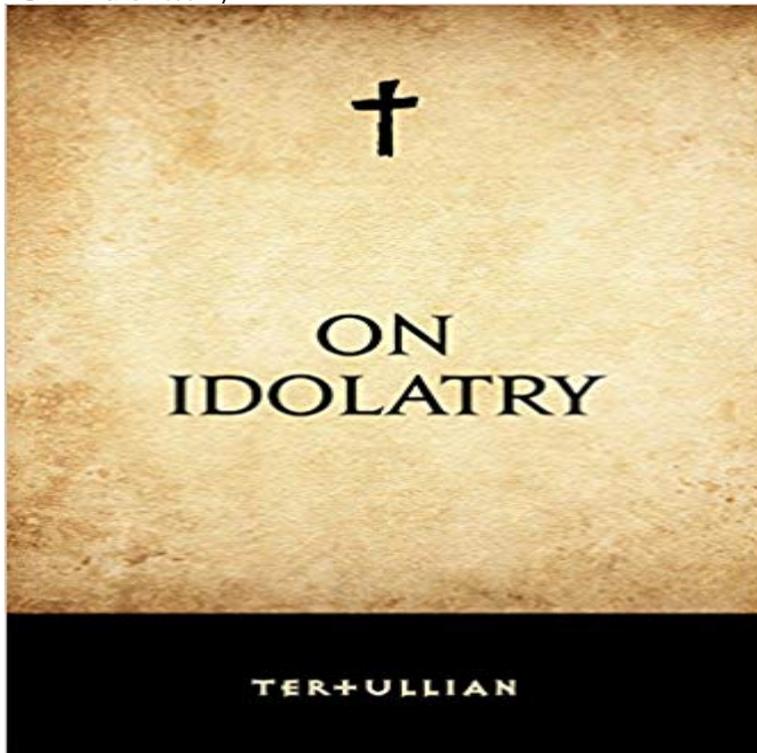


On Idolatry



Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, commonly referred to as Tertullian (c. 160 c. 220 AD), was raised in Carthage. He was thought to be the son of a Roman centurion, a trained lawyer, and an ordained priest. These assertions rely on the accounts of Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, and St. Jerome's *De viris illustribus* (On famous men). Tertullian is the first Christian author to produce an extensive corpus of Latin Christian literature. He also was a notable early Christian apologist and a polemicist against heresy. Tertullian has been called the father of Latin Christianity and the founder of Western theology. Though conservative, he did originate and advance new theology to the early Church. He is perhaps most famous for being the oldest extant Latin writer to use the term Trinity (Latin *trinitas*), and giving the oldest extant formal exposition of a Trinitarian theology. [Other Latin formulations that first appear in his work are three Persons, one Substance as the Latin *tres Personae, una Substantia*. He wrote his trinitarian formula after becoming a Montanist; his ideas were at first rejected as heresy by the church at large, but later accepted as Christian orthodoxy. Scant reliable evidence exists to inform us about Tertullian's life. Most history about him comes from passing references in his own writings.

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