forced to slow down at points in the day and commune with God and fellow believers.

D. Concluding Remarks

One may perceive a different focus in Tertullian’s writings in this chapter. When

¹⁵ Tertullian, “Prayer,” 182-3. (*De Orat.* 24)

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 183-4 (*De Orat.* 25.5)

Tertullian addresses issues which Origen does not, he seems to show a very practical interest. Osborn sees Tertullian's treatment of prayer as eminently practical as against a more philosophical approach of Clement of Alexandria.¹⁷ Even if one may find Tertullian's views on the apparel of women objectionable, Tertullian had very specific concerns in mind. If women dressed as he desired then Christians could better focus on communion with God instead of getting distracted by everyday issues. His discussion of liturgical practices was concerned with keeping the unity among the believers in prayer. His discussion on the times of prayer was meant to ensure that people would keep on praying. These issues were ones which they could put into practice in their daily living. Unlike Tertullian, Origen's concerns were more esoteric.

III. Unique Topics in Origen

A. Prayer in General

When Origen begins his discussion of prayer he explores the two major words used for prayer in the Greek Bible, *προσευχή* and *εὐχή* in an attempt to distinguish between the two words. He defines *εὐχή* as a word for "a person who promises in prayer to do this or that, if so be that he obtains these things from God. But the term is also employed in its customary usage: as for example, we find it so used after the plague of frogs, the second in order of the ten. ... 'Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said,

¹⁷ Osborn, *First Theologian of the West*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 150.

‘Pray the Lord for me,...’.”¹⁸ Origen claims that εὐχή tends to have the connotation of making a vow to the Lord; whereas, προσευχή refers more to a simple prayer utterance. However, Oulton and Chadwick point out that “this long discussion of Origen on εὐχή and προσευχή has no great value. It amounts to no more than this. The customary meaning of both words is ‘prayer’.”¹⁹ Origen’s reference to Hannah’s prayer shows the distinct semantic domains of these two words. Origen quotes from 1 Samuel 1:9-11, “And Eli the priest sat upon a seat by the door posts of the temple of the Lord. And she [Hannah] was in bitterness of soul, and prayed [προσηύξατο] unto the Lord, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow [εὐχήν], and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and wilt give unto thine handmaid seed of a man, then I will give him unto the Lord as a gift all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.”²⁰ So προσευχή has a basic meaning of prayer in general; whereas, εὐχή has a dual function either as a synonym of προσευχή or the more specialised connotation of making a vow to God.

Origen also returns to the subject of prayer near the end of his treatise. In *Peri Euches* 33 he discusses the forms that prayer should take. He outlines a fourfold pattern for prayer. Origen describes these components of prayer as their subjects. He, therefore, writes:

At the beginning and preamble of prayer, so far as possible, God is to be glorified, through Christ glorified together with him, in the Holy Spirit

¹⁸ Origen, “On Prayer,” in John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, eds., *Alexandrian Christianity*. Library of Christian Classics. Vol. 2. (London: SCM Press, 1954), 244. (P.E. 3.2)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 234.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 246-7.

hymned together with him. And next in order after each one must offer general thanksgiving including blessings bestowed on many besides himself, together with those he has personally obtained from God. After thanksgiving, it seems to me that he ought to accuse himself bitterly before God of his own sins, and then ask God, first for healing that he may be delivered from the habit that causes him to sin, and secondly for forgiveness of the past. After confession, it seems to me that in the fourth place he should add his request for great and heavenly things, his own and general, and also for his family and dearest. And finally he should bring his prayer to a close glorifying God through Christ in the Holy Spirit.²¹

Origen validates all these items of prayer by pointing to examples in Scripture. Thus for the opening glorifying of God he looks to Psalm 104:1-7. For thanksgiving he points to 2 Samuel 7:1-17. Confession appears in Psalm 39:8 and Psalm 38:5-6. Requests for great and heavenly things appear in Psalm 28:3.²² The majority of examples of prayer come from the book of Psalms and Psalms played an important part in the liturgy of the early Church.²³ Their importance is still evident in the liturgical traditions which weekly have a responsive Psalm after the Old Testament lesson.²⁴ Origen's opening discussion on the words used for prayer fits within his training as a grammarian. His natural inclination would be to explore what people understood prayer to be. His closing statements about the subjects of prayer are his own practical advice to his readers on how they should go about prayer. Origen had personal prayer in mind rather than prayer within the context of the communal worship environment.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 327-8. (P.E. 33.1) This pattern of prayer is not altogether different from the ACTS pattern (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). Origen's preferred order would be more like ATCSA (Adoration, Thanksgiving, Confession, Supplication, Adoration).

²² Notice that Origen only makes spiritual requests of God. This idea will be explored below.

²³ Alec Robertson writes, "From the earliest times the Christian community sang the psalms following the practice of the synagogue, in antiphonal or responsorial forms, and the psalter became basic to the liturgy of mass and office. We learn from the fathers of the church how psalmody spread over the Christian world. Eusebius (260-340), Bishop of Caesarea, paints a vivid picture of the result: 'The command to sing psalms in the name of the Lord was obeyed by everyone in every place...' Tertullian even mentions the use of Psalms in household prayer (*De Orat.* 27). Alec Robertson, "Psalmody" in J. G. Davies, ed. *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*. (London: S. C. M. Press, Ltd., 1972), 326.

B. Problems with Prayer

Origen begins *Peri Euches* 5 with a disclaimer that only pure atheists or those who question God's providence reject prayer outright. So for those who accept divine providence, prayer is a necessary component of life. One should recall such philosophical systems as Neo-pythagoreanism, Platonism, and Stoicism on top of theistic faiths like Judaism and Christianity here. Origen quickly points out a problem. If God knows everything before it happens, "What need is there, then, to offer up a prayer to him who before it was prayed knows what we lack?"²⁵ Not only is there a problem with God's foreknowledge, there is a problem with his determination of things. Prayer cannot change what are natural processes; for example, Origen cites the man who prays that the seasons be shifted so the temperature is more moderate as senseless (*Peri Euches* 5.3). Origen sums up the problem this way, "First: if God knows the future beforehand, and it must come to pass, prayer is vain. Secondly: if all things happen according to the will of God, and if what is willed by him is fixed, and nothing of what he wills can be changed, prayer is vain."²⁶

How does Origen solve these problems? Origen first establishes that people have free will (*Peri Euches* 6.3). In fact, when he discusses the notion of free will he bases his reasoning in the "faculty of motion." Oulton and Chadwick point out that Origen's

²⁴ Roman Catholic and Anglican for example.

²⁵ Origen, "On Prayer," 248. (*P.E.* 5.2)

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 250. (*P.E.* 5.6)

argument that rational creatures are moved “through themselves” (δι’ αὐτῶν) as ultimately coming from Plato.²⁷ He then concludes that God has so arranged creation that

what has been foreseen by him is arranged by Providence suitably for every single person, and it is understood beforehand what so-and-so will pray for, his kind of disposition, the nature of his faith, and what he desires to happen to him; and, this being understood beforehand, some sort of arrangement as this will accordingly have been made in the disposing of things.²⁸

Furthermore, Origen asserts that God will only answer prayers positively that are in people’s best interest (*Peri Euches* 6.4). This is one place in his treatise on prayer in which Origen is most certainly displaying his Middle Platonic heritage. The questions he has asked and the arguments he has espoused above are the same as discussed by Maximus of Tyre²⁹, a philosopher generally portrayed in the school of Middle Platonism. Origen was a capable philosopher and the mode in which he thought was Middle Platonic. When he addressed himself to the topic of prayer, he felt compelled, no doubt, to respond to the very substantial philosophical problems which some people had with prayer. Perhaps even his patron, Ambrose, had asked Origen to deal with these issues when he examined the topic of prayer. Origen’s concern is decidedly more cerebral than Tertullian’s. This a function of not only personal preference but also the audience each

²⁷ Oulton and Chadwick, 337. They refer to *Phaedrus* 245C and *Laws*, X, 893B. Plato regarded this motion “through itself” as the essential character of the soul. See also M. J. Denis, *De la philosophie d’Origène*, (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1884), 251.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 252. (*P.E.* 6.4)

²⁹ Daniélou quotes Maximus’ views on prayer, “God will not grant a request for anything bad.” Further Daniélou summarises Maximus’ opinions on prayer, “But what about prayers of petition in general? Can they make God change his mind? They cannot make God give a man something he is not fit to receive or refuse a man something he deserves....Moreover, if what you ask for is good, God will give it you even if you do not ask for it, and if it is bad he will not give you even if you do.” See Jean Daniélou, *Origen*. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 93.

was addressing. His philosophical presuppositions most certainly influenced his concept and practice of prayer.

C. Types of Prayer

Chapters 14 through 17 of *Peri Euches* begin with a brief exposition of 1 Timothy 2:1 as a way of entering into a discussion on different types of prayer. In this section Origen distinguishes between *supplication* (δεήσις), *prayers* (προσευχή), *intercessions* (εντεύξις), and *thanksgiving* (εὐχαριστία). *Supplication* is defined by Origen as a “petition offered with entreaty for the obtaining of something which a person lacks.”³⁰ He cites four examples of supplication from the Bible: the prayer of Zechariah for a son (Luke 1:13); Moses’ entreaty to the Lord to spare the children of Israel (Exodus 32:11); Moses’ reporting his prayers to the people for their forgiveness (Deuteronomy 9:18); and in the Greek version of Esther, Mordecai entreated the Lord to spare his people (Esther 13:8,9 in Vulgate or 4:17 in LXX).

When Origen considers the term *prayer* (προσευχή), he specifically mentions that *prayer* should be addressed only to the Father. Origen says that prayer is “offered in a dignified manner with ascription of praise by some one concerning matters of importance.”³¹ Johannes Quasten translates *προσευχή* as *adoration* in this context thus making it clear to the modern reader that Origen intended prayer to be centred around the adoration of the Father.³² Origen further explains in Chapter 15 of *Peri Euches* the following:

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 267. (P.E. 14.2)

³¹ *Ibid.*, 267. (P.E. 14.2)

³² Johannes Quasten, *Patrology: Volume 2*, (Allen, Texas: Thomas More Publishing, 1983), 67.

If we understand what prayer is, perhaps we ought not to pray to anyone born [of woman], nor even to Christ himself, but only to the God and Father of all, to whom also our Saviour prayed, as we have mentioned before, and teaches us to pray . . . For if, as is shown elsewhere, the Son is different from the Father in person and in subject, we must pray either to the Son and not to the Father, or to both, or to the Father alone. Now, everyone without exception will agree that it would be most absurd to pray to the Son and not to the Father, and that to maintain this would be contrary to revealed truth. If we were to pray to both, this would involve making our requests in the plural, . . . It remains, therefore, to pray only to God the Father of all, but not apart from the high priest, who was "appointed" by the Father.³³

It would seem that Origen has categorically ruled out any prayer to Christ. However, Pelikan points out that Origen "himself addressed prayers to Christ; and in opposition to a pagan critic he championed the appropriateness of 'petitions to the very Logos himself', consisting of intercession and thanksgiving, so long as the distinction between prayer in the absolute sense and prayer in the relative sense was observed."³⁴

With respect to the practice of prayer, one may gain an insight into Origen's doctrine of God. Some have accused him of a heretical subordinationism. However, various scholars have cautioned against a too simplistic view for one major reason. Origen lived before the Christological controversies of the fourth century. So Cunningham correctly points out that "Origen did not have the benefit of a Christological language that could state with precision the relationship of Son to Father or the character of Christ's divinity."³⁵ Cunningham may have too fervent a desire to portray Origen as more theologically acceptable to modern scholars than he actually was. Oulton and Chadwick probably speak more realistically when they state:

³³ Oulton and Chadwick, 269-270. (*cf. P.E.* 15.1)

His philosophic background at Alexandria provided him with a conception of God into which it was very difficult, if not impossible, to fit a doctrine of the essential Trinity. And, secondly, Origen lived before the controversies and the great conciliar decisions of the fourth and fifth centuries had given formal expression to the Catholic Faith. At the beginning of the third century thought was fluid on these matters.³⁶

On the whole, in his preference for prayer only to the Father, Origen is simply following the liturgical patterns of the Church of his day.³⁷ He cites five examples of prayer from Scripture. The references are: Azarias' prayer in the fiery furnace (LXX Daniel 3:25); Tobit's prayer of lament (Tobit 3:1-2); Hannah's prayer to God for a child (1 Samuel 1:10-11); Habakkuk's prayer (Habakkuk 3:1-2; and, Jonah's prayer (2:1-3). Origen notes that Jews would reject the first two references as not authoritative he thus proceeds to the final three references.³⁸ Oulton and Chadwick assert that these references do not fit Origen's own definition of prayer because the Habakkuk reference does not seem to have any matter of importance in it and Jonah's prayer has no ascription of praise.³⁹

Intercession is "a request to God for certain things made by one who possesses more than usual confidence."⁴⁰ Origen cites the following examples of intercession:

³⁴ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, Volume 1. The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 199. Pelikan quotes from *Contra Celsum* 5.4.

³⁵ Lawrence S. Cunningham, "Origen's *On Prayer*" in *Worship*, Vol. 67, July 1993, 337.

³⁶ Oulton and Chadwick, 189. However, Athenagorus, a second century apologist, wrote, "But the Son of God is the Logos of the Father, in idea and operation; for after the pattern of Him and by Him were all things made, the Father and the Son being one. And, the Son being in the Father and the Father in the Son, in oneness and power of spirit, the understanding and reason of the Father is the Son of God." Athenagorus, *The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagorus*, Trans. Marcus Dods, George Reith, and B. P. Pratten. Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Volume 2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), 385. (*Log.* 10.2)

³⁷ Cunningham, 337.

³⁸ Why Origen would have worried whether these citations were acceptable to the Jews is unclear. He quotes Tobit in other places (*P.E.* 11.1; 31.5) and does not seem to be concerned that Jews do not accept it as authoritative. The phrase Origen uses here to specify Tobit's standing in Jewish eyes is $\mu\eta$ ἐνδιαθήκω.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 267. (*P.E.* 14.2)

when Paul writes that the Spirit intercedes with groans (Romans 8:26-27); when Joshua prays for the sun to stand still (Joshua 10:12); and when Samson asks that God give him strength to topple the Philistine temple (Judges 16:30).

Thanksgiving is “an acknowledgement, with prayer, that blessings have been obtained from God, the greatness of that for which acknowledgement is made having been recognized, or else the apparent greatness to him who has been benefited of the benefit that has been conferred upon him.”⁴¹ Strangely enough, the one example that Origen gives for thanksgiving is Christ’s words in Matthew 11:25, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants.” This example is odd because the words rendered *I thank* in English is εὐχαριστῶ and not ἐξομολογῶμαι. Ἐξομολογῶμαι tended to be used more in the context of *confession* rather than *thanksgiving*. However, this linguistic puzzle may show the inter-relatedness of these two words. Εὐχαριστῶ is thanksgiving for what the Lord has done. Ἐξομολογῶμαι viewed from its positive connotation is a confession of faith. Such a confession naturally leads to what God has accomplished in Christ. This in turn can be rendered into praise or thanksgiving.

The modern Christian may wonder if Origen would allow any room for prayer for matters concerned with the material realm. They may be shocked to find that such an answer would be negative. Recall that Origen, true to his Platonic heritage, denigrated the material realm in favour of the spiritual realm. The closing sentence of chapter 17

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 267. (P.E. 14.2)

indicates his views on prayer for material matters. He writes, “We must pray concerning the pre-eminently and truly great and heavenly blessings; and as concerning the shadows that accompany these pre-eminent blessings we must commit this matter to God, who ‘knows before’ we ‘ask him what things’ we ‘have need of’ for the perishable body.”⁴² For Origen, much like other Platonists, the material realm was but a shadow of true reality. God takes care of the material realm and the prayers of believers affect the material realm but only as the material realm was affected through the spiritual realm.

D. Concluding Remarks

Tertullian’s unique topics focused on the practical areas of public worship and liturgical practice. His major concern in discussing women and public prayer, liturgical practices and times of prayer stressed the importance of prayer in fostering Christian unity. His hermeneutical approach certainly contributed to his idea and practice of prayer since he relied on literal exegesis in order to buttress his arguments. Origen seems to have little concern with these areas. Instead he dwells on definitions and philosophical understandings. Perhaps because philosophy is the pinnacle of human intellect, Origen sees that this is an appropriate place for the rational human mind to consider the mode of commerce between the human soul and the divine. How can anyone pray? What actually is prayer? These are questions with simple answers in one respect but they also cause great intellects to struggle. The concept of prayer must be understood before one can do it properly. Origen, thus, expends great effort defining terms. Once the terms are known then one must grapple with problems that arise when one seriously considers communion with God in prayer. Origen addresses himself to the very human concerns of prayer.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 274. (P.E. 17.2)

Origen's philosophical concern does seem to have some bearing on why he addressed himself to these topics and influenced his understanding and practice of prayer.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was an exploration of the factors which influenced the concept and practice of prayer in Tertullian's *De Oratione* and Origen's *Peri Euches*. This study has been one of comparison in which two ancient proponents of the Christian faith were held alongside each other so that the modern reader could come to a better appreciation of the polyvalent nature of the Christian witness concerning prayer—even in early Christian history. Numerous examples have been cited wherein Tertullian's views have differed from that of Origen's with respect to the Christian practice of prayer. The hypothesis that was put forward to explain this disagreement in viewpoint was that each author's formative influences in the areas of the Bible, hermeneutics, and philosophical world view were important factors in delineating their notion and practice of prayer.

Chapter 2 discussed background information related to the three influences that were traced throughout this thesis. This was not a comprehensive discussion, instead it focused on various ideas within the factors which were pertinent to Tertullian's and Origen's concept and practice of prayer in their respective treatises. For Tertullian, the pertinent issue attached to Scripture was his choice of Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer. His use of Old Testament citations as compared to New Testament ones is also noteworthy. The ratio of New Testament to Old Testament citations is approximately 5:1. Tertullian's claim that Christian prayer is a departure from Old Testament prayer is a

theme that has often been noted in the preceding discussions.¹ Tertullian was certainly interested in demonstrating the newness of Christian prayer in its form and especially in its knowledge of God as Father.

Origen's use of the Bible is slightly different. Although he cites from the New Testament more than he does from the Old Testament; the ratio of New Testament citations to Old Testament is a bit under 2:1. The testimony of Scripture as located in the Old Testament was much more important to Origen than it was to Tertullian. This fact fits nicely with the notion that Origen wished to stress the continuity of prayer from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Thus, prayer by Origen's definition, should only fittingly be addressed to the Father. The God to whom prayers were addressed in the Old Testament is the same God to whom prayers are addressed in the New Testament. The very nature of prayer, then, remains constant because the God to whom believers pray is the same. This distinction in biblical usage should not belie the fact that Origen, too, shows heavy reliance on the four Gospels in his treatise. Again Matthew is the most quoted Gospel because Origen also favours Matthew's account of the Lord's Prayer. However, Luke and John are also significantly present in this discussion. The reason for Luke's presence is Origen's constant referral to the Lukan version of the Lord's Prayer. John's Gospel is as present as Luke's probably because of its more spiritual focus. The discussion on the clauses in the Lord's Prayer which contain the greatest preponderance of Johannine citations display a decidedly spiritual interpretation.²

¹ For example, Tertullian contrasts prayer in Old Testament times with Christian prayer (*De Orat.* 29.2).

² See the discussion of "Our Father which art in heaven" (Chapter 3.II) and "Give us this day our daily bread" (Chapter 3.VI).

Hermeneutics also seems to have had an impact on Tertullian's and Origen's understanding and practice of prayer in their treatises. The mere fact that there was so much biblical material used in each treatise should be an indication of the importance of a framework for interpretation of these Scriptural passages. As was noted in Chapter 2, Tertullian did not set out a specific hermeneutic but his methodology in interpretation bears tacit witness to the presence of a hermeneutic. He looked for the common meanings attached to words, for the contexts within which passages he was studying were located, and for a literal reading of the text. His hermeneutic seems most akin to modern modes of evangelical interpretation. Tertullian was not a pre-nascent critical biblical scholar. Instead his training in rhetoric seemed to govern his exegesis more than anything else. As well, there are elements in his hermeneutic which would generally be rejected in this day. His use of typology and allegory show that for all the affinities one may see in him with the modern world, he was located within an ancient milieu which prized typology and allegory as valid modes of exegesis. After all, his background in Stoic philosophy included the use of allegory to explain ancient texts which may be otherwise obscure and offensive to readers. These factors did have an impact on his concept and practice of prayer as was demonstrated in subsequent chapters to Chapter 2.³

Origen's hermeneutic was eminently spiritual. This is not to say that Tertullian's was not spiritual. It means that Origen's interest in biblical hermeneutics led him to remove the hearers from a mundane environment and help lift them to a spiritual plane in which they could encounter the spiritual truths which are much more important for the

³ For example, see the discussion on "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Chapter 3.V)

individual soul's return to perfection. The reader of *Peri Euches* notes that Origen took elements of the Old Testament—notably some of its prayers—and spiritualised the answer to these prayers. No longer does God give succour or support in the material realm. Instead, these prayers were used as types that were subsequently applied to spiritual realities (*Peri Euches* 13.3-5). The four step process by Karen Jo Torjeson discussed in Chapter 2 proved helpful in demonstrating the way in which Origen would move from the grammatical and historical circumstances of a text to a spiritual and existential interpretation of the text. This hermeneutical influence was vitally important in defining Origen's idea and practice of prayer in *Peri Euches*.

When one considers the philosophical influences on Tertullian and Origen, one sees the greatest divergence between the two writers. It is true that Origen's Middle Platonism contained Stoic elements that would be shared by Tertullian; however, it is the overtly anti-material bias of Platonism that seems to have the greatest influence on Origen. It was established in Chapter 2 that Tertullian drew some inspiration from Stoic philosophy. For Tertullian, philosophy was helpful insofar as it aided people in their quest to know God more. The relative paucity of philosophical influences in *De Oratione* shows that Tertullian was not as dependent on philosophical notions to describe prayer as was Origen. This dearth of philosophical reasoning can be explained in a number of ways. First of all, Tertullian's audience may not have been sufficiently sophisticated to understand philosophical ideas. Secondly, Tertullian may have thought that philosophical language would not be helpful to describe prayer. The latter explanation seems more reasonable if one recalls the eminently practical nature of this treatise. Where philosophical notions seem to occur in *De Oratione*, one sees that Tertullian is

dwelling more upon the nature of God than he is about the form or subjects of prayer.

For example, when Tertullian discusses the first clause of the Lord's Prayer, he includes a brief discussion of the relative disposition of the Father, the Son, and the Church as Mother. As well, the fact that he draws attention to God's new name as *Father* demonstrates the notion of the increasing knowledge of God, itself a part of Stoic natural theology (cf. *De Oratione* 2). These Stoic categories influenced his understanding and practice of prayer. Much of what has been mentioned above involves communal relations. One should recall that Tertullian places great importance on the fellowship attendant on communal prayer. His description of the Father, the Son as well as the Church as Mother provide a solid basis for such practice.

Origen's Middle Platonism is pervasive throughout *Peri Euches*. One can have little doubt that it played an important part in his writing. Whenever Origen shows a preference for spiritual over material matters he is demonstrating his Platonic heritage. Whenever he grapples with fundamental questions connected with prayer he shows his Platonic heritage. For example, his opening discussion on the sheer impossibility of prayer highlights the divide between the transcendent, spiritual God and his finite, material people. As well, his discussion in *Peri Euches* of the problems that some have with prayer come from Platonic sources (cf. *Peri Euches* 5-8.1). The reader's attention has been drawn to sufficient examples of Origen's Middle Platonic heritage in *Peri Euches* to conclude that it played an important part in his concept and practice of prayer in *Peri Euches*.

The last three chapters of this thesis were not only to show a comparison of what Tertullian and Origen wrote but also to demonstrate that the three presuppositions

discussed above were indeed present in the work. Not only has this thesis essayed to do this, but it has also demonstrated that these presuppositions were important in each author's understanding and practice of prayer in their respective works. The chapter on the Lord's Prayer showed that Origen and Tertullian agreed on some points but differed on others. It is interesting that the two seemed to agree when they both adopted a more spiritual bias. This notion is not surprising in Origen, but it is in Tertullian. Is this inconsistent on Tertullian's part? Perhaps it is. The clause concerning God giving people their daily bread is spiritualised by Origen to mean a feeding of the soul with spiritual food while Tertullian takes the clause to mean that Christ is the bread of life who gives eternal life. On the surface their conclusions may seem different but Origen sees the soul as immortal in need of sustenance. This sustenance comes from the *Logos* who is also Christ. So there really is not much difference between the two on this point.

More important are the points of difference between Tertullian's and Origen's exposition on the Lord's Prayer. The first clause of the Lord's Prayer shows a difference which highlights the notion of discontinuity of prayer between the Testaments for Tertullian and the continuity for Origen. Tertullian stresses the revelation by Christ of a new name for God while Origen stresses the immutability of God. Strangely enough, both of these authors are correct in what they affirm. Tertullian is certainly correct in showing the newer way of addressing God in prayer as *Father*. Origen is also correct in affirming that God does not change. The God who revealed himself to Moses is the same God who revealed himself in Jesus Christ. Origen's affirmation is ethical, Tertullian's is relational. The two need not be mutually exclusive. Their discussion on the second phrase of the Lord's Prayer seems to further their arguments already begun in the

previous section. In fact it is in this section in which they discuss the importance of the name *Father*.

Tertullian's discussion of the clause about the coming kingdom is eschatological in its focus; it looks toward the accomplishment of what God has promised through Christ. Origen, on the other hand, dwells on the kingdom's presence in believers in the present day. As was pointed out in the discussion above, Tertullian and Origen embody the two sides of the debate about the nature of the kingdom.

The petition praying for God's will to be done in earth as in heaven further involves differentiation between Tertullian and Origen. Tertullian argues that it is God's will that people are obedient to his teachings. Further, he equates *heaven* with people's spiritual nature and *earth* with people's material nature. Origen conceives of God's will as people becoming Christlike. His notion of heaven and earth has a dual understanding. First of all, *heaven* means Christ and *earth* means the Church. Secondly, *heaven* represents Christlikeness and *earth* represents inferior or material things.

Since the petition about daily bread has recently been discussed, it will be passed over here. The petition concerning forgiveness is concerned with being forgiven one's debts while one forgives the debts owed to oneself. Tertullian defines the notion of *debt* as a biblical idiom for *sin*. Origen sees *debt* more as moral obligations that people have with each other and with God. Origen stresses ethical living before God and humankind. Although Origen does mention sin in conjunction with the notion of debt, he seems more inclined to understand debt in a more societal mode than as sin—something which separates a person from God and from other people.

Tertullian's and Origen's discussion of temptation centres around where each author places the primary location for temptation. Tertullian sees the Devil as the main source for temptation. He, therefore, sees this petition of the Lord's Prayer as a request that God not allow the Devil to tempt anyone beyond what they can bear. Origen, on the other hand, locates temptation within life in general. The Devil may or may not tempt but it is life which constantly tempts the believer. The deliverance that Origen seeks then is that temptation not be of the type that overwhelms believers. It is important to remember that for Origen, one is delivered from temptation by pure thinking. One may justly wonder if Origen is too anthropocentric at this point. Why would one bother to pray to God concerning temptation if it is strictly a personal discipline? It would seem that although Origen sees the locus of activity in resisting temptation primarily within the soul of the individual, the life of the individual is one of constant interaction between the human and the divine. It is only as one becomes more spiritual (i.e., more in tune with God) that one can focus one's thoughts toward resisting temptation.

The two final chapters on common topics and unique topics also bear considerable testimony to the notion that Scripture, hermeneutics, and philosophy were important elements within Tertullian's and Origen's concept and practice of prayer in their works. In Chapter 4 one sees the topic of the emotional attitude of those who pray as immensely influenced by philosophical notions (even more so than biblical notions). Both Tertullian and Origen point out that the one who prays should be free from anger and any other disturbance of mind. It would seem that both writers held the view that emotions were beneath God's dignity. This being the case, it was inappropriate to approach God with any bad emotions. This is an element of their notions of prayer more akin to Platonism or

Stoicism than it is to biblical faith. Origen seems to ignore examples of prayer in the Old Testament which show people considerably disturbed in mind (i.e., Hannah in 1 Samuel 1). Given that Tertullian emphasised the newness of life in Christ and thus a disjunction with prayer as conceived in the Old Testament, he still ignores a number of New Testament examples wherein great people of faith seem somehow disturbed in mind (i.e., Christ in Gethsemane, Matthew 26:36-46; Paul asking to have a “thorn removed from his flesh”, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

Both authors treat the spiritual meaning and efficacy of prayer. Tertullian describes prayer within the context of worship using vocabulary and ideas reminiscent of pagan sacrifices. It is through this language of sacrifice that Tertullian shows the efficacy of prayer. According to Tertullian, those who pray with a pure heart will obtain everything that they ask of God. Origen, on the other hand, sees the efficacy of prayer in numerous ways. First, prayer has a positive psychological effect for those who pray. Second, those who pray are also kept from sins. Lastly, Origen sees that those who pray have their understanding elevated above the mundane to the spiritual realm. As far as the efficacy of prayers is concerned, both authors have a positive view. Tertullian stresses the disjunction between the Testaments in that prayers used to deliver people from suffering; whereas, Christian prayer teaches patient endurance amid suffering. Origen stresses continuity between the Testaments but spiritualises the Old Testament prayers so that they have a spiritual and existential application to the present day.

Chapter 4 also focused on the physical posture of those who prayed. Both Tertullian and Origen seemed to assume that people stood with arms outstretched in prayer. There does not seem to be any differentiation between personal and communal

prayer. As well, both recognise that kneeling is an important posture when one is confessing sins to God. Their discussion on posture in prayer seems to indicate a common heritage or church practice.

Although space in this thesis does not permit, perhaps future study could examine the importance of church tradition and praxis as other influences on developing a notion and practise of prayer for Tertullian and Origen. As well, a full study into the topic of prayer in all of Tertullian's and Origen's writings would be beneficial. One would be able to trace the development in each author's deliberations on prayer. Since Tertullian was a well known proponent of Montanism later in his life, one may well discover that his theological shift had an impact on his concept of prayer. Study of the development in Origen's thought is more problematic since many of his extant writings are preserved in Rufinus' Latin translations. These translations generally do not reflect Origen's thought since Rufinus often removed some of Origen's more objectionable ideas from his work.

This chapter also discusses the method by which Tertullian and Origen introduce the topic of prayer to their audiences. Tertullian stresses disjunction between the two Testaments claiming that what was old had been abolished, completed, fulfilled, and perfected—at least with respect to the practice of prayer. He then points to three practical ways of prayer set out in the Gospels. Prayer should be in secret. It should be economical in its choice of words. The Lord's Prayer is a good model for prayer since it shows the sorts of things that are appropriate in prayer. Origen begins his treatise with a discussion on the sheer impossibility of prayer. The only way that he sees that prayer is possible is through the mediation of the Holy Spirit. Once such a problem is surmounted he then discusses the topics of appropriate subjects and modes of prayer.

Chapter 5 focused on the unique topics that each author addressed with respect to prayer. Tertullian discusses the dress of women in worship, some liturgical practices of worship, and how often one ought to pray. The themes he highlights in these discussions concern maintaining fellowship in the community especially in its prayer life. Women should be veiled so as not to be a distraction. Those fasting and taking part in station days should not absent themselves from the prayers because this breaks fellowship. Finally, five set times of prayer are detailed not only because it is helpful for the individual believer to develop the habit of regular prayer but because it ensures that all believers will be praying. These topics are intensely practical and show Tertullian's desire to help his audience to become people who prayed. Origen's topics of discussion show his own peculiar interests. Origen concentrates on defining prayer based on the words that are used in Scripture to describe it. This topic shows his background as a grammarian. As well, his discussion of the philosophical problems attached to prayer show his own philosophical background. This subject has been discussed at numerous occasions in this thesis. However, Origen does provide some very practical guides to prayer when he discusses the concept and subjects of prayer. The pattern for prayer that he provides is adoration, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, and adoration.

This brief overview shows that there is some credibility in the hypothesis that Scripture, hermeneutics, and philosophy were major influences in Tertullian's and Origen's concept and practice of prayer in their treatises. Whether one resonates with the sort of ideas Tertullian and Origen espoused with respect to prayer, one should not doubt that both of these men prayed. Furthermore, they both demonstrated that the life of the Christian should include prayer as a key element to it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Documents

Athenagorus, *The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagorus*, Trans. Marcus Dods, George Reith, and B. P. Pratten. Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Volume 2. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870.

Diogenes Laertius. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. 2 Volumes. Trans. R. D. Hicks, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Eusebius Pamphilius, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Christian Frederick Cruse, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995 reprint.

Justin Martyr, "First Apology" in Cyril C. Richardson, ed. and trans. *Early Christian Fathers*. New York: Touchstone Book, 1996.

Origen. "Die Schrift Vom Gebet." in *Origenes Werke*, 295-403. ed. Paul Koetschau. 2 band. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1899.

_____. *An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, First Principles: Book IV, Prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs, Homily XXVII on Numbers*, trans Rowan A. Greer. New York: Paulist Press, 1979.

_____. "On Prayer." in *Alexandrian Christianity*, eds. and trans. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick. Library of Christian Classics, II. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954.

_____. *The Writings of Origen (Vol. 1)*. Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Volume 10. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869.

_____. *The Writings of Origen (Vol. 2)*. Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Volume 23. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872.

Plato, *Plato V. Republic I*. Trans. Paul Shorey. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982 reprint.

Plotinus, *Enneads. VI. 1-5*. Trans. A. H. Armstrong. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Tertullian. "Prayer." in *Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works*, trans. Emily Joseph Daly. New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1959, 153-88.

_____. "Tertullian's Tract on Prayer." *De Oratione: Latin and English*. ed. and trans. Ernest Evans. London: SPCK, 1953.

- _____. *De Oratione in Tertulliani Opera*, 257-74. Vol. Pars 1. Opera Catholica. Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 1. Turnhout: Brepols, 1954.
- _____. *Against Marcion*. Trans. Peter Holmes. Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Volume 7. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870.
- _____. *The Writings of Tertullian (Vol. 1)*. Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Volume 11. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869.
- _____. *The Writings of Tertullian (Vol. 2)*. Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Volume 15. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870.

Secondary Documents

- Attridge, Harold W. and Hata Gohei, eds. *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992.
- Ayers, Robert H. *Language, Logic, and Reason in the Church Fathers : a Study of Tertullian, Augustine, and Aquinas*. Hildesheim ; New York : Olms, 1979.
- Barnes, Timothy David. *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Beckwith, Roger T. "A Modern Theory of Old Testament Canon." in *Vetus Testamentum* 41, no. 4 (1991): 385-95.
- Bostock, Gerald. "Allegory and the Interpretation of the Bible in Origen." *Literature and Theology* 1, no. 1 (1987): 39-53.
- Bouyer, Louis. *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers. A History of Christian Spirituality. Volume I*. Trans. Mary P. Ryan. New York: Seabury Press, 1963.
- Bray, Gerald Lewis. *Holiness and the Will of God : Perspectives on the Theology of Tertullian*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979.
- Crouzel, Henri. *Origène et la Philosophie*. Aubier: 1962.
- Cullmann, Oscar. *Prayer in the New Testament*. trans. John Bowden. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Cunningham, Lawrence. "Origen's *On Prayer*: Reflection and Appreciation." *Worship* 67, no. 4 (1993): 332-39.
- d'Alès, Adhémar. *La Théologie de Tertullien*. 2e éd. ed. Paris: Beauchesne, 1905.

- Daniélou, Jean. *Origen*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955.
- Davies, J. G., ed. *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*. London: S. C. M. Press, Ltd., 1972.
- Di Berardino, Angelo and Basil Studer, eds. *History of Theology: The Patristic Period*. Volume 1. Trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996.
- Dillon, John M. *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*. London: Duckworth, 1969.
- _____. *The Golden Chain : Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity*. Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain; Variorum; Brookfield, Vt., USA: Gower, 1990.
- Edwards, M. J. "Gnostics, Greeks, and Origen: The Interpretation of Interpretation ." in *Journal of Theological Studies* 44 , no. 1 (1993): 70-89.
- Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright and J. I. Packer, eds. *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988.
- Finan, Thomas and Vincent Twomey, eds. *The Relationship Between Neoplatonism and Christianity*. Kill Lane, Blackrock, Co. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1992.
- _____. *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*. Cambridge: Four Courts Press, 1995.
- Grace, Madeline. "The Catechumenate Within the Patristic Heritage." in *Diakonia* 30, no. 2-3 (1997): 77-87.
- Grant, Robert McQueen. "Two Notes on Tertullian [His Account of Greek Philosophical Views on God]." *Vigiliae Christianae* 5, no. 2 (1951): 113-15.
- Hanson, R. P. C. *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation*. London: SCM Press, 1959.
- _____. "Notes on Tertullian's Interpretation of Scripture." *Journal of Theological Studies* 12 (1961): 273-79.
- Harl, Marguerite. *Le Dechiffrement du Sens : Etudes Sur L'Hermeneutique Chretienne D'Origene à Gregoire de Nysse* . Paris: Institut d'etudes augustinienes, 1993.

- Harris, R. Laird, et al., eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Heine, Ronald E. "Gregory of Nyssa's Apology for Allegory." in *Vigiliae Christianae* 38, no. 4 (1984): 360-370.
- _____. "Stoic Logic As Handmaid to Exegesis in Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John." *Journal of Theological Studies* 44, no. 1 (1993): 90-117.
- House, Dennis K. "The Relation of Tertullian's Christology to Pagan Philosophy ." *Dionysius* 12 (1988): 29-36.
- Kannengiesser, Charles and William L. Petersen. *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy [Conf Papers, Origen Colloquy, Univ of Notre Dame, April 1986]* . Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Revised ed. Harper Collins, 1978.
- Kittel, Gerhard and Gerhard Frierichs, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Reprint of 1985 edition. Abridged and Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992
- Lampert, Jay. "Origen on Time." in *Laval Théologique Et Philosophie* 52, no. 3 (1996): 649-64.
- Livingstone, Elizabeth A. *Studia Patristica*. Vol. XXXI. Papers presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristics held in Oxford 1995. Preaching, Second Century, Tertullian to Arnobius, Egypt before Nicaea. Louvain: Peeters, 1997.
- Lundin, Roger, Clarence Walhout and Anthony Thiselton. *The Promise of Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- MacRae, Richard J. and George W. Clifford, eds. *The Word in the World: Essays in Honor of Frederick L Moriarty*, Cambridge, Mass: Weston College Press, 1973.
- McCartney, Dan G. "Literal and Allegorical Interpretation in Origen's Contra Celsum." in *Westminster Theological Journal* 48 , no. 2 (1986): 281-301.
- McDonald, Lee M. *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*. revised and expanded ed. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.
- Meyendorff, John. *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*. Reprint of revised 2nd edition. New York: Fordham University Press, 1983.
- Monceaux, Paul and France. *Histoire Littéraire De L'Afrique Chrétienne Depuis Les Origines Jusqu'à L'Invasion Arabe*. Tome 1. Tertullien et les origines. Paris: E. Leroux, 1901.

- Mulder, Martin Jan and Harry Sysling. *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.
- O'Malley, T. P. *Tertullian and the Bible: Language, Imagery, Exegesis*. Utrecht: Dekker & Van de Vegt N. V. Nijmegen, 1967.
- Oden, Thomas. *Requiem: A Lament in Three Movements*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.
- Oliver, William C. "Origen and the New Testament Canon." in *Restoration Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (1989): 13-26.
- Osborn, Eric F. *Beginning of Christian Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- _____. *The Emergence of Christian Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- _____. "History, Exegesis and Prayer ." *Reformed Theological Review* 20/21 (1961): 20: 79-87; 21: 16-22.
- _____. *Tertullian First Theologian of the West*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Systematic Theology: Volume 3*. Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, Volume 1. The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Petzer, Jacobus H. "Tertullian's Text of Acts." in *Second Century* 8, no. 4 (1991): 201-15.
- Rankin, David. *Tertullian and the Church*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Rist, J. M. *Stoic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.
- Quasten, Johannes. *Patrology: The Ante-Nicene Literature After Irenaeus*. Allen, Texas: Christian Classics, 1983.
- Sanders, John. *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Scalise, Charles J. "Allegorical Flights of Fancy: The Problem of Origen's Exegesis." in *Greek Orthodox Review* Vol. 32 (1987): 69-88.

- Sell, Alan P. F. "Theology and the Philosophical Climate: Case-Studies From the Second Century A.D." in *Vox Evangelica* 13 (1983): 41-66.
- Sider, Robert D. *Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- _____. "Approaches to Tertullian." in *Second Century* 2, no. 4 (1982): 228-60.
- Simonetti, Manlio. *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction of Patristic Exegesis*. T & T Clark, 1994.
- Stead, Christopher. *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Tilley, Maureen A. "The Use of Scripture in Christian North Africa; an Examination of Donatist Hermeneutics [Tertullian to Augustine]." Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1989.
- Torjesen, Karen Jo. *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Structure in Origen's Exegesis*. Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 1986.
- Trigg, Joseph Wilson. *Origen*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Tyson, John R. *Invitation to Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Van de Beeke, A. "Origen As Theologian of the Will." *Reformed Review* 51, no. 3 (1998): 242-54.
- Van der Geest, J. E. L. *Le Christ Et L'Ancien Testament Chez Tertullien. Recherche Terminologique*. Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1972.
- Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.
- Widdicombe, Peter. *The Fatherhood of God From Origen to Athanasius*. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Williams, David Salter. "On Tertullian's Text of Luke." in *Second Century* 8, no. 4 (1991): 193-99.
- Williams, George Huntston. "The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, by Harry Austryn Wolfson: a Review Article." *Church History* 26 (1957): 156-68.
- Young, Frances. *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Zeller, E. *The Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics*. Trans. Oswald Reichel. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892.

APPENDIX A

THE ORDER OF *DE ORATIONE* AND *PERI EUCHES*

Provided below are the chapter topics for Tertullian's *De Oratione* and Origen's *Peri Euches*.

Tertullian's *De Oratione*

| Chapter | Topics |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Introduction to prayer |
| 2 | Lord's Prayer: "Father in Heaven" |
| 3 | Lord's Prayer: "Hallowed be thy name" |
| 4 | Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done in heaven and on earth" |
| 5 | Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come" |
| 6 | Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread" |
| 7 | Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" |
| 8 | Lord's Prayer: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" |
| 9 | Concluding thoughts on the Lord's Prayer |
| 10 | Petitions offered in prayer |
| 11 | Prayer should be free of anger |
| 12 | Prayer should be free of any other disturbance of mind |
| 13 | Hands need not be washed before prayer |
| 14 | Hands are raised and spread in prayer |
| 15 | Cloaks should not be set aside in prayer |
| 16 | One need not sit after prayer is ended |
| 17 | Prayer should be done with humility |
| 18 | Those who fast should still exchange the kiss of peace after prayer |
| 19 | Those on station days should not refrain from prayers |
| 20 | Women should be moderately attired |
| 21 | The problem: some in the Church allow virgins to be unveiled |
| 22 | The resolution: inclusiveness of the term <i>woman</i> , thus virgins too should be veiled |
| 23 | The practice of kneeling in prayer |
| 24 | Prayer can be done anywhere |
| 25 | Prayer should observe particular times |
| 26 | Pray with visitors to your house |
| 27 | The addition of Alleluias and psalms after the prayer |
| 28 | Prayer offered in the spirit is a fitting sacrificial victim |
| 29 | The efficacy of prayer |

Origen's *Peri Euches*¹

| Chapter | Topics |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1, 2 | Introduction to the subject of prayer |
| 3, 4 | The words <i>Euche</i> and <i>Proseuche</i> |
| 5 | Philosophical objections to prayer |
| 6-8.1 | Answers to Objections |
| 8.2-10 | Advantages of Prayer |
| 11 | Angels and Christ pray with believers |
| 12-13.1 | Whole life ought to be a prayer |
| 13.2 | Examples of answered prayer from the Old Testament |
| 13.3-5 | Similar prayers answered today |
| 14.1 | Content of prayer |
| 14.2-5 | Forms of prayer |
| 14.6-15 | Prayer proper addressed solely to the Father |
| 16-17 | Content of prayer |
| 18 | Introduction to the Lord's Prayer |
| 19-20 | Prayer should not be done in streets or synagogues |
| 21 | Prayer should not be vain repetitions |
| 22-23 | Lord's Prayer: "Our Father which art in heaven" |
| 24 | Lord's Prayer: "Hallowed be thy name" |
| 25 | Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come" |
| 26 | Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" |
| 27 | Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread" |
| 28 | Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors" |
| 29 | Lord's Prayer: "Bring us not into temptation" |
| 30 | Lord's Prayer: "But deliver us from the evil one" |
| 31.1-3 | Disposition and posture in prayer |
| 31.4-7 | Where one ought to pray |
| 32 | Prayer toward the East commended |
| 33 | Subjects of Prayer |
| 34 | Conclusion |

¹ The breakdown of *Peri Euches* is based upon Oulton and Chadwick's topical division of the text. See John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, eds. *Alexandrian Christianity*. Library of Christian Classics. Vol. 2, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954), 202-5.