


Tertullian - Treatise on the Soul (Modern US English Translation)

By *Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus*



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Whatever noxious vapors, accordingly, exhaled from philosophy, obscure the clear and wholesome atmosphere of truth, it will be for Christians to clear away, both by shattering to pieces the arguments which are drawn from the principles of things—I mean those of the philosophers—and by opposing to them the maxims of heavenly wisdom—that is, such as are revealed by the Lord; in order that both the pitfalls wherewith philosophy captivates the heathen may be removed, and the means employed by heresy to shake the faith of Christians may be repressed. We have already decided one point in our controversy with Hermogenes, as we said at the beginning of this treatise, when we claimed the soul to be formed by the breathing of God, and not out of matter. We relied even there on the clear direction of the inspired statement which informs us how that “the Lord God breathed on man’s face the breath of life, so that man became a living soul”—by that inspiration of God, of course. On this point, therefore, nothing further need be investigated or advanced by us. It has its own treatise, and its own heretic. I shall regard it as my introduction to the other branches of the subject. -Tertullian

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