EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS:

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECCLESIOLOGY AND

SOTERIOLOGY FOR CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

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by

David Forrest Mills

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APPROVAL SHEET

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For my Lord Jesus Christ and my darling wife Anna

Vos amo, et vobis gratias ago.

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PREFACE

I want to thank the many professors and teachers who have taught me how to study history and how to love it, and I want to send my appreciations to the staff at James P. Boyce Centennial Library for helping me acquire resources during the COVID-19 quarantine. I also want to thank Tyler Flatt for his expertise in helping me to understand Cyprian's Latin, as well as Henk Bakker for reading my dissertation and providing comments. However, I would especially like to thank Gregg R. Allison and Stephen O. Presley for taking the time and effort to serve on my dissertation committee, for keeping me accountable to produce good scholarship. Additionally, Michael A. G. Haykin spent many hours answering my questions and meeting with me to teach me what it means to be a good scholar and teacher. As the first person in my family to receive a terminal degree, I came into the program with no prior knowledge of how higher education functions, so I am forever thankful for his help. Most importantly, I appreciate the hard work and dedication that came from my lovely wife Anna Mills. She sacrificed to an extent that only we will ever understand in order that I might fulfill my calling of receiving this education. Finally, I thank my Lord Jesus Christ. Ultimately, I wrote this dissertation for you, since I may not have had the courage nor the willpower to pursue this degree without your strength and guidance in my life.

D. Forrest Mills

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PART 1

PROLEGOMENA

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Cyprian of Carthage (bishop 248–258) was arguably the most influential bishop of the mid-third century, possibly even the most respected Latin theologian prior to Augustine of Hippo (bishop 394–430).[1] Cyprian's thought shaped theological discussion long after his martyrdom during the Valerian persecution (256–260). In fact, the Donatist controversy of the fourth and fifth centuries was partly a debate over who was following Cyprian's teachings.[2] Of the various theological loci, most scholarship has focused upon his ecclesiology, especially his understanding of the role of the bishop, as well as his thoughts concerning the relationship between the Roman bishop and the rest of the episcopal college. Within these discussions, scholarship has largely assumed that Cyprian closely linke d his ecclesiology and soteriology because he believed that only those within the one true church received salvation. While a correct assumption, no monograph or thesis has yet investigated this topic and attempted to explain why he joined them together. This dissertation seeks to explore the relationship between ecclesiology and soteriology in the writings of Cyprian. It examines the question why he

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[1] Cyprian's full name was Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus. Born around 200 into probably the decurion class of Punic ethnicity in Carthage, Cyprian was not converted until an adult *circa* 246. He was both evangelized and discipled by a man named Caecilius, who was an aged presbyter of the Carthaginian church. Cyprian might have changed his *nomen* (family name) to Caecilius after his baptism to honor his early mentor. Pontus, *Vita Cypriani* 4, in *The Complete Works of Saint Cyprian of Carthage* (ed. with commentary by Phillip Campbell, Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing, 2013) Hereafter, all citations will be given as Pontus, *Vita Cypriani* 4. According to Clarke, Cyprian's *agnomen* (first name) appears to have been of Punic origin. Cyprian's *cognomen* (nickname) means 'from Cyprus.' The reason why 'Cyprianus' became his *cognomen* is unknown. Drawing from Pontus' *Vita Cypriani* 15, Clarke has suggested that Cyprian might have gone by Thascius when among those in Carthage. G. W. Clarke, trans. and ed., *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, vol. 3, *Letters 55–66* (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 323.

[2] David E. Wilhite, *Ancient African Christianity: An Introduction to a Unique Context and Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2017), 154.

believed the schismatics had lost salvation, even though they held orthodox views on issues like the Trinity and the person of Christ.[3]

Thesis

Based upon his reading of Scripture, Cyprian assumed that the spiritual church and visible church were virtually wed together, so those who separated from the visible church also left the spiritual church and thus lost their salvation. For Cyprian, the spiritual church was all Christians in whom the Holy Spirit was indwelling and imparting salvation. He defined the visible church as the local congregations glued together through the union of their bishops. In a sense salvation began at conversion because catechumens were saved if they died prior to their baptism. However, the spiritual church and visible church were linked via the Holy Spirit, who worked through the sacraments and bishops of the church both to initiate salvation and to strengthen Christians for perseverance. Therefore, when people broke fellowship with their congregation by apostatizing or becoming a schismatic, they also lost the saving presence of the Spirit. Unlike catechumens, schismatics and heretics could not die as martyrs because they intentionally rejected the church and thus did not have the Holy Spirit who bestowed salvation on it.

Methodology

This dissertation is founded upon the Latin texts of Cyprian's writings located in *Corpus Christianorum*, volumes 3–3F.[4] It largely accepts the received writings in this collection, rather than delving too much into the manuscripts or text-critical issues. Unless otherwise specified in a footnote, English quotations come from the *Ancient*

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[3] This dissertation defines both ecclesiology and soteriology in the fullest meaning of these terms. It does not truncate ecclesiology into issues of governance and polity but looks at other issues like the sacraments. It also does not limit soteriology to merely justification and conversion but includes the whole *ordo salutis*, such as sanctification.

[4] Whenever this dissertation quotes from the Latin text, it places the line numbers for the text alongside the chapter and section numbers.

Christian Writers series for *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate, De lapsis*, and Cyprian's *Epistulae*.[5] Translations for Cyprian's other writings come from the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Three major systems for enumerating Cyprian's letters exist. Since this dissertation works from the Latin texts, it uses the enumeration of the *Corpus Christianorum* series. While the claims in this dissertation are established upon the primary literature, this work also routinely references and engages various secondary literature when applicable, thus demonstrating how this scholarship relates to other books and articles concerning Cyprian's thought, as well as research over the ecclesiology and soteriology of the third-century church. This dissertation pays special attention to literature written in the last hundred years (since 1920), as representing the most recent scholarly thought on Cyprian.

State of the Question

Most treatments of Cyprian have focused on his ecclesiology, specifically concerning what he believed about the Roman bishop. The crux of the matter has centered around the existence of two editions of *De unitate*, with one edition elevating the Roman bishop to a position over other bishops.[6] Scholarship originally followed Edward White Benson (1829–1896) in believing that a medieval editor added the primacy text to make Cyprian sound more Roman Catholic.[7] However, Maurice Bévenot in *The Tradition of Manuscripts* (1961) proved that the primacy text was the original text. Bévenot admitted that the writings of Stephen I of Rome (bishop 254–257) have been

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[5] For the rest of this chapter, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* will be written in a shortened form as *De unitate.*

[6] While Bévenot might stand as the most cited and pre-eminent authority on this textual issue, Hinchliff also spent several pages discussing this debate. Peter Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage and the Unity of the Christian Church* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1973), 107–10.

[7] Edward White Benson, *Cyprian: His Life, His Times, His Work* (New York: Appleton, 1897), 209; cf. E. H. Blakeney, *Cyprian: De unitate ecclesiae* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1928), 58. Brent pointed out that Benson wanted his work to serve partly as a polemic for Anglicanism against Catholicism. Allen Brent, trans. and eds, *On the Church,* vol. 1, *Select Treatises* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 2006), 150–51.

lost, so historians have no record of Stephen even knowing that *De unitate* existed.[8]

Nevertheless, Bévenot maintained that Cyprian modified *De unitate* 4–5 himself during

his conflict with Stephen concerning the baptismal rites within heretical and schismatic

churches. Bévenot argued that Cyprian never saw the Roman bishop as having primacy

of power but rather primacy of influence based upon his succession from Peter.

Therefore, the received text was a second edition, in which Cyprian re-articulated his

thoughts in *De unitate* 4–5 in a way that would prevent Stephen from using that passage

to justify claiming power over other episcopal sees.[9]

While most of Cyprianic scholarship has focused upon the relationships

within the episcopal union in Cyprian's thought, many have also looked at the roles the

bishops played within their respective churches. Scholarship has generally agreed that for

Cyprian a bishop governed his church and administered the sacraments.[10] Some studies

has seen much of modern Catholicism in Cyprian's ecclesiology.[11] Bévenot argued that

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[8] Maurice Bévenot, "'*Primatus Petro datur'*: St. Cyprian on the Papacy," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 5, no. 1 (April 1954): 355–56.

[9] Bévenot, "'*Primatus Petro datur,'*" 346. Bévenot believed that Cyprian's thoughts on the Roman bishop might have developed some after Stephen started asserting authority over other bishops, something that Cyprian did not experience with Stephen's predecessors. Bévenot, "*Primatus Petro datur*," 357.

[10] G. S. M. Walker claimed that in Cyprian's mind his responsibility to deliver the homily made him the proper administrator of the sacraments as well. G. S. M. Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1969), 37.

[11] For one of the more extreme cases, Joseph H. Fichter (1908–1994) began his biography on Cyprian with "*The Roman Catholic Bishop of Carthage* sat in his writing room" (italics added), thus indicating that his biography would assume a strong continuity between Cyprian and Roman Catholicism. This preconceived notion presented problems at times. Fichter stated that Cyprian must have held to the indelible mark at ordination, so he did not understand why Cyprian wrote in *Epistula* 68 that a lapsed bishop could never again administer the sacraments efficaciously. Joseph H. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian: Early Defender of the Faith* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book, 1942), 1, 197. Cf. Phillip Campbell, ed., *The Complete Works of Saint Cyprian of Carthage* (Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing, 2013), xi; Patrick Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian: Clerical and Lay Participation." *Theological Studies* 37, no. 1 (March 1976): 96 note 7; Lauren Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology: Redefining the Office of the Christian Bishop" (MA thesis, Georgia Southern University, 2013), 45-46, 52; John D. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 202–3, 209–15; Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 304, 307.

Cyprian believed the church could forgive sins.[12] Sage held that Cyprian virtually equated the church with the bishop.[13] J. Patout Burns, Jr., saw a strong connection between the bishop and soteriology in Cyprian's thoughts. He maintained that the bishops for Cyprian needed legitimate succession from the apostles to be able to channel saving grace when administering the sacraments.[14] Additionally, John D. Laurance in *'Priest' as Type of Christ* (1984) argued that in Cyprian's mind the bishop represented Christ to the people and the people to God, especially while supervising the eucharistic rite.[15] When it comes to Cyprian's view of baptism, Frank Edward Brightman (1856–1932) defended the idea that the bishop for Cyprian hallowed the baptismal waters so that the elements could channel saving grace. Brightman added that in Cyprian's thought the Holy Spirit came upon believers when a bishop laid his hands on them.[16]

However, not all scholarship has seen extensive connections to modern Catholicism. Contrary to modern Catholic notions of *ex opere operato*, which can allow for any person to administer the sacraments if they administer them using the correct formula, John Alfred Faulkner (1857–1931) held that Cyprian thought only the bishop could administer the eucharist for it to have any effect.[17] Abraham van de Beek has recently criticized some portrayals of Cyprian as relying too heavily upon Augustine' interpretation in *De baptismo*. Van de Beek argued that the purity of the bishop did not

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[12] Maurice Bévenot, "The Sacrament of Penance and St. Cyprian's *De lapsis*," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 16 (June 1955): 175–213.

[13] Sage, *Cyprian*, 329.

[14] J. Patout Burns, Jr., *Cyprian the Bishop* (London: Routledge: 2002), 129.

[15] Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 41; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 36.

[16] Brightman wrote that the bishop also helped the church celebrate the martyrs. Frank Edward Brightman, "Terms of Communion and the Ministry of the Sacraments in early times," in *Essay on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, ed., H. B. Swete (London: MacMillan and Company, 1918), 384.

[17] Brightman, "Terms of Communion," 384; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1256; John Alfred Faulkner, *Cyprian: The Churchman* (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1906), 43.

matter as much for Cyprian as for the Donatists.[18] Similarly, Raymond Johanny said that the eucharist for Cyprian primarily served as a memorial to Christ's death and as a symbol and a means of unity for the church, not as a means for salvation along the lines of sacramental theology.[19] In sum, many issues involving Cyprian's ecclesiology continue to be disputed.

While historically Cyprianic scholarship has focused upon his view of the church, some recent scholarship has explored his thoughts on atonement. According to Frances Young, Cyprian's treatise *De opere et eleemosynis* made a "seminal contribution" to the emerging idea of alms and penitence atoning for post-baptismal sin, an idea that became fully developed in the penitential system of the medieval period.[20] Similarly, David T. Downs wrote that Cyprian helped solidify the notion of Christ's work directly atoning for pre-baptismal sins only. It merely atoned indirectly for post-baptismal sin by giving Christians grace to perform good works after baptism. Downs believed Cyprian saw many post-baptismal works as atoning for sin, but he did not see every work as equally efficacious. Downs thus claimed that *De opere et eleemosynis* was a *tour de force* for the biblical arguments for almsgiving as the primary way to atone for post-baptismal sin.[21] According to Downs, this system demonstrated God's sovereignty and love

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[18] Abraham van de Beek, "Cyprian on Baptism," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, ed. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010): 155–64. Cf. The anonymous work *De rebaptismate* was written during the baptismal controversy (257) to uphold the Roman view of baptism against the North African position defended by Cyprian. Like Augustine and the Donatists later, the author of the work misunderstood Cyprian as making the bishop's purity the mark of valid administration. Instead, the validity of a baptism for Cyprian came from its administration within the true church at the hands of a genuine bishop. Chapters 6 and 8 discuss this topic in more detail. *De rebaptismate* 10, in *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Hereafter, all citations will be given as *De rebaptismate* 10.

[19] Raymond Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage," in *The Eucharist of the Early Church,* 156–82, ed., Willy Rordorf, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1978), 163.

[20] Frances Young, "Atonement," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 1990, ed., Everett Ferguson, vol. 1, *A–K*, rev. ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 147.

[21] Thus, Cyprian believed almsgiving atoned better than prayer and fasting. David T. Downs, *Alms: Charity, Reward, and Atonement in Early Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 5, 234, 256–71. Downs wrote, "Cyprian's two stage chronology of atonement does not, therefore, portray the forgiveness of sins before baptism as a divine endeavor and the cleaning of sins after baptism through

because God had to give grace to Christians for them to do good works. God also revealed his mercy when he forgave Christians, as they inevitably could not make complete atonement through their works.[22] Hence, Downs believed salvation for Cyprian was a process that required both faith and works, a practice that required God's mercy and grace.[23]

Finally, some recent studies challenged the traditional idea of seeing Cyprian as an exclusivist. Instead, this scholarship argued that Cyprian's texts should be read with an inclusivist interpretation. Their argument rested mainly upon one notion, namely that he was writing to schismatics in *Epistula* 73 and *De unitate*. In these writings, Cyprian revealed that he clearly thought schismatics had placed themselves outside the salvation of the church. However, he did not address pagans in these texts. Therefore, scholarship should remain either agnostic to what Cyprian believed about pagans, or it should accept him as holding the inclusivist position. Francis A. Sullivan (1922–2019) has popularized this scholarly opinion.[24] Cyprian's famous axioms were clearly meant to exclude schismatics from salvation.[25] However, Sullivan noted that Cyprian did not address these

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merciful deeds as a human one disconnected from God's power and mercy. Instead, Cyprian frames the washing away of human sins by *eleemosyna* as a divine mercy." Downs, *Alms,* 269.

[22]Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis* 1–3; Downs, *Alms*, 95, 264, 268–69.

[23] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 31–32; *Epistula* 59; 65; Downs, *Alms*, 269. Dunn believed Cyprian also saw practical benefits for emphasizing almsgiving to atone for post-baptismal sins. Almsgiving gave the church more money to give to the poor, thus preventing the destitute from allowing the *lapsi* back into the church solely for their money. In other words, members under discipline could still give money to the poor. Hence, for both theological and practical reasons, Cyprian promoted almsgiving to atone for sins committed after baptism. Geoffrey D. Dunn, "The White Crown of Works: Cyprians' Early Pastoral Ministry of Almsgiving in Carthage," *Church History* 73, no. 4 (December 2004): 735–36.

[24] Francis A. Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 20, 23; cf. Michael M. Canaris, *Francis A. Sullivan, S.J. and Ecclesiological Hermeneutics: An Exercise in Faithful Creativity* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 118. Barnes appealed to Sullivan to make the same argument, but he added that Cyprian was talking about the church, not salvation. For Cyprian, the church was a community of love so that schism was the worst possible evil. Michael Barnes, *Theology and the Dialogues of Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 41. D'Costa wrote prior to Sullivan and made a similar argument, though a less developed one. Gavin D'Costa, "'*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*' Revisited," in *Religious Pluralism and Unbelief: Studies Critical and Comparative*, ed., Ian Hamnett (London: Routledge, 1990), 133–35.

[25] Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* 22.

comments to non-believers, so scholarship cannot know for certain whether he thought they were outside the realm of salvation.[26] Following Sullivan, Jacques Dupuis wrote that Cyprian saw schismatics as guilty simply because they had separated from the church. [27] According to Dupuism Christians started applying Cyprian's famous axioms to non-Christians only after Christianity became the favored religion in the fourth century. Finally, Marcel Poorthuis expanded on the thoughts of Sullivan and Dupuis. Poorthuis contended that Cyprian probably would have revealed more of his inclusivistic tendencies if his context had led him to develop and articulate his thoughts. Poorthuis summarized Cyprian's view as full salvation is only found in the church.[28]

Significance

The significance of Cyprian's *De unitate* for understanding his thought cannot be overstated. This work contains the most complete biblical argument from Cyprian for why he thought the visible church and spiritual church were connected. Additionally, the treatise reveals how this belief shaped his view of schism. Cyprian limited salvation to those within the realm of the church. Schismatics had lost salvation because they had separated from the church. An exploration of Cyprian's thoughts on the relationship between the church and salvation, therefore, must include an exegesis of *De unitate*. Relatively little literature has explored what *De unitate* reveals about Cyprian's soteriology, even though Michael M. Sage has written that Cyprian made ecclesial

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[26] Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* 20–23. Murray did not reference Sullivan, but he also said Cyprian was only addressing those who had broken church unity. Russel Murray, "Assessing the Primacy: A Contemporary Contribution from the Writings of St. Cyprian of Carthage," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 47, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 41–63.

[27] Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 88.

[28] Marcel Poorthuis, "Cyprian and the Tolerance of Our Mother the Church," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, 243-70, ed. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010), 255-68.

organization and episcopal governance essential for salvation.[29] Most scholarship on this treatise has focused upon *De unitate* 4–5 and what it says about Cyprian's view of the bishop, as well as the text-critical issues for those chapters. However, the bulk of Cyprian's argument against schism comes in *De unitate* 6–22, where he presented his biblical reasons for why the spiritual church and the visible church were united and inseparable. Therefore, while much scholarship exists on *De unitate*, few people have explored the treatise's main argument, especially to the extent in this dissertation.

Similarly, Cyprian's views on baptism and the eucharist have received some attention already, but scholarship has sometimes imprinted later developments onto Cyprian's thought. Van de Beek's article served as a helpful corrective. However, his article was more of a call for a renewed investigation into Cyprian's understanding of baptism; this dissertation follows that call by exploring the connection between baptism and salvation in Cyprian's thought. Additionally, most discussions concerning Cyprian's view of the eucharist look at the sacrament's connection to the bishop, rather than seeing how it linked Christians to salvation. Moreover, this dissertation explores the role of the bishops for salvation to answer the question of what part they played in reconciling believers with God.

This dissertation also looks at Cyprian's understanding of Christ's work upon the cross because much scholarship has confused Cyprian's view of reconciliation with the church with his belief in how reconciliation with God occurs. Cyprian's writings require an understanding of what the Latin words *satisfactio* and *paenitentia* meant in the third century. Without this knowledge, interpretations of Cyprian can easily read into his writings later developments that connect those words to sacramental theology. Little scholarship has also considered how Cyprian's thoughts changed because of the Decian persecution (250–251). He probably published *De opere et eleemosynis* around 249, early

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[29] Sage, *Cyprian*, 264.

in his career as the bishop of Carthage and prior to the Decian persecution, which created

a bigger problem due to the number of Christians who had committed the egregious sin

of sacrificing to idols.[30] In *De opere et eleemosynis* 4, Cyprian wrote that almsgiving

sometimes was the only act that could make satisfaction for sin. However, his later

writings placed more attention upon repentance and lamentation.[31] Scholarship should

not focus too heavily upon *De opere et eleemosynis* but should investigate his whole

corpus when exploring his view of satisfaction, repentance, and reconciliation.

Finally, James G. Sigountos and others have done significant work in arguing

against the idea that many in the early church held to a form of pluralism or inclusivism,

but no scholarship has refuted this reinterpretation of Cyprian specifically. [32] Granted,

David Paul Knievim mentioned that, because the church held the keys to the sacraments,

Cyprian saw the church as the gateway and guardian of the new birth.[33] However,

Knievim did not focus upon Cyprian in his work. This reinterpretation of Cyprian

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[30] The dating for Cyprian's work *De opere et eleemosynis* has remained under dispute, with some scholarship claiming a later date, especially 253 during the time of the great plague in Carthage. However, the internal evidence indicates a publication prior to the issue of atoning for the egregious sin of apostasy. Furthermore, the work fits well within a context of nominal Christianity, which was prevalent at the beginning of Cyprian's time as bishop, prior to the persecution. Downs, *Alms*, 234n3; Michael Andrew Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in Third-Century Exegesis* (Tübingen, Germany: JC. B. Mohr, 1971), 20; Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian*, 134; Sage, *Cyprian*, 380–81.

[31] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 14, 17, 28–30, 36. Cyprian also wrote towards the end of *De lapsis* that only repentance can make satisfaction for sins. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 34. Cyprian's letters reflected a greater attention upon prayer and repentance as the means of satisfying God for post-baptismal sins. He eventually wrote that satisfaction did not occur without repentance. Cyprian, *Epistula* 51; 55; 59; 65.

[32] Sigountos ended his refutation of inclusivism in the early church with the following footnote: "If unitive pluralists wish to argue that the patristic tradition was wrong to reject religion, that is their right. But let us at least start our discussions from a historically sound analysis." James G. Sigountos, "Did Early Christians Believe Pagan Religions Could Save?" in *Through No Fault of Their Own? The Fate of Those Who Have Never Heard*, ed. William V. Crockett and James G. Sigountos (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 229-41. Little scholarship has argued for inclusivism or pluralism based upon the church fathers after the 1990s. David Pitman recently referenced Knitter's argument, but the lack of argumentation against Sigountos and others demonstrated Pitman's wholesale appropriation of Knitter's views. David Pitman, *Twentieth Century Christian Responses to Religious Pluralism: Difference is Everything* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 13.

[33] The church also assisted Christians after their new birth, helping them to become mature in Christ. David Paull Knievim, "Christ, the Gospel, and the Church: The Church's Participation in the Salvation of Its Members," (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 15, 17–19; Robert E. Webber, "Evangelism and Christian Formation in the Early Church," *Reformation & Revival Journal* 13, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 84.

demands a response, especially considering this new view has major flaws. To learn what Cyprian thought concerning the extent of salvation, his teaching within his whole corpus must be explored. Afterwards, the significant texts for this new interpretation can be interpreted based upon an understanding of Cyprian's overarching theology. A discussion on the extent of salvation for Cyprian not only helps explain the necessity of the church for salvation, but it also counters the arguments of Sullivan and others concerning inclusivism in the early patristic period.

Ultimately, most of Cyprianic scholarship has looked only at Cyprian's ecclesiology. While some scholarship has looked at his soteriology, no monographs have investigated that sole subject. This dissertation does not study Cyprian's soteriology comprehensively. However, connections between his ecclesiology and soteriology should inform discussions concerning third-century soteriology as well.

Argument

Most scholarship on *De unitate* has investigated the relationship between the bishops in Cyprian's thought, but the treatise itself does not focus upon that issue. Rather, it served as a polemic against the Novatianists in Rome. They had not split the church but rather had departed from it, so they had lost their salvation because of their schism. In other words, the treatise aims at the relationship between soteriology and ecclesiology, not at ecclesial offices. *De unitate* 4–5 contain the much-debated problem of the two versions: the received text and the primacy text. While this dissertation acknowledges the issue, it does not extensively engage the matter of the textual variants for two reasons. First, the topic falls outside the scope of the dissertation since this work is concerned with the relationship between the church and salvation, not the relationship of the Roman bishop to the other bishops. Second, the argument of *De unitate* remains the same regardless of which text was original. The spiritual and visible church were linked and indivisible. Visible correspondence between the bishops glued the local churches together

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into one visible church. [34] When a bishop decided to break from this union, he might seem to split the church in half, but in truth Scripture describes the church as unable to be shorn in two. Biblical teaching describes both the spiritual and visible church. The spiritual church cannot be rent, and it remains with the one visible church. Therefore, all those outside the fellowship of the congregations are outside the spiritual church. Only those within the spiritual church are saved, so salvation is only found within the one true church. Hence, becoming a schismatic necessarily meant losing one's salvation.[35]

De unitate demonstrated that Cyprian saw a connection between the spiritual and visible church in Scripture, but the question remains how this union of the two impacted the rest of his theology. In other words, what relationship did the church have to salvation? To answer this question, Cyprian's view of the relationship of the church to atonement, satisfaction, and reconciliation is considered because some scholarship has conflated these aspects of Cyprian's thought.[36] This dissertation demonstrates that Cyprian used language fitting to both a *Christus Victor* and penal substitutionary model of the atonement when talking about Christ's work upon the cross. People come to the Father through his crucified Son, whose atoning sacrifice redeemed humanity from sin. [37] During a true baptism in the one true church, the Holy Spirit applies this atonement for all sins upon new believers, thus reconciling them with God.

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[34] Hinchliff said that "the conventional exposition of Cyprian's theory of unity" is that the bishops serve as the "glue of the church." Hinchliff, *Cyprian,* 113; cf. Paulo Siniscalco and Paul Mattei, *Cyprien de Carthage: L'Unité de L'Église* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2006), 80. Arnold wrote that this argument joined the church's structure and nature. Thus, Cyprian believed schism did not just break the church's structural unity but tore its very nature apart. Brian J. Arnold, *Cyprian of Carthage: His Life & Impact* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2017), 95.

[35] Arnold wrote that this idea made the church necessary for salvation. To separate from the church meant separation from Christ and his saving power. Arnold, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 98.

[36] Downs argued that *De opere et eleemosynis* required almsgiving for the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins. Downs, *Alms*, 264.

[37] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.27; *Quod idola dii non sint* 11. "This grace Christ bestows; this gift of his mercy he confers upon us, by overcoming death in the trophy of the cross, by redeeming the believer with the price of his blood, by reconciling man to God the Father, by quickening our mortal nature with a heavenly regeneration." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 25.

However, people continue to sin after their baptism, and Cyprian thought they needed a way to make satisfaction for these post-baptismal sins. To understand Cyprian, the use of *satisfactio* in late antiquity must be explored. The Latin word *satisfactio* in the first few centuries AD did not carry the same meaning as the English word atonement. Atonement means the reunification of two people back into harmony, a notion which for Cyprian occurred through Christ's work upon the cross.[38] However, *satisfacere* meant to do something to recompense for a past wrong committed against someone else.[39] Hence, in Cyprian's thought, Christ reconciled people with God through his death on the cross, but people still needed to make satisfaction for their post-baptismal sins. Cyprian argued for the necessity of making satisfaction, not because it led to salvation but because it demonstrated one's salvation. Contrary to those who had sacrificed to idols and later showed no remorse, true Christians continually sought to make satisfaction to God through the church for their sins. Early in his career as bishop, Cyprian emphasized almsgiving as the best method for satisfaction. However, the Decian persecution generated widespread apostasy within the Carthaginian church. For Cyprian, these former church members needed to realize that they had committed an egregious sin, so Cyprian shifted from focusing upon almsgiving to emphasizing signs of true repentance, like weeping.[40] Thus, salvation occurred only within the church, and true Christians exhibited their salvation by remaining within the church and making satisfaction for sins. When membership within the church was revoked because of heinous sin, Christians retained salvation by truly repenting of their sin, making satisfaction for their transgression, and

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[38] *Oxford English Dictionary,* rev.ed, vol. 1, s.v. "atonement."

[39] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, rev. ed., vol. 2, s.v. "*satisfaciō*,"

[40] Someone could interpret Cyprian through the lens of later penitential developments so that the church or the bishop forgave sin. However, Cyprian saw the issue of restoring the *lapsi* more as an ecclesiological problem rather than a soteriological one. He stated that God had the authority to approve or disapprove what the church decided on matters of church discipline, which made those decisions all that more important because the bishop did not want to find himself judging people contrary to God's judgment. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17–21; *Epistula* 56. Cf. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian,* 120–21.

seeking to re-enter the church. Those who showed no sign of remorse or who chose to become a schismatic instead of pursuing after the church demonstrated that they had forsaken the Holy Spirit and the spiritual church.

Just as some scholarship has imposed later developments concerning the sacrament of penance onto Cyprian's view of satisfaction, other scholarship has interpreted Cyprian as holding similar views on the sacraments and the bishops as often found in modern Catholic theology. Truly, Cyprian held some nascent views that foreshadowing medieval developments. Cyprian saw the eucharist as a form of sacrifice, and he believed original sin was washed away at baptism.[41] However, modern Catholicism has also directly contradicted Cyprian, who explicitly said that bishops could forever lose the ability to administer the sacraments by committing an egregious sin.[42] Furthermore, he believed the validity of the sacraments came from their celebration within the true church, not from the correct performance of the rites.[43] Be this as it may, the sacraments remained channels of grace and unifying rituals for the church so that a

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[41] Gordon D. Harris conflated bishops and presbyters under the term *priest*. However, Cyprian always reserved that nomenclature for bishops alone. Gordon D. Harris, "Cyprian and His Role as the Faithful Bishop in Response to the Lapsed, the Martyrs, and the Confessors, Following the Decian Persecution," *Eleutheria* 1, no. 2 (June 2011): 91. Cf. Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 301.

[42] This notion contradicts the modern Catholic idea that ordination puts an indelible mark upon the ordained person that gives him the permanent ability to administer the sacraments. Campbell, *The Complete Works,* xi; Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination in the African Response to the 'Rebaptism' Crisis: Cyprian of Carthage's Synod of Spring 256. *Theological Studies* 62, no. 2 (May 2006): 266–73; Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian*, 1, 197; Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 96 note 7; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 45-46 52; Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 202–3, 209–15; Sage, *Cyprian*, 304, 307. Cf. Augustine, *De baptismo* 1.1; 6.15, in Augustine of Hippo, *The Donatist Controversy I*, trans. with commentary by Maureen Tilley and Boniface Ramsey, ed. Boniface Ramsey and David G. Hunter (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2019). Hereafter, all citations will be given just as Augustine, *De baptismo* 1.1. Augustine, *Epistula* 43.5, in *The Confessions and Letters of Augustin* (1886; repr., American ed., trans. Philip Schaff, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995). Hereafter, all citations will be given just as Augustine, *Epistula* 43.5.

[43] *De unitate* 4–5 could be interpreted as apostolic succession. To be sure, Cyprian believed that the bishops inherited the role of governing the church from the apostles. However, Cyprian never articulated a modern understanding of apostolic success. For Cyprian, a bishop's ability to baptize or celebrate the eucharist came from his position as a true bishop within a true church. He did not articulate the modern notion that ordination elevated the human nature and gave the ordained man an indelible mark because it came from a succession of episcopal ordinations from the apostles down to his day. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2.2.3.6.3.1555–58.

Christian's life began at baptism, and the Lord's Supper both unified the church and led to sanctification. Thus, both baptism and communion remained important vehicles of grace for Christians in Cyprian's thought, even if they did not carry the same weight for salvation as in the sacramental theology of the medieval period.

Finally, some contemporary scholarship has interpreted Cyprian as holding to an inclusivist ecclesiology. However, this reinterpretation has relied largely upon silence, and it has not explored Cyprian's view as portrayed across his whole corpus. Most notably, Cyprian explicitly said in his apologetic work *Ad Demetrianum* that those who reject Christ face eternal damnation.[44] The passages in *Epistula* 73.21 and *De unitate* 6 should be interpreted through the lens of much clearer statements concerning the exclusivity of the gospel and the impartation of salvation only to those within the church. Cyprian thus did not merely exclude schismatics from salvation in *Epistula* 73.21 and *De unitate* 6. He used the idea of exclusivism as a weapon to counter the justification for schism and to prod wayward Christians to return to the church. In other words, Cyprian did not merely say "There is no salvation for those who have left the church." He used the phrase more like "Since there is no salvation for anyone outside the church, then those who depart from the church have no salvation."[45]Recent attempts to appropriate Cyprian as an inclusivist have thus failed.

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[44] Faulkner, *Cyprian,* 36–38. Scholarship has debated whether Cyprian wrote *Quod idola dii non sint*. Sage argued that an anonymous author after Cyprian authored it. Sage, *Cyprian*, 373.In contrast, Hans van Loon recently maintained Cyprianic authorship of the treatise. Hans van Loon presented a cogent argument, so this dissertation assumes that Cyprian wrote *Quod idola dii non sint*, though it does not draw heavily from the treatise. Hans van Loon, "Cyprian's Christology and the Authenticity of *Quod idola dii non sint*," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, ed. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010), 127–42.

[45] Hinchliff summarized this passage as "If there is no salvation outside the church, the heretic is stained rather than washed by his false baptism, is piling up new sins instead of getting rid of old ones." In other words, if the axiom was true (with implied belief that it is), then schismatic baptism was not just false but sinful. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 93.

Summary of Chapters

Part 1 provides a prolegomenon that lays the foundation for the rest of the dissertation. This chapter introduces the topic, thesis, and methodology. Additionally, it discusses the current state of the question and overviews the significance and major arguments of this work. Scholarship largely has assumed the relationship between ecclesiology and soteriology for Cyprian rather than exploring why the two intersected. Salvation for Cyprian was only found within the true church because the Holy Spirit imparted salvation only upon those within the true church. After this introduction, chapter two exegetes Cyprian's most famous work *De unitate*. Not only did this piece of literature impact later theological developments, but it also provides the most systematic treatment of the relationship between ecclesiology and soteriology in Cyprian's thoughts. The chapter acknowledges important textual debates concerning *De unitate* 4–5, but it focuses upon discerning Cyprian's meaning, with special attention given to his biblical arguments for why only one spiritual and visible church exists. Ultimately, Cyprian saw a strong unity between the spiritual and visible church. Just as the spiritual church was one, the visible church was one too.

Part 2 then explores Cyprian's view of atonement, satisfaction, and repentance. Much scholarship on Cyprian has confused his understanding of how people become reconciled with God with Cyprian's belief in the need to make satisfaction for sin. Thus, chapter three looks at his descriptions of Christ's work upon the cross. Ultimately, Cyprian articulated a sacrificial notion of the atonement that fell within the dual categories known later as *Christus Victor* and penal substitution. He emphasized *Christus Victor*, but it came through the substitutionary sacrifice made by Jesus Christ upon the cross. Following this exploration of the cross in Cyprian's writings, chapters four and five delve into his requirements for reconciliation with the church. Chapter four investigates the meaning of *satisfacere* in late antiquity and in his writings to argue that *satisfacere* for Cyprian meant to repay someone for an injury done. Just as the virtuous person makes

satisfaction when he wrongs another, Christians make satisfaction to God for committing post-baptismal sins. Satisfaction was often made through good works, but it needed true repentance, as explored in chapter five. Showing remorse, doing godly deeds, and seeking the church demonstrated that one had not left the faith.

Part 3 then studies the relationship between the sacraments, the bishop, and salvation in Cyprian's thought to see how the virtual welding of the spiritual and visible church impacted his views in these areas. Therefore, the sixth chapter looks at his understanding of baptism. Cyprian believed that a Christians' life began at baptism, and the validity of that baptism was founded upon its administration in the one true church. Chapter seven similarly discusses his view of the eucharist. The eucharist served as a unifying and sanctifying element for the church because it memorialized Christ's sacrifice upon the cross. As a memorial to his death, its celebration also became a way for Christians to sacrifice to God. Finally, chapter eight delves into the role of the bishops for salvation in Cyprian's thought. The bishops protected the truth and proclaimed the gospel of salvation. Additionally, the Holy Spirit applied salvation to the church through the ministries of the bishop, especially the episcopal work of administering the sacraments.

Finally, part 4 provides a conclusion for this dissertation. Chapter nine explores a contemporary re-interpretation concerning the extent of salvation in Cyprian's thought. It critiques this new interpretation and proves that he held to exclusivism. Finally, chapter ten summarizes the main points of the dissertation. In *De unitate,* Cyprian virtually equated the spiritual church with the visible church so that separating from the visible church necessarily meant losing salvation. While he connected salvation and the church, he did not hold to a works-based salvation. Rather, the Holy Spirit worked through the church to save only those within the church. Hence, Cyprian limited salvation to those within the realm of the church. The limits of the visible church defined the limits of the spiritual church, and this one visible and spiritual church kept the true teachings about Jesus Christ and administered the true sacraments.

CHAPTER 2

DE ECCLESIAE CATHOLICAE UNITATE

Introduction

While Cyprian wrote several works on the Christian life, scholarship has generally agreed that his ecclesiology had the most lasting impact upon the church. For example, the Donatists and Catholics argued over who was adhering best to Cyprians legacy, and Augustine pulled from *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* to argue against schismatics in *De baptismo*.[1] Of Cyprian's works, *De unitate* contained some of his most extensive treatments on the doctrine of the church.[2] Peter Hinchliff wrote that the treatise has remained Cyprian's most well-known work because it continues to elicit much "fierce controversy."[3] Discussions concerning *De unitate* have focused upon what it taught concerning the bishop, especially the relationship between bishops. However, the work itself did not aim to explain church polity but rather argued that schismatics lose their salvation because they are no longer in the church. In other words, *De unitate* tried to connect ecclesiology and soteriology and did not focus upon ecclesiology proper. Ultimately, Cyprian virtually equated the spiritual church with the visible church in *De*

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[1] David E. Wilhite, *Ancient African Christianity: An Introduction to a Unique Context and Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2017), 154. For the rest of this chapter, the abbreviation *De unitate* will be used for *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*.

[2] Brian Arnold, *Cyprian of Carthage: His Life & Impact* (Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2017), 58. Campbell wrote that Cyprian did not invent the term *catholicity*, but he emphasized the idea more than those before him. However, Cyprian more accurately emphasized *unity* against the schismatics rather than *catholicity*. Phillip Campbell, ed., *The Complete Works of Saint Cyprian of Carthage* (Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing, 2013), xiii.

[3] Peter Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1974), 99.

unitate so that breaking from the union of local churches meant placing oneself outside of the church and thus outside the realm of salvation.

Occasion and Purpose

In the spring of 251 the Decian persecution ended. For the first time, churches could discuss what they were going to do with the *lapsi*, or those who had apostatized during the persecution. Cyprian divided the *lapsi* into two groups. The *sacrificati* had sacrificed during the persecution. The *libellatici* had bribed officials into handing over certificates of sacrifice without requiring them to actually sacrifice. While Cyprian believed the *sacrificati* had committed a greater sin, he categorized both groups as *lapsi*.[4] After the persecution ended, two parties emerged that went to opposite extremes concerning how to treat the *lapsi*.

The deacon Felicissimus led a schism in Carthage that held a laxist view. They want to allow the *lapsi* back into the church with little or no penance, especially if the *lapsi* had received from a confessor a letter of peace (*libellus pacis*), which granted reconciliation to the recipient. The confessors were those who were tortured and imprisoned for their faith during the Decian persecution but who refused to recant Jesus Christ or sacrifice to idols. They differed from the martyrs only in that they survived the persecution. Their willingness to stand for Christ gave the confessors great authority in the eyes of many in the church, and Cyprian constantly battled against those who placed confessors at the same level as the bishops.[5]

Around the same time, the presbyter Novatian protested the election of Cornelius to the episcopal see of Rome (bishop 251–253). Novatian and his followers held a rigorist view towards the *lapsi,* believing they had committed such an egregious

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[4] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 27–28; *Epistula* 55.13–18.

[5] Cyprian, *Epistula* 8–10, 16–17.

sin that they never could be reconciled with the church. When he was not elected bishop after the death of Fabian (bishop 236–250), Novatian led his followers to split from the Roman church and to appoint him as the rightful bishop of Rome.[6] Within this milieu, the Latin North African churches held a council at Carthage in the spring of 251, and Cyprian wrote *De lapsis* and *De unitate.*

Scholarship traditionally has seen *De unitate* as combatting the Novatian schism. However, Hugo Koch (1869–1940) questioned this narrative. He claimed Cyprian wrote the work primarily for the schism in Carthage, based upon certain phrases and biblical references in *De unitate* that matched similar usage in letters written to the schismatics in Carthage.[7] Similarly, Sage believed Cyprian presented the work to the Carthaginian council in the spring 251. Since the Novatian schism in Rome did not occur until that spring, Sage did not believe Cyprian had the Novatianists in mind as his primary audience while writing the work.[8] However, Bévenot argued that scholarship should date *De unitate* after Novatian attempted to receive recognition from the council of Carthage. Hence, Cyprian wrote the work in response to Novatian's appeals for acknowledgment. [9] Paulo Siniscalco and Paul Mattei recognized that *De unitate* provided arguments against the Carthaginian schismatics, but they argued that Cyprian had the Novatian schism particularly in mind by the time he was writing this treatise.[10] According

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[6] Novatian might have been expecting election to the episcopal see of Rome since he had helped govern the church as a presbyter after the death of Fabian during the persecution. Novaitan was also a well-known theologian at that time, having written an early treatise on the Trinity (*De Trinitate*).

[7] Koch also believed Cyprian wrote the work before the spring council of 251. Since the Novatian schism occurred that spring, then he would not have had the time to finish the work before the council if his primary audience were the Novatianists. Hugo Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen* (Bonn, Germany: A. Marcus and E. Weber, 1926), 83–110.

[8] Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 241–242n4.

[9] Maurice Bévenot, *St. Cyprian* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1957), 6; Maurice Bévenot, *St. Cyprian's 'De Unitate' chap. 4 in the Light of the Manuscripts* (Rome: Analecta Gregoriana, 1937), 66–77.

[10] Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage,* 33–35.

to Allen Brent, Cyprian would not have had the time to compose either *De lapsis* or *De unitate* until after his return from exile. Thus, Cyprian attempted to restore order through both works, with the first written against the laxist Carthaginian schism and the latter written against the rigorist Roman schism.[11] Uniquely, Hinchliff argued that *De unitate* probably came at the end of Cyprian's life, mostly because most figures in history did not write their *magnum opus* early in their careers. Thus, Hinchliff dated the work to Cyprian's "schism" with Stephen over the rebaptism of schismatics.[12]

Ultimately, the arguments for the Novatianists as the primary audience of the treatise holds the greatest weight. If *De lapsis* and *De unitate* are compared, the two works addressed different issues. The former work pointed out the theological and practical problems inherent in the laxist position. The latter work contended against schism by arguing for the sake of unity itself. Cyprian was inclined more towards rigorism. Though he denounced the Novatianists for not allowing any reconciliation with the church, the greatest sin of the Novatianists was their schism, not so much their rigorism.[13] While his readers in Carthage could easily apply much of *De unitate* to their circumstances, Cyprian targeted the Novatianists with *De unitate.*

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[11] Allen Brent, trans. and eds, *On the Church,* vol. 1, *Select Treatises* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 2006), 145.

[12] Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage,* 99.

[13] Cyprian argued against the Novatian schism in *De unitate* by contending for the unity of the church rather than against rigorism. This approach differs from the one taken by an anonymous work written against Novatian around 255, called *A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian by an Anonymous Bishop.* Erasmus published the treatise among Cyprian's works in 1520 because it seemed to have been written by a Latin North African bishop, thus making Cyprian the obvious candidate. However, scholarship has largely rejected him as the author. The style does not match his works. Additionally, the treatise carries a harsher tone than *De unitate* and argues against Novatian's rigorism. A. Cleveland Coxe, ed. and trans, *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; American ed., repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 655–63.

De ecclesiae catholicae unitate **1–3**

Cyprian began his work in chapter one referencing Matthew 5:13: "You are the salt of the earth."[14] Through the apostles, Cyprian believed Jesus Christ was speaking to the church. Christ had conquered Satan so that Christians could live blamelessly and so that former pagans were coming into Christ's church. Therefore, Satan had convinced the Romans to persecute Christians so that the church would die in its infancy. However, Christians had faced death bravely, so the devil created a new plan, hoping to destroy the church from within through heresy and schism. Cyprian did not distinguish much between heretics and schismatics because he believed improper conduct sprang from improper thought. The schismatics had failed to consider Christ's commands to love, and thus had separated themselves from the church.[15] Additionally, Cyprian saw the terms "true church" and "false church" as a tautology because false congregations were not churches at all. In contrast to schismatic congregations, the one true church stood against Satan's wiles by holding fast to God's Word and obeying Christ's commands (Matt19:17; John 15:14–15).[16]

Hinchliff argued that Cyprian in these early chapters united the church around Christ's command to love. Since the schismatics did not love their fellow Christians, they had lost salvation. Hinchliff concluded that Cyprian held much more strongly to ecclesial

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[14] "*Vos estis sal terrae.*" Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 1.1. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.87; *De Dominica oratione* 17.

[15] Wilhite, *Ancient African Christianity*, 146.

[16] "If you wish to enter life, obey my commandments" (Matt 19:17). "If you do what I command you, I call you then not servants but friends" (John 15:14–15). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.1; *De Dominica oratione* 20; *De opere et eleemosynis* 7; *Epistula* 59.7.3; 63.14. Translations of biblical passages in this chapter come from Brent, *On the Church*, vol. 1, *Select Treatises*, unless otherwise specified. Pulling biblical quotations directly from Cyprian's writings should help readers see his argument since he did not draw from a modern English translation, from the Latin Vulgate, nor from a modern Greek New Testament. For a summary concerning what the manuscripts reveal concerning Cyprian's Latin translation of the Bible, see H. A. G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to Its Early History, Text, and Manuscripts* (2016; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 9–14.

unity based upon love than based upon doctrinal fidelity, and he claimed that Cyprian

thought the Holy Spirit would correct mistakes over time if the church stayed unified.[17]

However, better explanations exist than that of Hinchliff's regarding Cyprian's

thoughts concerning the foundation of ecclesial unity. Cyprian certainly saw Stephen's

view as preventing people from coming into the church and receiving salvation, but

Cyprian never counted Stephen a heretic even though he broke fellowship with some

bishops of Asia Minor for baptizing schismatics.[18] Thus, Cyprian saw Stephen's view as

serious enough to prevent people from coming into the true church and accepting the true

gospel but not so heinous as to prevent Stephen himself from being saved, especially

since he already had accepted the true gospel and had become a bishop in the true church.

Hinchliff also portrayed Cyprian as a modern liberal who elevated action over belief.

Such a dichotomy between belief and action was not germane to the patristic worldview.

Early patristic theologians equated incorrect theology with inappropriate action and *vice

versa*.[19] Even within Hinchliff's own example of *De unitate* 1–3, this principle was

revealed. The schismatics were not acting appropriately, so Cyprian assumed they held

poor theology. In *De unitate* 1–3, he found the problem in their failure to obey Christ's

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[17] Hinchliff wrote that Cyprian connected the ministries of the church to the *esse* of the church. Therefore, the rebaptism heresy (which Hinchliff argued was the *Sitz im Leben* of *De unitate*) became an issue over the *esse* of the church. Additionally, since Cyprian wed the *esse* of the church to salvation, then Cyprian believed this issue impacted one's salvation. According to Hinchliff, Cyprian never discounted Stephen's salvation primarily because he had received a true election to the bishop's seat. Thus, while they did not agree on doctrine, they still belonged to the same church. Additionally, Hinchliff argued that Cyprian equated schismatics with heretics. Thus, by Cyprian's own definition of heresy, he could not call Stephen a heretic, though he preached theological error. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 101–2, 106–7, 114–18.

[18] Cyprian, *Epistula* 75. While found among Cyprian's letters, *Epistula* 75 was written to Cyprian by Firmilianus of Caesarea (bishop c. 232– c. 269), one of the bishops with whom Stephen had broken fellowship for holding the same view as the churches of North Africa concerning the baptismal rites performed in schismatics and heretical churches. A synodal roll says that Stephen also held a Roman council that decided to break fellowship with Cyprian and the other African bishops over their rejection of the baptismal rites within heretical and schismatic churches at the Carthaginian council of 256. However, no other records mention this Roman council. A. Cleveland Coxe, ed. and trans, *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; American ed., repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 653.

[19] Campbell also warned readers against having a "modernist" interpretation of Cyprian. Campbell, *The Complete Works*, 33n8. Cf Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.1.3.

command to love. Thus, *De unitate* 1–3 demonstrated better the union between correct action and correct belief in early patristic thought, than that Cyprian based the unity of the church around love between Christians.

Be this as it may, in Matthew 7:24–25, Jesus Christ pointed out the wisdom of those who built their houses upon a rock because their houses would survive storms. Christ said that similarly those who obeyed him were establishing their lives upon a solid rock.[20] Cyprian took this passage as directed at his own time. He stated that Christians who did not heed Christ's commandments would stagger towards salvation while believing every error that they encountered. Cyprian turned these passages against the schismatics in chapter three. The schismatics were claiming they were preserving the holiness of the church through refusing to allow apostates back into the church.[21] On the contrary, they were deceiving themselves and others. Cyprian viewed them as akin to Satan's demons, who fool people by appearing as angels of light and agents of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 11:14). Claiming to be Christians, they were luring people away from the church, thus undermining the church rather than edifying it.[22] In contrast, true Christians stood upon Christ's commands and remained with God's people to keep themselves from deception and error. [23]

De ecclesiae catholicae unitate **4–5**

After these introductory remarks about the Satanic foundation of schism, Cyprian transitioned to describing the church's unity. Hinchliff noted that nobody should dare

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[20] "He who hears my words and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock: the rain descended, the floods approached, the winds came and beat upon that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded upon a rock" (Matt 7:24–25). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.96.

[21] Brent, *On the Church*, 1:146.

[22] Brent, *On the Church*, 1:145.

[23] Brent noted at the end of chapter three that Cyprian's references to *head* (*caput*) did not imply a papacy but rather served as a more "general geographical metaphor." Brent, *On the Church*, 1:149n1.

discuss this treatise without at least acknowledging that two editions of *De unitate* 4–5 exist.[24] The received text stressed the equality of the apostles. Peter's chair (*cathedra*) only represented the church's unity; it did not form that union. The primacy text stated more strongly the primacy of Peter over the other apostles so that the latter received power and honor through their union with Peter.[25] The primacy text could imply that the Roman bishop inherited Peter's role so that all bishops had to remain in union with him. Separating from him meant departing from the church.[26]

Most of the debate has entailed which edition came first. Edward White Benson (1829–1896) and E. H. Blakeney (1869–1955) argued that someone added the primacy edition to support the papacy.[27] Similarly, J. Le Moyne strongly doubted the authenticity of the primacy text.[28] However, through an intensive study of the manuscripts in *The Tradition of Manuscripts* (1961), Bévenot argued that Cyprian himself wrote both editions, the first with *Epistula* 55 and the second with *Epistulae* 72–73.[29] According to Bévenot, Cyprian wrote the primacy version during the Carthaginian council of 251 to counter the Novatian schism in Rome. Later, he amended the work

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[24] Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage,* 112.

[25] Hinchliff thought that Cyprian saw the Roman church as a "prototype" for the other churches, though Cyprian did not believe that the Roman bishop had the authority to command other bishops just because he served as the "prototype." Hinchliff thus did not believe *De unitate* 4–5 argued for papal primacy. In other words, Hinchliff thought that Cyprian held a similar view of the Roman church as Irenaeus. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against Heresies* 3.3.1–4, in *Irenaeus on the Christian Faith: A Condensation of Against Heresies* (trans. and ed. James R. Payton, Jr. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011). Hereafter, all citations will be given just as Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3.3.1–4. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage,* 107, 111. Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 3.3.1; 59.7.3; 59.14.1 The primacy text received its names from the sentence "*primatus Petri datur*," which can be translated as "the primacy is given to Peter."

[26] Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage,* 107.

[27] Edward White Benson, *Cyprian: His Life, His Times, His Work* (New York: Appleton, 1897), 209; E. H. Blakeney, *Cyprian: De unitate ecclesiae* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1928), 58. However, Brent pointed out that Benson wanted his work to serve partly as a polemic for Anglicanism against Catholicism. Brent, *On the Church*, 1:150–51.

[28] J. Le Moyne, "Saint Cyprien est-il bien l'auteur de la redaction brève du '*De unitate*,'chapitre 4?" *Revue Bénédictine* 63 (1953): 70–115.

[29] Cf. D. Van den Eynde, "La double edition du *De unitate* de saint Cyprien," *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 29 (1933): 5–24.

during his controversies with Stephen, creating the received text. Bévenot speculated that Stephen was using the early edition to claim authority over the whole church rather than just the Roman congregation.[30] J. S. M. Walker agreed with Bévenot.[31] Likewise, Siniscalco and Mattei have said that Cyprian wrote both editions, the first in 251 and the second during the rebaptism controversy, though they believed that the issue should remain open.[32] Hinchliff also followed Bévenot in that Cyprian wrote the received text during his debates with Stephen. Hinchliff held that the revised version became the most popular one in North Africa.[33] However, Hinchliff also warned that little evidence is available to know for sure which text came first, and scholarship should not look for the answer through searching for internal evidence. Both editions correlate with Cyprian's early writings.

However, some scholarship has offered alternative options. Phillip Campbell believed Cyprian wrote the primacy edition for Rome and the received edition for general circulation, noting that both Jerome (340–420) and Gelasius of Rome (bishop 492–496) knew of both versions.[34] Similarly, Stuart George Hall argued that the received text came from the Carthaginian council of 251, which fought primarily against the Carthaginian schism; whereas, the Carthaginian council of 252 revised the text, creating the primacy

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[30] Scholarship for a while has stated that primacy (*primatus*) in Cyprian's writings did not mean the same thing as papal primacy in modern Catholicism. Koch argued that primacy for Cyprian meant temporal primacy because of the early establishment of the Roman church. Hugo Koch, *Cathedra Petri* (Gießen, Germany: A Töpelmann, 1930), 52–59. For Bévenot, primacy meant an honorary primacy, or a primacy of influence, not an authoritative primacy. Maurice Bévenot, "*Primatus Petro datur*: St. Cyprian on the Papacy," in *Church, Ministry, and Organization in the Early Church Era*, ed., Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993).

[31] Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 19–32.

[32] "La question de l'authenticité reste ouverte. Pour ma part, j'ae acquis la conviction que les deux textes sont bien attribuables à Cyprien…la redaction du premier daterait du printemps 251, celle du second de la controverse baptismale." Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage*, 115.

[33] Hinchliff admitted that his narrative for the two versions did not have strong evidence, but he still held to it because it served as a good hypothesis. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 107, 111–12.

[34] Campbell unfairly labeled this debate a Protestant-Catholic issue. Campbell, *The Complete Works*, 34n11.

version in response to the schism in Rome.[35] Finally, Burns argued for three versions. An original lost edition circulated in North Africa, indicated by certain phrases aimed at the laxist schism in Carthage. Cyprian sent a second primacy edition to Rome to counter the Novatianists, and he wrote the third received edition during the rebaptism controversy.[36]

Regardless of which edition came first, neither version argued explicitly for papal primacy because Cyprian used Peter as a symbol for ecclesial unity without referring to the Roman bishop.[37] Bévenot denied that either publication contended for a papacy; rather, both claimed the unity of the church was founded upon Peter.[38] Sage said that *De unitate* 4–5 established the bishop's authority upon the union of the church.[39] Brent also wrote that chapters four and five, while instrumental in the development of the church's idea of the bishop, did not immediately address the role of the bishop.[40] Instead, these chapters described the importance of the unity of the church for salvation. Brent believed these chapters taught that a true church had a bishop united with the other bishops. For Brent, Cyprian defined schism as breaking from this episcopal union (which included union with the Roman bishop), rather than parting just from the Roman bishop (as schism later became defined).[41] Similarly, Michael Andrew Fahey wrote that

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[35] Stuart G. Hall, "The Versions of Cyprian, *De unitate* 4–5: Bévenot's Dating Revisited," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 55, no. 1 (April 2004):138–46.

[36] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 93–96, 159–62.

[37] Cyprian, *Epistula* 66.8.3; 70.3.1; 71.3.1. Cf. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 114. However, in a letter to Cornelius against the Carthaginian schism, Cyprian called the Roman bishop "the very source of episcopal unity" (*unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta*). Cyprian marveled that the Felicissimus Fortunatus dared to seek recognition for their schismatic church from the see of Rome when the Roman bishop represented the unity of the episcopal college. This letter also demonstrated two further reasons why the early churches held the Roman church in great esteem. First, they believed it passed down the chair of Peter. Second, Paul himself commended the faith of the Romans and wrote his most theological work to them. Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.14.1. Cf. Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage*, 83–84.

[38] Bévenot, *St. Cyprian,* 6; Bévenot, "*In solidum*" and St. Cyprian: A Correction," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 6 (1955): 244–48.

[39] Sage, *Cyprian*, 244, 244n3.

[40] Brent, *On the Church*, 1:145.

[41] Brent argued that this definition of schism meant Cyprian saw Stephen's allowance of heretical baptism as an act of fellowshipping with heretics, so he had separated himself from the rest of the

scholarship sometimes has "exaggerated beyond all proportion" Cyprian's use of

Matthew 16:18–19.[42] He never used the passage to establish the primacy of the Roman

bishop over the other bishops but rather to emphasize episcopal unity, symbolized by the

founding of the church upon Peter.[43] Finally, Hinchliff wrote that the text could point

towards papal supremacy, but the same text could also just be referencing Peter and not

the bishop of Rome. The primacy text did not necessarily require a papacy.[44]

Therefore, the main point of the passage does not change depending upon

which edition is taken as the original because both editions argued that breaking from the

church meant losing salvation. Drawing from Matthew 16:18–19, Cyprian taught that

Jesus Christ established the church upon Peter rather than upon all the apostles because

Christ wanted to turn Peter into a symbol of the spiritual and visible unity of the church.[45]

Peter passed this role of symbolizing and maintaining ecclesial unity to the apostles in his

own lifetime, and the apostles then passed this role to their successors, the bishops.[46]

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church. Contrary to Brent, Cyprian remained in union with Stephen, indicating that Cyprian never saw Stephen as a heretic or a schismatic. Rather, Cyprian was pointing out the necessary consequence of Stephen's theology. Brent, *On the Church*, 1:151. Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.24.

[42] Michael Andrew Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in Third-Century Exegesis* (Tübingen, Germany: JC. B. Mohr, 1971), 309–310. Cf. P T. Camelot, "S. Cyprien et la primauté," *Istina* 4 (1957): 421–34; L. Campeau, "Le texte de la primauté dans le 'De Catholicae Ecclesiae unitate' de s. Cyprien," *Sciences ecclésiastiques* 19 (1967): 81–110, 255–75; G. Händler, "Die drei großen nordafrikanischen Kirchenväter über Mt. 16, 18s," *Theologische Literatur Zeitung* 81 (1956): 835–58; J. Ludwig, *Die Primatworte Mt. 16/18–19 in der altkirchlichen Exegese* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1952); M. Lods, "Le 'Tu es Petrus' dans l'exégèse patristique," *Eglise et Théologie* 21 (1958): 13–34; Benjamin Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage and the College of Bishops* (Minneapolis: Fortress Academic, 2018), 55.

[43] Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 309–10.

[44] Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage,* 111–13.

[45] "I tell you that you are Peter, and, on that rock, I will build my church, and the gates of the underworld will not prevail against her. I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you will bind upon earth will have been bound even in heaven, and whatever you will loose upon the earth will have been loosed even in heaven" (Matt 16:18–19). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 11; *De habitu virginum* 10; *De bono patientiae* 9; *Epistula* 33.1; 43.5; 57.1; 59.7; 66.8; 70.3; 71.3; 73.7, 11.

[46] *De unitate* 4–5 could be interpreted as apostolic succession. To be sure, Cyprian believed that the bishops inherited the role of leading the church from the apostles. However, Cyprian never articulated a modern understanding of apostolic success. For Cyprian, a bishop's ability to baptize or celebrate the eucharist came from his position as a true bishop within a true church. He did not articulate the modern notion that his ordination elevated his nature and gave him an indelible mark because it came from a succession of episcopal ordinations from the apostles down to his day. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2.2.3.6.3.1555–58.

Siniscalco and Mattei argued that Cyprian made the bishops equal with the apostles. On the contrary, Cyprian did not make give them equal clout, but rather he saw the bishops as having inherited the governorship of the church from the apostles. The apostle's true authority rested in their writings, from which Cyprian copiously quoted to justify his arguments.[47] For Cyprian, a bishop symbolized the spiritual unity of his own church, and the fellowship of the bishops represented the spiritual connection between all the churches in the Roman Empire, thus creating one visible church. In other words, in *De unitate* 4–5 Cyprian argued that the visible union of the bishops was a sign of the spiritual unity of the church, a visible sign of a spiritual reality, so schismatic bishops had torn their congregation from the spiritual church.[48]

De ecclesiae catholicae unitate 6–22

Ultimately, *De unitate* 4–5 occupies only one small space in Cyprian's work compared to his biblical argument for ecclesial unity in *De unitate* 6–22.[49] These chapters illustrated well Cyprian's belief in the perspicuity of the Bible because he often quoted a biblical passage and then shifted topics, indicating that he believed merely quoting Scripture settled the issue because Scripture was clear.[50] Furthermore, while Cyprian in theory believed the New Testament progressed revelation, in practice he often did not distinguish Old Testament passages from New Testament ones. This practice stemmed from his belief that all biblical passages were immediately relevant for the Christians of his day, so Cyprian often quoted biblical texts as if the authors had his context in mind.

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[47] Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage*, 70.

[48] Cyprian made a similar argument in *Epistula* 55.24, where he said that Novatian had created a human church because his congregation did not exist in unity with the rest of the church. Cyprian wrote, "He can be no Christian who is not inside the [church[of Christ" (*Christianus non est qui in Christi ecclesia non est*) (*Epistula* 55.24.1). Cyprian thus revealed again how he equated the visible church with the spiritual church so that separating from the union of bishops meant stepping outside the spiritual church and hence outside of salvation.

[49] Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 110, 113.

[50] Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible,* 624–25.

This usage of both the Old and New Testaments also came from his high view of Scripture. When Jesus Christ talked in the gospels, Cyprian believed Christ spoke directly to the church of the third century. Similarly, Cyprian believed the Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Old and New Testaments so that both testaments had immediate relevance for third-century Christians. Cyprian also provided Christological and ecclesiological interpretations to make passages relevant to his audience.[51] In other words, Cyprian often looked for what a passage might teach either about Jesus Christ or about the church. With this view of Scripture in mind, Cyprian in chapters six through twenty-two collated a host of biblical passages to prove that Christians should not divide the visible church.

Cyprian began in chapter six by playing upon the double meaning of *adulterare,* which could be translated either as 'to commit adultery' or 'to counterfeit.' He thus argued that schismatic churches existed as both counterfeit and immoral groups. All who joined themselves to these schismatic churches were committing spiritual adultery.[52] For Cyprian, someone "cannot have God as his Father who does not have the church as his Mother."[53] Cyprian saw ecclesiological typology in the ark of Noah. Just as all those who did not come into the ark died, all who did not come into the church would perish too.[54] Cyprian also quoted Christ's axiom in Matthew 12:30. Though an eschatological

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[51] For a comprehensive investigation into Cyprian's use of Scripture, see Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 29–56. Fahey in his study argued that Cyprian did not rely upon Tertullian when choosing biblical quotations because Cyprian routinely quoted passages not found in Tertullian's works, even when discussing the same subject. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 331, 367, 405–6, 535–36. For a similar treatment of Scripture, see *A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian by an Anonymous Bishop*, which was written by one of Cyprian's fellow bishops in Latin North Africa around 255.

[52] Brent held that Cyprian was not referencing the sacraments but rather the oath of admission into an army, thus using *sacramentum* in the older sense rather than the way it came to mean for the church. While Brent's view avoids anachronism, more than likely Cyprian was talking about baptism and the eucharist since both had already become very important to the church by his day. Brent, *On the Church*, 1:155, 156n10. Cf. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 6; *Epistula* 55.

[53] "Habere iam non potest Deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem." Cypriam, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6.149–150. Similarly, Cyprian said in *De lapsis* that those who had sacrificed to idols during the persecution had denied both God as Father and the church as Mother. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 9.

[54] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6. Cf. *Epistula* 69.2.2. *A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian by an Anonymous Bishop* 2–6 contains a more allegorical interpretation of Noah's Ark in

verse, Cyprian applied the statement to the schisms of his day, thus demonstrating how he virtually equated the eschatological, spiritual church with the visible, physical church. Cyprian also compared ecclesial harmony to unity within the Trinity by referencing John 10:30 and 1 John 5:8.[55]

The reference to 1 John 5:8, especially the references to *filius* and *spiritu sanctu*, led Walter Thiele to claim the old Latin Bible contained the Johannine comma, a verse that most modern scholarship has rejected as inauthentic to the original autograph.[56] However, Bévenot argued well that Cyprian instead interpreted "spirit, water, and blood" in a Trinitarian sense.[57] Unlike Tertullian, who routinely interlaced his writing with biblical quotations, Cyprian usually prefaced his biblical passages with some sort of expression like *scriptum est* ("it is written"). This routine might reveal that he believed the old Latin Bible had poor rhetoric, because he was trying to distance his polished language from the poor Latin of his Bible. However, this habit of using introductory phrases certainly proved that Cyprian held a high view of Scripture. In *De unitate* 6, he placed the quotation formula after "concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" but before "the three are one."[58] Since Cyprian routinely used typological interpretation and habitually introduced direct quotations from Scripture with a formula, the old Latin Bible probably did not contain the Johannine comma.

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order to connect the Ark to the church. The work was written by an anonymous bishop in Latin North Africa around 255.

[55] "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Matt 12:30). "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). "And, the three are one" (1 John 5:8). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.86; *Epistula* 43.5; 69.1, 5; 70.3; 73.12. Koch pointed to certain linguistic similarities between *De unitate* and Novatian's *De trinitate* to show that Cyprian's thoughts concerning ecclesial fellowship were influenced by Novatian's discussions concerning the divine unity. Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen*, 93–97.

[56] Walter Thiele, "Beobachtungen zum Comma Iohanneum," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 50, no. 1–2 (1959): 68–70.

[57] Maurice Bévenot, *St. Cyprian*, 109n53–54. Cf. *De rebaptismate* 15.

[58] "Et iterum de Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto scriptum est: *Et tres unum sunt*." Cyprian, *De unitate* 6.156–57.

Be this as it may, Cyprian then argued in chapters seven and eight that both the Old and New Testaments taught that unity remained an essential aspect of the church.[59] Cyprian pointed to John 19:23–24, where the soldiers decided to gamble for Christ's seamless cloak rather than tear it apart. Cyprian also referenced 1 Kings 11:31–36, where Ahijah cut his cloak into twelve pieces to illustrate that Jeroboam was dividing God's people. For Cyprian, the cloaks served as types for the church. Hence, these passages instructed Christians that the church had to remain undivided.[60] In chapter eight, Cyprian again directly applied commands in the New Testament to his current situation. Jesus Christ taught only one flock and one shepherd existed (John 10:16). While Christ was referencing the spiritual church, Cyprian evoked the text to denounce the rise of a second bishop within the sphere of an established bishop. Similarly, Cyprian quoted 1 Corinthians 1:10 and Ephesians 4:2–3 as commands that came directly from Paul against the schism of Cyprian's day.[61]

Cyprian also saw ecclesiological typology in Joshua 2:18–19, Exodus 12:46, and Psalm 67:7, which allowed him to direct these Old Testament passages against the

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[59] Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.4.1. In addition to the following biblical and theological arguments, Alan Krieder believed that a missional mindset drove Cyprian to stress Christian unity and discipline. In other words, Cyprian stressed ecclesial fellowship because he wanted unbelievers to look at the church and to desire to come into it and be saved. Alan Kreider, "Patience in the Missional Thought and Practice of the Early Church: The Case of Cyprian of Carthage." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 4 (October 2015): 224.

[60] Ulrich Wickert argued from *Epistula* 41 and 69 that Cyprian founded the unity of the church upon love. Laurance responded by pointing to Cyprian's use of typology in *De unitate* 7. Laurance interpreted the passage as people needed to unite visibly with Jesus Christ in one church. While Laurance correctly saw that Cyprian founded the unity of the church upon union with Christ (via the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at baptism so that the spiritual and visible church were virtually the same), in this passage Cyprian was mainly exhorting people to maintain the fellowship of the church, rather than describing the unity of the church. John D. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 135; Ulrich Wickert, *Sacramentum Unitatis: Ein Beitrag zum Verstädnis der Kirche bei Cyprian* (Berlin: Walter de Gruter, 1971), 29.

[61] "And, there will be on flock and one shepherd" (John 10:16). "I beseech you brothers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you keep on speaking to the same end and that there be not schisms among you; be instead reconciled in the same mind and in the same opinion" (1 Cor 1:10). "…sustaining one another in love, acting sufficiently to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the joining together in peace" (Eph 4:2–3). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.86; *De bono patientiae* 15; *Epistula* 55.24; 69.5; 76.7.

schismatics. [62] He wrote of Joshua 2:18–19 that Rahab served as a type for the church (*in qua praeformabatur ecclesia*), thus allowing him to interpret the passage as meaning all those who left the church also lost their salvation.[63] While he saw the lamb as a type for Jesus Christ in Exodus 12:46, Cyprian gave an ecclesiological interpretation for the command not to take the cooked lamb outside the house. Eating of the lamb became a type for partaking of the eucharist. Thus, the command in Exodus towards the Israelites during the unique event of Passover became an order to the church to keep ecclesial unity and not to allow those outside this one visible church to partake of the eucharist.[64] Similarly, Cyprian gave an ecclesiological interpretation for the house in Psalm 67:7 so that the passage became a divine prediction that the true church possessed one mind and remained in accord.[65]

Cyprian wrote in chapters nine through eleven that God had allowed schismatics to arise within the church so that true believers would shine forth amidst the darkness. True Christians imitated the Holy Spirit, who came in the form of a gentle dove. According to Cyprian, the schismatics were acting more like wild dogs or poisonous snakes. In response, he directly applied 1 John 2:19 to refer to the schismatics of his time so that he could warn them that God at the last judgment was going to pour his wrath upon them as upon the pagans and heretics.[66] Cyprian also saw 1 Corinthians

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[62] "In one house shall it be consumed: you shall not throw the flesh out of doors from your house" (Exod 12:46). "You shall gather your father and your mother and your brothers and the whole house of your father in your own house. And, it will be that all who leave the gate of your house will bear their own guilt" (Josh 2:18–19). "God who makes men dwell in one mind in one house" (Ps 67:7).

[63] Cyprian, *De unitate* 8.203–4.

[64] Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 71. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.86; *Epistula* 69.4.

[65] Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.6, 28; 3.86, 113; *De Dominica oratione* 8, 23; *Epistula* 11.3; 69.5.

[66] "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for, if they had been of us, they would have remained with us" (1 John 2:19). Cyprian used this passage in other works to argue that schismatics did not perform valid baptisms because they did not belong to the spiritual church. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.78; *Epistula* 59.7; 69.1; 70.3

11:19 as a direct warning from the Spirit. Through this passage the Holy Spirit was urging Carthaginians of the third century to persevere in staying loyal to the one visible church as a demonstration of their true faith.[67]

Cyprian also alluded to Psalm 1:1 to say that God had even allowed some heretics to take the bishop's chair.[68] Unlike Tertullian, who interweaved allusions and paraphrases of biblical passages throughout his writings, Cyprian usually preferred to quote Scripture directly. Thus, the allusion to Psalm 1:1 in *De unitate* 8 was an exception. Moreover, the reference required Cyprian to give the passage an ecclesiological meaning to make it applicable to his current situation. The passage contrasted those who rejected God with those who followed him during the time of the old covenant. Cyprian equated the former with schismatic bishops and the latter with true bishops. The former had taken upon themselves false *cathedra* because they sat outside the church. Indeed, Cyprian had rejected Novatian as the bishop of Rome largely because he did not follow the normal procedure for the election of bishops and thus had forcefully taken the chair that lawfully belonged to Cornelius.[69] Brent, Siniscalco, and Mattei argued that Cyprian held to a more political view of the church, in contrast to seeing the church more as a school. Tertullian had allowed for several teachers within a single church to possess relatively equal authority if they held a "family resemblance."[70] In contrast, Cyprian pictured power within the church more like Roman political authority. The bishop governed his church as

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[67] "There ought to be heresies in order that the approved might be manifested among you" (1 Corinthians 11:19). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.93.

[68] "…seated on a chair of plague" (Psalm 1:1).

[69] Cyprian, *Epistula* 44. Cf. Hinchliff, *Cyprian,* 14

[70] Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 32, in *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Hereafter, all citations will be given as Tertullian, *De praescriptione haeretocorum* 32.

a Roman magistrate presiding over his *imperium* (sphere of influence), so Novatian was

breaking into Cornelius' lawfully obtained domain by setting up a second see of Rome.[71]

This interpretation of Psalm 1:1 led Cyprian in chapter eleven to argue from

Jeremiah 23:16–22 that schismatic bishops could not perform efficacious sacraments

because they had separated themselves from the spiritual church.[72] Jeremiah 23 dealt with

false prophets who were deceiving the Israelites with messages of political peace.

Cyprian viewed these prophets as types for the schismatic bishops of his day, who were

deceiving people into a false spiritual peace through preaching that God had reconciled

himself with them when in fact they still lived as enemies of God. Jeremiah 23:21–22

also had Christological and ecclesiological meaning that supported Cyprian's rejection of

schismatic baptism. Seeing Christological typology for "the fountain of the water of life"

and an ecclesiological one for "cisterns," the passage for Cyprian taught that the

schismatics performed invalid baptisms because they had rejected the church of Jesus

Christ. Stephen believed that the validity of a baptism came from following the proper

procedures when doing the rite. Hence, according to him, heretical and schismatic

churches could baptize people since they had kept the baptismal ceremony intact. Their

baptisms were valid, but they remained inefficacious until a true bishop laid his hands

upon the recipient.[73] Cyprian refuted this nascent notion of *ex opere operato* by

connecting the validity of a sacrament to its administration within the true church rather

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[71] Brent, *On the Church*, 1:159n15; Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage*, 75–76.

[72] "Do not listen to the speeches of the false prophets since the visions of their hearts frustrate them. They talk, but not from the mouth of the Lord. They speak to those who reject the word of the Lord: 'There will be peace for you and for all who walk in their own desires.' To everyone who walks in the error of his own heart: 'Evils will not come upon you.' I have not spoken to them, and they themselves prophesy falsely. If they had stood in my counsel and had heard my words, and if they had taught my people, they would have turned them from their evil thoughts…They have abandoned me, the fountain of living water, and have dug for themselves ruined cisterns which cannot hold water" (Jer 23.16–17, 21–22). Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 43.5.

[73] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.7; cf. *De rebaptismate* 6–7, 10–15. A close analysis of the baptismal controversy occurs in chapter six.

than to the proper performance of the rite.[74] Additionally, Cyprian wrote that the

schismatic bishops could never administer baptism again.[75] Therefore, Christians should

flee the venom that these bishops were trying to inflict.[76]

Cyprian then switched in chapters twelve through sixteen to countering the

arguments of the schismatics. He first addressed Matthew 18:20.[77] He exhorted, "*They*

cut off this sentence from its context in the whole paragraph just and precisely because

the church has cut them off."[78] Cyprian's argument here should nullify any attempt to

equate his ubiquitous quotations from Scripture as proof-texting. He directly applied

biblical passages to his own context without giving much consideration to the historical

context of the text, and he often argued from a single verse. However, he usually

interpreted a biblical passage by looking at its literary context. Later, Athanasius of

Alexandria (bishop 328–373) argued similarly in *Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit*

1.3–14. Athanasius accused the Tropikoi of justifying their heresy by not understanding

the biblical use of the word *spirit* and for not taking into consideration the literary context

of the passages from which they argued.[79] Likewise, Cyprian accused the schismatics of

taking Christ's words out of context to justify their sin. In a passage that might be the

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[74] Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 101–2; Abraham van de Beek, "Cyprian on Baptism," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, ed. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010): 155–64.

[75] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.9.3; 65.2; 67.3; 72.2. Cf. Augustine, *De baptismo* 1.1; 6.15; *Epistula* 43.5; Campbell, *The Complete Works,* xi; Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination in the African Response to the 'Rebaptism' Crisis: Cyprian of Carthage's Synod of Spring 256. *Theological Studies* 62, no. 2 (May 2006): 266–73; Joseph H. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian: Early Defender of the Faith* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book, 1942), 1, 197; Patrick Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian: Clerical and Lay Participation." *Theological Studies* 37, no. 1 (March 1976): 96 note 7; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 45-46 52; Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 202–3, 209–15; Sage, *Cyprian*, 304, 307.

[76] Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.9.

[77] "Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them" (Matt 18:20).

[78] "Ut ipsi ab ecclesia scissi sunt, ita capitula unius sententiam scindunt." Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 12.284–85. The italics were in Brent's translation.

[79] Athanasius the Great and Didymus the Blind, *Works on the Spirit*, trans. with commentary and edits by Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, and Lewis Ayres (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 73–75.

longest example of Cyprianic exegesis outside of *De Dominica oratione,* Cyprian looked

at Matthew 18 to argue that Matthew 18:20 was exhorting believers towards unity. In

other words, Jesus Christ remained with those in harmony (even if they were a small

group) and not with those in discord (even if they were a large group).[80]

Cyprian then strengthened his biblical arguments by pointing to Daniel 3:8–30

and Acts 16:16–40 as exemplifying the principle that Christ remained with two or three

believers in harmony. In Daniel 3:8–30, the angel of the Lord (whom Cyprian interpreted

as the pre-Incarnate Christ) appeared among the three youths within the fire. Similarly,

the opening of the jail doors in Acts 16 validated the devotion of Paul and Silas, who had

been singing hymns together. For Cyprian, these passages illustrated how Jesus Christ

bestowed his presence upon his followers when they were united and knew simplicity

and peace (*cum simplicibus scilicet adque pacatis*), remaining in one mind.[81] Cyprian

concluded that Christ is "rather *with* the two or three praying together with one mind than

with the majority who are disagreeing."[82] Thus, Cyprian said in chapter thirteen that the

schismatics were breaking Christ's command that they should forgive their brother before

coming to the alter (Matt 5:23–24). Since Cyprian saw the eucharist as a Christian

offering to God, the dismissal of Cain's offering (Gen 4) illustrated that God also rejected

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[80] Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.3; *Epistula* 11.3. "Cyprian's interest in this section of Matthew's Gospel is not so much what it teaches about prayer than its exhortation to fraternal charity, the indispensable prerequisite for [church] unity... (These arguments) are valuable witness to his thorough-going ecclesial exegesis of the sayings of Jesus." Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 313–15. While Fahey accurately noted Cyprian's ecclesial interpretations of Scripture, he misinterpreted Matthew 18 as having to do with prayer when the passage is talking about how to conduct church discipline.

[81] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 12.306–307. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 11; *Ad Quirinum* 3.10, 14; *Epistula* 6.3; 58.5.

[82] "Ostendit magis esse se cum duobus aut tribus unianimiter orantibus quam cum dissidentibus plurimis." Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 12.319–21. Italics were in Brent's translation.

eucharistic rites performed within schismatic churches because they had strife against their brothers and sisters.[83]

Cyprian took his argument further in chapter fourteen by claiming that schismatics and heretics did not enter heaven even if they die during persecution.[84] He based this claim upon two points. First, they were not following the law of love set down by Christ, Paul, and John, which Cyprian believed they had established for the church (John 15:12; 1 Cor 13:2–8; 1 John 4:16).[85] Second, schismatics could call themselves "Christians," but they should forfeit that title because they had separated themselves from the spiritual church when they separated themselves from the visible church.[86] Therefore, schismatics did not receive the rewards of martyrdom in heaven, and they were deceiving people by saying their congregations had confessors and martyrs. By taking Christian titles for themselves, schismatics were fulfilling Christ's prediction that deceivers would arise from within the church in the last days (Matt 24:5).[87]

In *De unitate* 15–16, Cyprian further denied that miracles demonstrated God's approval of the schismatics. Cyprian called upon Matthew 7:22–23 and 22:40 (cf. Mark 12:29). He placed schismatics among those before whom Jesus Christ had performed miracles but who still did not know God (Matt 7:22–23). Cyprian also pointed out that

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[83] "When you will stand up to pray, forgive if you have anything against anyone, in order that also your Father who is in heaven may forgive you your sins" (Matt 5:23–24). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.4; *De Dominica oratione* 23; *De zelo et livore* 17.

[84] Brent, *On the Church*, 1:166n20.

[85] "This is my commandment, that you love one another in the way in which I have loved you" (John 15:12). "And, if I should have faith so that I should remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And, if I should distribute all my goods for food and if I should hand over my body in order that I should burn, but not have love, I profit nothing. Love is generous hearted; love is kindly; love does not engage in rivalry, is not puffed up, is not enraged, does not behave wrongly, (and) does not think evil. It delights in all things; it believes all things; it hopes all things; it bears all things. Love never fails" (1 Cor 13:2–8). "God is love, and he who abides in God abides in love, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.3; *De bono patientiae* 15; *De Dominica oratione* 24; *De zelo et livore* 11, 13; *Epistula* 11.3; 73.21.

[86] Cf. Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 24; *Epistula* 55.17.2; 60.4; 73.21.1.

[87] "Many will come in my name saying: 'I am the Christ' and will deceive many" (Matt 24:5). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 11; *Ad Quirinum* 3.29; *De mortalitate* 2; *Epistula* 73.16.

the schismatics were not even following the Great Commandment to love one's neighbor, a commandment which he believed Christ gave to the church when he gave it to the apostles (Matt 22:40; Mark 12:29).[88] Cyprian reiterated that love and unity best proved one's faith and where the true church lies, and he believed the most complete expression of love would be found within a unified church. The lack of true love towards the *lapsi* among the schismatics proved that they were no longer Christians.[89] Cyprian then said that the lack of love among the schismatics also testified to the immanence of Christ's return, as the Holy Spirit had warned the third-century church in 2 Timothy 3:1–9. Thus, Christians should shun schismatic bishops, who worked as false servants within fictitious churches.[90]

In chapters seventeen and eighteen, Cyprian once more denied that schismatic bishops performed valid sacraments because they had separated themselves from the spiritual church. In other words, he again rejected *ex opere operato,* arguing instead that valid sacraments only occurred within the true church. In chapter seventeen, he likened the words of the schismatics to a contagious disease, and he called them rebels who had abandoned God and who had treated him despicably by erecting altars outside of his

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[88] "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name and in your name expelled the demons, and in your name exercised miraculous powers?' And, then I shall say to them: 'I never knew you; depart from me you who work injustice'" (Matt 7:22–23). "'The Lord your God is one God, and you shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole strength.' This is the first and the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two precepts hang the whole law and the prophets" (Matt 22:40; cf. Mark 12:29). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 2; *Ad Quirinum* 3.26; *De Dominica oratione* 15, 28; *De lapsis* 1; *De opere et eleemosynis* 16; *Epistula* 55.20.

[89] Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 271. Cyprian's argument in chapter fifteen also demonstrated how Hinchliff incorrectly believed that Cyprian founded ecclesial unity upon Christian love because in this chapter he stated more clearly that love served merely as a proof of a true church.

[90] "In the last days, distressing times will come; there will be men pleasing themselves, proud, puffed up, covetous, blasphemers, refusing to listen to their parents, ungrateful, irreligious, without favorable disposition, without covenant, false accusers, without self-control, harsh, not loving good, betrayers, insolent, inflated with lust, loving their own base desires more than God, having a perverted form of religion but denying its power. From among these are those who slink into homes and take as their trophies little hussies laden with their sins, who are led by all kinds of desires, always teaching and never reaching the knowledge of the truth. And, in the way in which Jamnes and Mambres resisted Moses, so all these resist the truth. But they will not progress very much, for their ignorance will be manifest to all, just as in the case of the former" (2 Tim 3:1–9). Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 3.3; 11.1.

church. God had revoked their power and authority because of their persistent sin.

Cyprian appropriated Christ's warning to his disciples in Mark 13:23 as an exhortation

for the church to take heed of the eschatological events that Cyprian believed Jesus Christ

had predicted for Christians of the third century.[91] Hence, Cyprian quoted three biblical

passages to spur his readers to flee from the schismatics back to the true church. He

generalized Christ's warnings against the Pharisees in Matthew 15:14 so that the

statement was directed towards the third-century church and warned them about

following schismatic teachers.[92] To the Carthaginians of his day, Cyprian also applied

Paul's statement against antinomianism, turning the passage into a warning specifically

against remaining in the company of a schismatic (1 Cor 15:33).[93] Similarly, Cyprian

quoted Sirach 28:24 and directly applied it to his current context so that it warned third-

century Christians not to listen to schismatic arguments.[94]

 The only deuterocanonical work that Cyprian quoted in *De unitate* was Sirach

28:24, but this reference demonstrates well Cyprian's view of these books. The argument

of Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade should be kept in mind. According to

Gallagher and Meade, the early church labeled some works as Scripture that they would

not have included within their canon.[95] In other words, while the two are normally

equated in modern thought, the early church differentiated between authoritative ancient

writings (which they sometimes called Scripture) and the God-inspired canonical books.

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[91] "You, however, beware: behold, I have predicted all things to you" (Mark 13:23). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 11; *Ad Quirinum* 3.29; *De mortalite* 2; *Epistula* 73.16.

[92] "They are blind leaders of the blind: however, a blind man leading a blind man falls into the same ditch" (Matt 15:14). Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 43.5.

[93] "The worst conversations corrupt good characters" (1 Cor 15:33). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.95; *Epistula* 59.20.

[94] "Hedge in your ears with thorns and be unwilling to hear a wicked tongue" (Sir 28:24). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.95; *Epistula* 59.20; 66.7.

[95] Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), xii–xxii.

This distinction appeared most apparently in ancient canon lists rather than in general writings. Cyprian did not produce a canon list, so scholarship cannot have complete certainty on whether he saw certain works as canonical. However, Cyprian largely accepted the tradition passed down to him without question, including a Latin Bible that had followed the Septuagint in including the deuterocanonical works. He had little reason to doubt the canonicity of Sirach. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, Cyprian usually indicated when he believed he was quoting Scripture, and Cyprian introduced the Sirach passage with the phrase "it is written" (*sicut scriptum est*).[96] Thus, he probably viewed Sirach as inspired, though he preferred books like Matthew and Psalms over it.[97]

Be this as it may, this argument then led Cyprian in chapter eighteen to equate the schismatics with some false priests and improper practices in the Old Testament. Cyprian compared schismatic bishops to Korah who rebelled against Moses (Num 16), to the sons of Aaron who offered improper sacrifices (Lev 10), and to King Uzziah who offered sacrifices, though he was not a priest (2 Chr 26). Just as these Old Testament figures did not follow God's prescribed commands for proper worship, the schismatics would face judgment for holding services and administering the sacraments outside the church.[98] Campbell wrote that these references might indicate the schismatics were beginning to form their own liturgy.[99] On the contrary, Cyprian was referencing places in the Old Testament where God punished people for worshipping him in improper ways. In other words, these three stories illustrated Cyprian's point that the schismatics did not want to follow God's precepts that Christians worship him within the one church, so their

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[96] Cyprian, *De unitate* 17.421–422. Cf. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 30–32.

[97] Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible,* 40–43.

[98] Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 3.1; 67.3; 69.8–9; 73.8.

[99] Campbell, *The Complete Works*, 35.

devotion was invalid. By equating the schismatics with these Old Testament examples, Cyprian was saying that their services were not honoring God.

Therefore, Cyprian argued in chapter nineteen that schism was worse than lapsing (i.e., temporary apostasy). The Novatianists were denouncing Cyprian and Cornelius for allowing former apostates back into the church. Cyprian capitalized on this idea. He admitted that the *lapsi* had committed an egregious sin, but he claimed that schismatic Christians were transgressing even worse by denying they were sinning at all.[100] While the *lapsi* were admitting their faults and seeking to make satisfaction for them, the schismatics were refusing to confess and were even boasting of their transgression: "Though someone who has fallen [i.e., a *lapsus*] has sinned once, the schismatic instead sins daily."[101] Cyprian quoted Mark 7:9: "You have rejected the commandments of God so that you might establish your own tradition."[102] Cyprian often gravitated towards seeing Scripture as a collection of commands from God, partly driven by this passage, which Cyprian cited in other places to exhort Christians to obey God.[103] Cyprian used Mark 7:9 to argue that the schismatics had defied divine commands towards unity for the sake of upholding their own rigorist tradition. Thus, God would give the repentant *lapsi* the rewards of martyrdom, but not schismatics because they died as unrepentant sinners outside the church.[104]

Finally, in chapters twenty through twenty-two, Cyprian faced the reality that some confessors had become schismatics, thus possibly giving the separated

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[100] Brent, *On the Church*, 1:173n25.

[101] "Et cum lapsus semel peccauerit, ille cottidie peccat." Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 19.474.

[102] "*Reicitis mandatum Dei ut traditionem uestram statuatis.*" Italics were in Brent's text. Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 19.462–63.

[103] Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 2; *Epistula* 43.6; 63.14; 67.2; 74.3. Cf. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*¸ 35–37, 56, 259–62, 330–38, 367–69; Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage*, 75.

[104] Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.21.1.

congregations an authority from God. The confessors held a lot of influence over the people, sometimes too much clout in Cyprian's eyes. His early letters revealed that he had spent much time in his self-imposed exile during the Decian persecution trying to curtail the elevation of the confessors' power over that of the bishops'. Hence, Cyprian had to walk a fine line between praising the confessors for their faith and denying their claims to authority.[105] He thus first denied that the presence of confessors in schismatic churches necessarily validated the schismatic movement. He reminded his readers in chapter twenty that any person could fall into the devil's traps, so they should expect to find some confessors within schismatic churches. In fact, he noted that some confessors had already become adulterers. The immorality among these confessors within the schismatic churches proved that these confessors were suffering from a lack of contact with the spiritual church. Cyprian also warned the confessors that they could lose the reward of their confession through the sin of schism. He took Christ's command to the Philadelphian church in Revelation 3:11 as a command to all Christians. Thus, Cyprian quoted the text to remind his readers that confessing Christ during persecution did not guarantee salvation. People must persevere to the end to be saved. Cyprian likewise began his next chapter quoting Matthew 24:13 and again placed his generation within the final days predicted by Jesus Christ so that his warning became immediately applicable to Cyprian's readers.[106]

Therefore, Cyprian warned the confessors in chapter twenty-one not to let their confession generate pride, which inevitable led to sin. Quoting the axiom of Luke 12:48 that more is demanded from those to whom God has given more, Cyprian said that the confessors had a greater responsibility to the church because the congregation had

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[105] Sage, *Cyprian,* 246.

[106] "He who will persevere right up until the end shall be saved" (Matt 24:13). "Hold fast to that which you have lest another take it and receive your crown" (Rev 3:11). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 8, 11; *Ad Quirinum* 3.29; *De bono patientiae* 13; *De mortalitate* 2; *Epistula* 73.16.

honored them for their public faithfulness.[107] In return for that honor, the confessors had taught the people how to be arrogant.[108] Because the confessors had great influence within the church and because they faced more attacks from Satan, they should forsake pride and dissension for humility and love. Cyprian drew from Luke 14:11 and referenced Philippians 2:8–9, and he gave both these passages Christological interpretations.[109] He then used these passages to stress how Christians should conform to the image of Christ, including his humility.

While some confessors followed the schismatics, Cyprian in chapter twenty-two also noted that most confessors remained within the church, just as most of the apostles remained with Jesus Christ and only Judas betrayed him. Sage contended that Cyprian here dealt with losing one's exalted station.[110] However, Cyprian argued that most (and in his mind the best) confessors either stayed with the congregation or had returned to the church. In other words, just as almost all the apostles continued to follow Christ after his resurrection, almost every confessor remained within the church, so the schismatics could not argue for their validity based upon a few confessors in their midst. Even some who had departed from the church had already come back, and Cyprian believed their return indicated that good was defeating evil. He argued that the sinful acts of some confessors should not eliminate the glory of all confessors, and he justified his

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[107] "To whom much is given, much is required of him" (Luke 12:48). This quotation represented one of the few instances when Cyprian quoted the Bible without putting a formula beforehand. Bévenot, *St. Cyprian,* 121; Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible,* 351. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Donatum* 13. Brent saw some aspects of this argument as evidence for Cyprian having a law career prior to becoming a Christian. He used the word *servitus,* which could have a legal meaning. He also mentioned "words of praise," which might reference the praising oratory found in legal rhetoric. Brent, *On the Church,* 1:175n26.

[108] Brent saw this statement as political language. Injustice (*iniustitia*) meant political chaos. In other words, Cyprian charged the confessors with upsetting church order. Brent, *On the Church,* 1:176n27.

[109] "He who exults himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exulted" (Luke 14:11). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.13; 3.39.

[110] Sage, *Cyprian*, 247.

statement by quoting Romans 3:3–4.[111] While this passage concerned the unfaithfulness of the Jews under the old covenant, Cyprian provided an ecclesiological interpretation. Paul said God remained faithful even when his people were unfaithful; similarly, most confessors remained within the church, though some had forsaken it.

De ecclesiae catholicae unitate 23–27

After countering the schismatics' arguments, Cyprian concluded his work with an exhortation to unity in chapters twenty-three through twenty-seven. In chapter twenty-three, he took the commands in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and Ephesians 5:6–7 as directed against the schismatics of his day so that he could entreat those who had wandered from the congregation to return. The church could not be divided and still live.[112] Just as Paul exhorted the Thessalonians and Ephesians to withdraw from those who preached a false gospel, Carthaginian Christians should avoid schismatic churches. Like a branch that had fallen from a tree, any congregation that separated from the communion of churches would necessarily die because they had separated themselves from the life-giving Spirit found only within the one true church.

If the schismatics would not return, Cyprian then instructed his readers in chapter twenty-four to shun the schismatics because both the Old and New Testaments required Christians to be people of peace (Ps 33:13–15; Matt 5:9; John 14:27).[113] Cyprian

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[111] "For, what if some of them have departed from the faith? Will their unbelief ever make God's trust empty? Far be it! For, God is truthful, but every man false" (Rom 3:3–4). Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 66.8; 67.8.

[112] "Let no one deceive you with empty words: for, on this account comes the wrath of God on the sons of willful disobedience. Be unwilling to be their partners" (Eph 5:6–7). "We instruct you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you withdraw from all brothers who walk inordinately and not according to the tradition that they have received from us" (2 Thess 3:6). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.68; *Epistula* 43.6; 59.20; 65.5.

[113] "Who is the person who wishes for life and loves to see the best days? Hold back your tongue from evil and your lips that they speak not deceitfully. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and follow her" (Ps 33:13–15). Fahey wrote that Cyprian might have interpreted this passage through the lens of 1 Peter 3:10–12. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 134. "Blessed are the peacemakers since they themselves shall be called the sons of God (Matthew 5:9). "Peace I leave with you; my peace I grant to you" (John

demonstrated here how he often saw biblical commands as directly applicable to his current context, even if found in the Old Testament. While Cyprian in theory accepted progressive revelation, in practice it did little to impact his interpretations. For Cyprian, the Old Testament retained its relevancy as Christian Scripture because it was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Spirit was admonishing the church through inspiring the writing of Psalm 33. Similarly, while Jesus Christ spoke his words in Matthew 5:9 and John 14:27 to his disciples, through them he was also giving commands to the church. Therefore, in contrast to the schismatics, Cyprian argued that Christians should "be peacemakers, gentle in heart, guileless in their speech, agreeing in purpose, holding together amongst themselves faithfully in the bonds of one mind."[114]

In chapters twenty-five through twenty-seven, Cyprian then set his doctrine of the church within his larger theology of history. He agreed with the Stoics that the world was growing old, which would lead inevitably to a more fallen world and more depraved humanity. Within that context, Cyprian claimed in chapter twenty-five that one-mindedness (*unianimitas*), love (*caritatem*), and keeping the commands of God (*Domini mandata custodiens*) allowed the early church to pray efficaciously. They obtained what they asked because of the spirit from which they asked it. Cyprian referenced Acts 1:14 and 4:32 as examples of this principle because he believed the first-century church lived with unanimity and holiness.[115]

Despite this spirit in the New Testament, Cyprian in chapter twenty-six saw Christians of his day as having digressed into vice and dissension. The disunity and

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14:27). Fahey believed Cyprian saw this verse as especially relevant since Jesus Christ said it just prior to his death. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 394.

[114] "Pacificos esse oportet Dei filios, corde mites, sermone simplices, adfectione concordes, fideliter sibi unianimitatis nexibus cohaerentes." Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 24.580–82.

[115] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 25.583–545. "And, they were all continuing in one mind in prayer with the women and Mary, who was the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers" (Acts 1:14). "The crowd of those who believed, however, conducted themselves in one spirit and mind" (Acts 4:32). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.3; *De Dominica oratione* 8; *De opere et eleemosynis* 25; *Epistula* 11.3.

impiety within the congregation fulfilled Christ's prediction "with an eye on our times" (*tempora nostra respiciens*) that the church and world would morally deteriorate just prior to his arrival (Luke 18:8).[116] Thus, Cyprian took Christ's eschatological predictions as directed to the people of Cyprian's day.

Campbell wrote that this text revealed Christians of the third century had lost the "intense eschatological expectation" of the first- and second-century church.[117] Therefore, they were collecting worldly wealth rather than focusing upon godly living.[118] Though a theological shift might have occurred among the people, Cyprian certainly did not lose an eschatological focus. Brent argued that Cyprian's theology of history largely followed that of the Stoics, to the extent that Cyprian borrowed illustrations and terms from them. Like the Stoics, he connected the cosmos and human society so that they either both remained in harmony or both became disordered. Hence, he saw the disunity of the church as tied to the persecution and plagues that together symbolized that they were living in the last days. [119] In addition, other factors besides theology probably played a stronger role in tempting Carthaginian Christians towards accumulating wealth. Sage pointed out that the Carthaginian church contained many nominal Christians by the time of the Decian persecution because the congregation had not experienced much

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[116] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 26.597–598. Cf. Brent, *On the Church,* 1:169n22. "The Son of Man, when he comes, do you think that he could find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:8). Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.9.

[117] Clarke argued that Cyprian developed a view of Christ's imminent return after the Decian persecution ended, based upon how many more times Cyprian referenced the second coming after the persecution compared to how few allusions appeared in his writings prior the persecution. However, Clarke argued from silence. Though Cyprian emphasized Christ's return more after the persecution, Cyprian could have held the idea prior to the persecution. Cyprian's tendency towards practical matters rather than speculative writings led him to focus upon apologetic (*Ad Quirinum*) and ethical (*De habitu virginum*) issues early in his career. G. W. Clarke, trans. and ed., *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* vol. 3, *Letters 55–66* (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 301.

[118] Campbell, *The Complete Works*, 36.

[119] Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 109–10.

persecution for nearly fifty years, since Septimius Severus (r. 193–211).[120] The lack of morality in the church probably stemmed more from this practical problem than from the theological issue of losing an eschatological vision.

Regardless of why morality had deteriorated, Cyprian exhorted Christians in chapter twenty-seven to strive ever more diligently to follow Christ's commands so that he would find them waiting when he returns. Because Cyprian saw Christ's eschatological predictions as directed at the third century, Cyprian quoted Luke 12:35–37 and gave it a Christological interpretation. Thus, the passage became a direct charge from Christ to the Carthaginian church to watch for his return.[121] All those whom he finds resisting evil and watching for his advent would be rewarded at the last judgement.

Conclusion

Therefore, Cyprian argued in *De unitate* that schismatics had lost salvation because they had separated themselves from the true church in which redemption could alone be found. Hinchliff believed Cyprian based the unity of the church upon the love between Christians, so he claimed the book argued for the necessity of love: "*De unitate* is not, therefore, really a book about popes and bishops. It is a book about the need to love."[122] While correct that the book is not about popes and bishops, Hinchliff overstated his case. Rather than focusing upon the need to love one another, the treatise instead equated the spiritual church with the visible church, which then allowed Cyprian to say that schismatics had lost salvation because they had separated from the church. After picturing schism as a ploy of Satan and then pointing to Peter as the symbol of the

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[120] Bévenot, *St. Cyprian,* 3; Sage, *Cyprian*, 191–92.

[121] "May your lions be girded and your lamps burning, and, like those persons awaiting their Lord when he comes from the wedding, so that, when he will come and know, they shall open for him. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord arriving will find on watch" (Matt 5:16; cf. Luke 12:35–37). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 8; *Ad Quirinum* 2.19; 3.11; *Epistula* 13.3.

[122] Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 116.

church's unity, Cyprian launched into a host of biblical texts to justify his belief that a local congregation had to remain united with the other churches for its members to be saved. Through his exegesis, Cyprian virtually equated the spiritual church with the visible church, united through the union of the bishops, so that separating from this fellowship of the churches necessarily meant separating from the true church and thus the loss of salvation. Even dying during persecution could not save schismatics because they did not die as martyrs of the church. Thus, Cyprian exhorted his readers to return to the true church and remain in it so that they would be saved.

PART 2

THE CHURCH AND SATISFACTION

CHAPTER 3

THE CROSS AND ATONEMENT

Introduction

Cyprian's understanding of the relationship between works and salvation flowed out of his core belief in the virtual union of the spiritual and visible church, as detailed in his *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*. As said in the previous chapters, Cyprian made a huge impact upon the Latin church within his own day, and arguably was the most important Latin theologian until Augustine, who fought with the Donatists over who was adhering best to Cyprian's thought. Part of this legacy included his emphasis upon the need to satisfy God for post-baptismal sins. Because of this stress upon works, many interpreters have argued that Cyprian held at least a dual role of faith and works when it came to atonement, and a few have even interpreted Cyprian as maintaining a works-based salvation. However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, much scholarship has also failed to consider his meaning of the term *satisfactio,* including how it differed from contemporary theological treatments of atonement. As covered in this chapter, many studies have also not accounted for his whole theological outlook, especially his understanding of the actions of Jesus Christ upon the cross. Cyprian held that atonement for all sins came at baptism solely through faith because of Christ's work upon the cross.[1]

State of the Question

Gustaf Aulén (1879–1977) in his controversial work *Christus Victor* (1931) argued that the *Christus Victor* view of the atonement dominated patristic thought and

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[1] Portions of this chapter's arguments can also be found in D. Forrest Mills, "Cyprian and the Atonement," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 12, no. 1 (January 2020): 35–53.

language. While his work helpfully highlighted a major emphasis in patristic thinking, it implied that satisfaction views of the atonement (including penal substitution) did not reflect Christian Scripture nor the earliest Christian traditions.

Therefore, much scholarship after Aulén claimed he went too far. John Anthony McGuckin said patristic authors used a variety of images. He called any attempt to stick patristic thought into a *Christus Victor* model "anachronistic and inappropriately scholastic."[2] Frances Young also denounced Aulén's dichotomization, pointing to the Latin North African tradition as one example.[3] Similarly, Peter Ensor argued that Justin Martyr (100–165), Clement of Alexandria (150–215), Tertullian of Carthage (160–220), and other third-century theologians held penal substitutionary views of the atonement, though they did not use modern vocabulary.[4]

While much scholarship has responded to Aulén, it has largely left Cyprian untouched. Aulén himself briefly mentioned Cyprian only twice. According to Aulén, Tertullian developed the notion of earning merit via good works, which Cyprian then applied to Christ's work upon the cross. Jesus Christ gained merit through his death, and he transfers that merit to his followers.[5] However, Aulén also claimed Latin theologians like Cyprian still subordinated this notion to the *Christus Victor* view of the atonement. Like Aulén , L. W. Grensted incorrectly claimed Cyprian believed people atoned for all

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[2] John Anthony McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 39.

[3] Frances Young, "Atonement," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson, vol. 1, *A–K*, rev. ed. (1990, repr., New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 143, 147.

[4] Peter Ensor, "Clement of Alexandria and Penal Substitutionary Atonement," *Evangelical Quarterly* 85, no. 1 (2013): 19–35; "Justin Martyr and Penal Substitutionary Atonement," *Evangelical Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (2011): 217–32; "Penal Substitutionary Atonement in the Later Ante-Nicene Period," *Evangelical Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (2015): 331–46; "Tertullian and Penal Substitutionary Atonement," *Evangelical Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2014): 130–42.

[5] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Herbert (1937; 2nd repr., London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1937), 54–55, 97.

their sin through works.[6] Aloys Grillmeier (1910–1998) in his influential work *Christ in Christian Tradition* (1965) only mentioned Cyprian in four footnotes, merely stating that Cyprian's Christology influenced Lactantius (250–320).[7] Similarly, Henry Chadwick (1920–2008) brushed past Cyprian, saying he only cared to write about ecclesiology, a view which Ensor called "minimalistic."[8] Benjamin Myers claimed he covered the patristic view of the atonement in his article, yet he failed to mention any Latin writers, subsuming Latin theologians under the Greek fathers.[9] Likewise, Norman Russell in his article on the work of Christ in the patristic period only gave the Latin fathers two sentences.[10] Hastings Rashdall (1858–1924) stated that early Latin writers did not advance atonement theory beyond the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists. Though Rashdall admitted that Cyprian held prominence among early Latin theologians, he only wrote two pages on Cyprian. Rashdall claimed Cyprian's legal background drove him to "exaggerate the legalizing tendencies of Tertullian" to the point that God needed to be placated through "ecclesiastical satisfaction."[11]

Scholarship on Cyprian has focused much more heavily upon his ecclesiology than his other doctrines. Truly, Cyprian wrote a lot on ecclesiology due to the

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[6] L. W. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement* (London: The University of Manchester Press, 1920), 30.

[7] Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. John Bowden, rev. ed. (1965; repr., Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 190, 199n137, 201n144.

[8] Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), 213; Ensor, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement," 337n35.

[9] Benjamin Myers, "The Patristic Atonement Model," in *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, 71–88, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 71–88.

[10] Norman Russell, "The Work of Christ in Patristic Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, ed., Francesca Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 5.

[11] Rashdall's argument required Cyprian to have had a legal background. However, sparse evidence exists for his life prior to conversion. Jerome and Augustine mentioned Cyprian's rhetorical skill, but not his background in practicing law. Cyprian himself never mentioned practicing law prior to his conversion. Moreover, Rashdall failed to demonstrate how Cyprian's view of the atonement fit into his overarching theology. Hastings Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology* (1919; 2nd repr., London: MacMillan and Company, 1925), 326–28.

controversies he faced as the bishop of Carthage.[12] Furthermore, few patristic theologians

wrote extensively on the atonement, and Cyprian was not the exception.[13] Like many

early Christian writers, Cyprian preferred to speak about the whole process of salvation,

from what later became known as the effectual calling to glorification.[14] Thus, he largely

did not develop his thoughts on atonement but often professed the views passed down to

him.[15] In addition, the densest collections of his Christology appears in two of his earliest

writings: *Ad Quirinum* and *Quod idola dii non sint*. Cyprian mostly quoted Scripture in

the former work, and scholarship still debates whether he even wrote the latter.[16]

Nevertheless, the descriptions mentioned above of Cyprian's view of the

atonement failed to consider Cyprian's context and overarching theological beliefs.[17]

Cyprian largely allowed his context to dictate where he placed his attention, always

keeping a pastoral eye on his congregation. Furthermore, his view of the atonement had

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[12] As mentioned earlier, Cyprian faced two major controversies during his time as bishop. First, the church had to decide what to do with the *lapsi* (Christians who had apostatized during the Decian persecution). Second, after the schism of Novatian in Rome and Felicissimus in Carthage, Cyprian disagreed with Stephen over schismatic baptisms. Cyprian argued that schismatic and heretical baptisms were not baptisms at all.

[13] Ensor, "Tertullian and Penal Substitutionary Atonement," 130.

[14] McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook*, 36.

[15] Ensor, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement," 337.

[16] Some scholarship has continued to reject Cyprianic authorship for *Quod idola dii non sint*. Berthold Altaner, and Alfred Stuiber, *Patrology*, trans. Hilda C. Graef (New York: Herder and Herder, 1960), 196; Bertil Axelson, "Echtheits und textkritische Kleinigkeiten," *Eranos* 39 (1941): 64–81. However, Hans van Loon provided a cogent argument for the authenticity of *Quod idola dii non sint* and explored Cyprian's Christology based upon that text and upon *Ad Quirinum*. Hans van Loon, "Cyprian's Christology and the Authenticity of *Quod idola dii non sint*," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language, and Thoughts*, 127–42 (Leuven, Belgium: Petters, 2010), 127. For the work that convinced most historians of Cyprianic authorship, see Hugo Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen* (Bonn, Germany: A Marcus and E. Weber, 1926), 1–78. Johannes Quasten wrote that after Koch few historians doubted Cyprian authored *Quod idola dii non sint*. Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 2, *The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1953), 364. In contrast, David E. Wilhite wrote that most historians still doubt Cyprian wrote *Quod idola dii non sint*. David E. Wilhite, *Ancient African Christianity: An Introduction to a Unique Context and Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2017), 154, 167–168n176. Cf. Eberhard Heck, "Pseduo=Cyprian, *Quod idola dii non sint* und Laktanz, *Epitome diuinarum institutionum,* in *Panchaia: Festschrift für Klaus Thraede,* ed., Manfred Wacht (Münster, Germany: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922), 148–55.

[17] Additionally, the almost exclusive attention given to the Greek fathers when dealing with patristic views of the atonement has led much scholarship to judge the Latin fathers by using the Greek fathers as the standard.

to account for his idea of sin, the Holy Spirit, and the person and work of Jesus Christ. Hence, this chapter first explores Cyprian's overarching theology concerning sin, humanity, and the need for salvation; then, it looks more specifically at his view of Jesus Christ and his work upon the cross.

Cyprian and His Theology

Hamartiology and Pneumatology

A proper understanding of Cyprian's thought must first consider his robust hamartiology and his high pneumatology. Jerome wrote that Cyprian regarded Tertullian as his "master," whom he read every day. Aulén might not have been wrong when he wrote that Tertullian provided the materials with which Cyprian built the most systematic theology for Latin North Africa prior to Augustine.[18] However, Fahey demonstrated that Cyprian largely relied upon his own biblical exegesis rather than upon Tertullian's when formulating his ideas. In many cases, Cyprian quoted different biblical passages than the ones found in Tertullian's works, even when they agreed with each other. Thus, scholarship should not see too much of Tertullian in Cyprian's thought.[19]

Be this as it may, Tertullian certainly shaped Cyprian's view of humanity and sin. Tertullian's view of the soul was influenced by the Stoics, who believed the soul was corporeal.[20] Tertullian thus thought Adam's sin corrupted the soul, and he passed this

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[18] Aulén, *Christus Victor,* 54–55, 97; Jerome, *De viri illustribus* 53.3, in Jerome, *On Illustrious Men* (trans. Thomas P. Halton, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999).

[19] Michael Andrew Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in Third-Century Exegesis* (Tübingen, Germany: JC. B. Mohr, 1971), 331, 367, 405–6, 535–36. Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine: Some Historical Prolegomena* (New Haven, CT: Yale, University Press, 1969), 90–91.

[20] Tertullian, *De anima* 27.1, in *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Hereafter, all citations will be given as Tertullian, *De anima* 27.1. Jaroslav Pelikan believed Tertullian was more influenced by medical writings from figures like Soranus of Ephesus than by Stoic philosophy. Either way, Tertullian saw the soul as corporeal, and he held to traducianism. Namely, people receive their souls from their parents. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 89.

fallen soul to his progeny through reproduction.[21] This original sin inclined people

towards sin.[22] Though Cyprian did not hold to the corporeality of the soul, he did

appropriate Tertullian's belief in original sin and the fallenness of the will.[23] For this

reason, Cyprian did not maintain an age of accountability, when people became guilty of

sin. Even very young children and babies were culpable.[24]

Cyprian saw sin as a grave offense against God. Cyprian believed that people

could fall under demonic influence through sin because, when people sinned, they

basically were serving demons and doing the will of Satan.[25] Because of the weight of

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[21] Tertullian, *De anima* 9; 27.1; 40.1. Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (1958; 5th ed., 9th repr., London: Continuum, 2008), 175; Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine,* 91–92. Pelikan argued that Tertullian's belief in believer's baptism prevented him from developing a strong view of original sin as Cyprian and later Augustine. However, Pelikan based this claim upon the false assumption that only those who view baptism as expiating original sin can truly hold a strong view of original sin. Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 89–91.

[22] Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.22, in *Latin Christianity: Its Founder Tertullian* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Hereafter, all citations will be given as Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.22. Tertullian, *De carne Christi* 16, in *Latin Christianity: Its Founder Tertullian* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995); Tertullian, *De resurrectione mortuorum* 49, in *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Cf. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 176.

[23] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 10; *De bono patientiae* 11; *De mortalitate* 7; *Epistula* 55; 64.5.2. Cf. Phillip Campbell, ed., *The Complete Works of Saint Cyprian of Carthage*, (Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing, 2013) 64.5; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 176; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine: Some Historical Prolegomena* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 76–77, 81–85; Van Loon, "Cyprian's Christology," 140. Augustine called upon Cyprian (especially his *Epistula* 64) as a witness against the Pelagians to prove that the church already held to the notion of original sin, though in a less developed form. In fact, Cyprian's language on this subject might have influenced Augustine's own. Augustine, *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* 4.23, 29–32 in *Saint Augustin's Anti-Pelagian Works* (1887; American ed., trans. Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis, ed. Benjamin B. Warfield. Reprint. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995). Hereafter, all citations will be given just as Augustine, *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* 4.23. Augustine, *De gratia Christi et de peccato orginali* 2.37 in *Saint Augustin's Anti-Pelagian Works* (1887; repr., American ed., trans. Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis, ed. Benjamin B. Warfield, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995). Augustine, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 2.29.51 in *Saint Augustin's Anti-Pelagian Works* (1887; repr., American ed., trans. Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis, ed. Benjamin B. Warfield, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995). Augustine, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* 3.5.10 in *Saint Augustin's Anti-Pelagian Works* (1887; repr., American ed., trans. Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis, ed. Benjamin B. Warfield, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995). Hereafter, all citations will be given just as Augustine, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* 3.5.10. For an in-depth study of how Cyprian influenced Augustine's doctrine of original sin, see Pier Franco Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin: Augustine and the Pre-Augustinian Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 154–56.

[24] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 25; *Epistula* 64.5.2. Cf. Augustine, *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* 4.23; *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* 3.10.

[25] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 1–3; *Epistula* 55.14.

sin, Cyprian believed that God condemned people for their sins even before they died. This judgment often came through calamity, like persecution, illness, and even premature death.[26] Moreover, Cyprian saw sin as so bad that the stain (but not guilt) of sin could pass to another person through fellowship. He thus exhorted believers to flee from those who refused to repent so that they would be found blameless during the final judgment.[27]

One of the worst transgressions for Cyprian was denying what God had done through Jesus Christ.[28] Therefore, Christians who sacrificed to idols during the persecution committed a terrible sin. However, these *lapsi* could still receive a martyr's reward if they were truly repentant and were seeking reconciliation with the church. Hence, Cyprian saw schism as a worse sin than lapsing. While the *lapsi* admitted their transgression and sought forgiveness, schismatics refused to admit their crime and tore the church apart in doing so. They thus demonstrated that they not only had departed from the visible church but had separated from the spiritual church.[29] For Cyprian, only those who would not repent and seek reconciliation with the church suffered the loss of the Holy Spirit. Karl Rahner (1904–1984) argued well that the imposition of hands upon sinners during the process of church discipline mirrored more an exorcism and expiation than a confirmation, so Cyprian did not believe sin (even an egregious one) automatically led to the loss of the Holy Spirit. A person had to refuse to be reconciled with the church to merit such an extreme form of punishment.[30]

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[26] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 7–11; *Ad Fortunatum* 11; *Ad Quirinum* 3.47; *De bono patientiae* 5; *De Dominica oratione* 25–26; *De lapsis* 5–7, 19–21, 26; *De zelo et livore* 5; *Epistula* 11; *Quod idola dii non sint* 12.

[27] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.34; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 23; *De lapsis* 10; *Epistula* 69.9.

[28] Cyprian, *De mortalitate* 6; *Quod idola dii non sint* 9.

[29] Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 22–24, 30; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 19; *De lapsis* 15–16, 28–30, 33; *De opere et eleemosynis* 3; *Epistula* 15–17, 30–31, 65, 73–75.

[30] Karl Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 200–5. Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 57.4.2; 73.13. Therefore, when a schismatic repented and returned to the church, the bishop laid his hands upon the person, at which time the Holy Spirit indwelled the individual again.

Because Cyprian held a robust hamartiology, he also saw humanity as completely depraved. J. N. D. Kelly (1909–1997) rightfully stated that third-century theologians in Latin North Africa developed a "somber picture of the Fall" well before Augustine.[31] This fallen human nature partly involved susceptibility to pain and illness.[32] Cyprian wrote that all humans, even Christians, had to bear human infirmity because "they are associated with the human race in fleshly equality, but are separated in spirit."[33] The Fall not only caused the ability to suffer, but it also brought spiritual blindness and depravity. Sin secretly deceives the mind, making people spiritually blind.[34] Therefore, humans routinely err in their judgments.[35] Because of their sinful nature, humanity regularly created sacrilegious laws, institutions, and traditions.[36] Hence, Cyprian called upon Demetrianus to "leave behind the idols which human error has invented."[37] This anthropology helped Cyprian make sense of the severe persecutions faced by the church.[38] Additionally, it led him to emphasize the need to rest upon God's will and approval rather than give into human recommendations or testimonies, especially when it came to ecclesial matters.[39]

Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.9.2. In a sense, heretics benefitted from remaining within the church because they remained exposed to the salvific elements found only within the church. *Epistula* 73.11.3.

[31] Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 174.

[32] Cyprian, *De bono patientiae* 17.

[33] "Quoadusque istic in mundo sumus, cum genere humano carnis aequalitate coniungimur, spiritu separamur." Cyprian *De Mortalitate* 8.114–16. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 18–19.

[34] Cyprian, *De Dominca oratione* 20.

[35] Cyprian, *Ad Donatum* 4; *Ad Quirinum* 4, 10; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 19; *De opere et eleemosynis* 16; *Epistula* 43, 54.

[36] See Cyprian's arguments for using both wine and water in the eucharistic cup in *Epistula* 63.

[37] "Relinque idola quae humanus error inuenit." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 16.318.

[38] Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 57–59.

[39] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 18; *De lapsis* 19, 27. Cf. *Epistula*, 38–39, 67.

Not only did Cyprian see humanity as fallen, but he viewed each generation as growing worse. Cyprian believed that the world was going to last six thousand years and that his generation was living at the end of the sixth millennium.[40] While someone might view Cyprian as pessimistic, Jean-Claude Fredouille argued that Cyprian did not hold an especially negative view of the world. He lived during a tumultuous time in Roman history. While North Africa did not always feel the political and economic problems found in the rest of the empire, Cyprian's extensive correspondence kept him up-to-date on events.[41] In fact, Fredouille believed Cyprian held a more accurate view of the state of the empire than many of his contemporaries, in that he saw it was already declining.[42] In addition, Cyprian's position should not be considered especially pessimistic because Brent pointed out that Stoic philosophy also believed the world was growing older. Indeed, much of Cyprian's language mirrored that of the Stoics, though notably he did not hold to a cyclic view of history but rather to a linear one in keeping with biblical eschatology.[43] Jean Daniélou similarly argued that Stoicism shaped Cyprian's theology of history, though Daniélou claimed the Stoics did not have as much of an impact on the rest of Cyprian's thought.[44]

The impact of Stoicism upon Cyprian should not be exaggerated. He did not build his theology upon Stoic philosophy.[45] While he borrowed some illustrations and

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[40] Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum*¸ pref. 2.

[41] Jean-Claude Fredouille, *A Démétrien*, (Paris: Les éditions du cerf, 2003), 27.

[42] Fredouille, *A Démétrien*, 27, 31.

[43] Cyprian, *De mortalitate* 8, 22, 26. Cf. Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 102–5, 108–9; Jean Daniélou, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea*, vol. 3. *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, trans. David Smith and John Austin Baker, ed., John Austin Baker (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), 257.

[44] Outside of his theology of history, Daniélou believed Stoicism most influenced Cyprian's ethics. Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 251.

[45] Laurance assumed that Cyprian's theology was shaped by Platonic theology; thus, the bishop could serve as a type for the image of Christ in Cyprian's thought. However, Laurance never justified this connection between Cyprian and Platonism, and most scholarship has seen more of Stoicism

terms, his view of humanity came from Scripture, which taught that all people share a common humanity (e.g. Gen 1:27), that the church lives as many members of one body of Christ (e.g. 1 Cor 12), that the world will grow worse closer to Christ's return (e.g. Luke 21:31),and that an Antichrist will come (e.g. Rev 20:7–8).[46] Cyprian appropriated some explanations and illustrations from Stoic philosophy because they made the biblical teaching more intelligible to his audience, but he drew his ideas from Scripture.

While this theology of history revealed itself throughout Cyprian's works, it showed itself most clearly in *De mortalitate* and *Ad Demetrianum*. [47] In *De mortalitate*, Cyprian encouraged Christians in the midst of a devastating plague in 253 by pointing out that Scripture foretold such events would happen prior to Christ's return as the world aged.[48] Cyprian thus urged Christians to place their hope and joy in their eternal state rather than in the world.[49] While Christians remained in this world, they shared a common humanity with non-Christians, so for a time Christians also shared in the common toils and troubles inherent to all people.[50] Using a Stoic illustration of all

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than Platonism in Cyprian's theology. John D. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 167.

[46] Laurance acknowledged Cyprian's biblical reasons for this view of the world, but Laurance thought Cyprian believed this decay came from free will and individual sins. Instead, Cyprian held that Adam's sin generated original sin, which not only led people to be born sinners but also forced the world into its slow decay. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 151–53.

[47] Around 253, the church faced a severe plague that hit both Christians and non-Christians alike. This plague injured the faith of many in the church since it came right after they had suffered through a time of persecution (250–251). Those who had confessed and survived the persecution were now dying from a natural cause. Cyprian wrote *De mortalitate* to help them cope with such feelings and to strengthen their faith. He wrote *Ad Demetrianum* around the same time to counter the continuing charges of Demetrianus (the proconsul of Africa) against Christianity, accusations that had served as part of the impetus for the Decian persecution. *Ad Demetrianum* was the last of Cyprian's few apologetic works for Christianity, alongside *Quod idola dii non sint* and *Ad Quirinum*. For a history of *Ad Demetrianum,* see Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 275–80. For a discussion on the apologetic literature of Cyprian, see Philip Bradford Palmer, "Cyprian the Apologist," (PhD diss., Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014).

[48] Cyprian, *De mortalitate* 2, 17. Cf. Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage,* 107.

[49] Cyprian, *De mortalitate* 17, 25. Cf. Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage,* 107.

[50] Cyprian, *De mortalitate* 8. Cf. Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* 108.

humanity living in one house, Cyprian asked why Christians were not wanting to leave the house, when they saw that it was falling to pieces around them.[51]

In *Ad Demetrianum* Cyprian explained his theology of history even more clearly.[52] Cyprian in *Ad Demetrianum* 3–4 argued that the world was growing old, leading to more disasters.[53] Rain fell less often, crops were not growing as well, and trees were not producing much fruit. Moreover, people no longer lived as long, and humans had worse eyesight and hearing. Hence, the plague of 253 did not occur just because of divine judgment but partly because of this cosmic pattern of decay. Daniélou argued that Cyprian's information in *Ad Demetrianum* 3–4 did not come from the Bible but from Latin philosophy.[54] While Cyprian might have used Stoic illustrations, Daniélou undervalued the underlining biblical themes behind Cyprian's illustrations. Cyprian was making a philosophical argument, but that did not necessarily preclude a biblical foundation for his philosophy.[55]

This natural degeneration mirrored the moral degradation among humans. Fewer people were becoming sailors and soldiers. The market possessed little innocence, and the courts were failing to act justly. Cyprian wrote that pagans could not blame Christians for this moral degradation since it merely mirrored the natural dilapidation of the world. In *Ad Demetrianum* 10–11, Cyprian again emphasized this notion of moral

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[51] Cyprian, *De mortalitate* 25. Cf. Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 107, 110–13; Seneca, *De Beneficiis.* VII.1, 7.

[52] Cyprian's robust hamartiology as well as his view of the world as slowly decaying can also be seen in Cyprian's early work *Ad Donatum* 6–14.

[53] Cyprian wrote, "You ought to have grasped in the first place that the world has at this point of time grown old. It no longer consists of those vital powers of which it previously consisted, nor is it endowed with the superior force and vitality with which it was endowed in the past." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 3. 40–42 (Brent, *On the Church*, 1:71).

[54] Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 253.

[55] Daniélou also weakened his own statement when he admitted that Cyprian might have been shaped by Minucius Felix. Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 253. Cf. Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 34.2–3, in *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Hereafter, all citations will be given as Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 34.2–3.

degeneration in people. Cyprian described the world as filled with crime and sin.[56]

Instead of showing compassion for the sick and dead because of the plague of 253, many

people instead cast greedy eyes upon their relatives' belongings.[57] The plague

demonstrated for Cyprian that humanity was growing worse and needed not just

redemption from sins but also the renewal of humanity.[58] These chapters mirrored his

argument in *De lapsis* 5–6 for why God had allowed the persecution. Essentially, Cyprian

accepted the presuppositions on which Decius had based his policy (that Roman society

had become more fallen) without accepting his solution (that the old pagan gods need to

be worshipped).[59]

      Because of this robust view of sin and the fallen reality of humanity, Cyprian

did not believe salvation came via human effort but through the empowering work of the

Holy Spirit. Since the work of the Spirit was a foundational principle behind the church

and salvation for Cyprian, an investigation into the relationship between his ecclesiology

and soteriology requires a proper understanding of his pneumatology. However, A.

D'Alès wrote that Cyprian did not have much of a pneumatology.[60] Similarly, F. LeRon

Shults and Andrea Hollingsworth only mentioned Cyprian when they talked about the

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[56] Cyprian in *Ad Demetrianum* 11 focused more upon crimes within the courts than upon other sins. Passages like these imply that he might have had more experience with these crimes than others, thus strengthening the case that he served as a rhetorician in the law courts prior to his conversion.

[57] Cyprian wrote, "Meanwhile compassion is not shown to the sick, and greed and robbery cast longing eyes over the deceased. The same people avoid the funeral rites of their dead relatives, not having the courage to fulfill their family duty, and in eager pursuit for personal gain, they are covetous towards any possessions of the dead that they can grab. [Clearly] the afflicted have been abandoned in their sickness and perhaps, for this end, that they may not be able to escape death by finding a cure. For one who seeks to obtain by force the property of someone dying wishes him to die from his sickness." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrium* 10.196–202 (Brent, *On the Church*, 1:78–79).

[58] In *Epistula* 67, Cyprian said that the more the church relied upon the world, the more the church would decline with the world. In contrast, the more the church relied upon God, the more it would remain untouched by the aging of the world. Cf. Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 14, 17. For an extended discussion on the world and Scripture as two proofs for Cyprian that the world was in the last days, see Fredouille, *A Démétrien*, 21–38.

[59] Brent, *On the Church*, 1:105.

[60] A. D'Alès, *La théologie de saint Cyprien* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1922), 11.

patristic view of the spiritual gifts.[61] In contrast, M. Réveillaud maintained that

scholarship should call Cyprian's debate with Stephen the pneumatological controversy

(*controverse pneumatologique*) rather than the baptismal controversy (*controverse*

baptismale) because the debate centered around the work of the Spirit in baptism.[62]

Gerald M. Fagin and Burns likewise believed the Holy Spirit held a foundational place in

Cyprian's theology, but they sometimes imposed later developments upon his thought.

They tied the Spirit's work to succession from the apostles, and they said that Cyprian

believed the bishop could forgive sins and sanctify the church.[63] However, Cyprian did

not require apostolic succession.[64] Additionally, as will be argued in chapter five, Cyprian

did not believe bishops could forgive sins but rather that God alone forgives sins.

 Cyprian certainly did not ignore the Holy Spirit but rather saw him as

integrally involved in every aspect of a Christian's life.[65] Cyprian followed Paul's

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[61] Shults and Hollingsworth argued that Cyprian reserved the charismatic gifts only for bishop, but their position did not consider *Epistula* 16 and 30, where Cyprian ascribed visions to laypeople. F. LeRon Shults, and Andrea Hollingsworth, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 23–24.

[62] "Un simple coup d'oeil sur nos fiches nous révèle au contraire combien souvent l'évêque de Carthage mentionne les esprits, le Saint-Esprit et les réalités spirituelles." M. Réveillaud, "Note pour une Pneumatologie Cyprienne." *Studia Patristica* 6 (1962): 181–82. While Réveillaud correctly saw the discussion as revealing much of Cyprian's view of the Holy Spirit, Réveillaud unnecessarily reduced the issue to pneumatology rather than seeing the controversy as primarily over the nature of the church, one which involved the work of the Spirit and the place of valid baptisms. Furthermore, Réveillaud assumed that Cyprian's thought concerning the Holy Spirit was heavily influenced by what Cyprian had experienced at baptism. This interpretation of Cyprian revealed Réveillaud's liberal bias in that experience became the primary shaper of theology. In contrast, Scripture and tradition shaped Cyprian's theology much more than his experience, as indicated by his sharp defenses from Scripture.

[63] J. Patout Burns and Gerald M. Fagin, *The Holy Spirit* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), 80.

[64] *De unitate* 4–5 could be interpreted as apostolic succession. To be sure, Cyprian believed that the bishops inherited the role of leading the church from the apostles. However, he never articulated a modern understanding of apostolic success. For Cyprian, a bishop's ability to baptize or celebrate the eucharist came from his position as a true bishop within a true church. Cyprian did not articulate the modern notion that his ordination elevated his nature and gave him an indelible mark because it came from a succession of episcopal ordinations from the apostles down to his day. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2.2.3.6.3.1555–58.

[65] For an intensive study concerning Cyprian and the Holy Spirit, see Jordan H. Edwards, "*Promissam Vim Spiritus Sancti:* The Holy Spirit's Activity in Early Carthaginian Pneumatology" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021), 154–97.

language in seeing conversion as a spiritual birth wrought by the Spirit.[66] Cyprian

believed Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to believers.[67] Cyprian also saw the Spirit as the

one who spoke to Christians through Scripture and through the mouths of others.[68]

Cyprian used prosopological exegesis to make the Spirit the speaker of many biblical

texts so that the passages had divine authority.[69] In *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 9,

Cyprian argued that the Spirit set a divine example for Christians. They should be gentle,

like the Spirit, who manifested himself as a gentle dove. Elsewhere, Cyprian said that the

Spirit empowered Christians, and he directed and united the church.[70] Cyprian especially

emphasized this latter idea in his *Epistula* 74, where he argued that only one church

exists, just as only one Spirit exists. The Spirit indwells a person during a valid baptism

so that the presence or absence of the Spirit determines whether someone truly was a

Christian, as well as whether a baptism truly had occurred. Thus, Cyprian questioned how

Stephen could say heretics and schismatics had valid baptisms when they had not

received spiritual birth from the Spirit.[71] Stephen's baptismal theology meant Jesus Christ

and the Holy Spirit could be separated so that heretics and schismatics could have Christ

but not the Spirit.

  The relationship between sin, the Holy Spirit, and conversion appeared most

clearly in Cyprian's early work *Ad Donatum*, which most scholarship has claimed was

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[66] Cyprian, *Ad Donatum* 1–3; *De opere et eleemosynis* 25; *Epistula* 11.5.3.

[67] Cyprian, *Ad Donatum* 3–4.

[68] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 6, 17, 20; *Ad Fortunatum* 11; *De bono patientiae* 22; *De Dominica oratione* 5, 28, 35; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4–10, 16, 24; *De habitu virginum* 1, 13; *De lapsis* 10, 27; *De mortalitate* 11, 23; *De opere et eleemosynis* 2, 5, 9; *De zelo et livore* 8; *Epistula* 63.5.1–2.

[69] David T. Downs, *Alms: Charity, Reward, and Atonement in Early Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 265–67; David J. Downs, "Prosopological Exegesis in Cyprian's *De opere et eleemosynis*," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 2 (September 2012): 279–93.

[70] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 18; *Ad Fortunatum* 10–11; *De bono patientiae* 2, 14; *De Dominica oratione* 23; *De lapsis* 7; *De mortalitate* 8; *De opere et eleemosynis* 4; *Epistula* 55.9.1; *Quod idola dii non sint* 11.

[71] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 20; *Ad Quirinum* 3; *De Dominica oratione* 2, 11–12, 17, 34–36; *De habitu virginum* 23; *De mortalitate* 14; *De zelo et livore* 13–14; cf. *Epistula,* 73–74.

written just after his conversion, or at least right after he became a presbyter or bishop.[72]

In this work, he gave the Spirit a sovereign role in conversion, and Cyprian invited

Donatus to experience this conversion as well. According to Cyprian, the Holy Spirit

made him a new man by revealing to him the truth of the gospel and empowering him to

live a truly virtuous life.[73] The Spirit lived within him, and the Spirit formed the church

into Christ's military camp, ready to do spiritual battle.[74] Hence, Cyprian held a high

pneumatology, coupled with a robust hamartiology.

Christology

Few studies have explored Cyprian's Christology, even though he lived just

prior to the great Trinitarian debates of the fourth century.[75] The scholarship that does

exist has generally agreed he held a high Christology, including seeing Jesus Christ as

fully divine.[76] Faulkner summarized Cyprian's view of the person of Christ as "the word

of God . . . [who] is to come as Judge and is to reign as King forever."[77] Truly, Cyprian

routinely gave divine titles to Christ. Cyprian even called Christ "our Lord and our

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[72] For a thorough exegesis of Cyprian's letter to Donatus see Michael A. G. Haykin, "The Holy Spirit in Cyprian's *To Donatus*," *Evangelical Quarterly* 83, no. 4 (2011): 321–29. For the dating of the letter, see Brent, *On the Church,* 2:47; Sage, *Cyprian,* 110, 118, 380, 383. However, the date has not been completely established. Mattias Gassman has recently argued that Cyprian wrote it right before he became a bishop to rebut his early critics who were protesting his ordination. Mattias Gassman, "Cyprian's Early Career in the Church of Carthage," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 7, no. 1 (January 2019): 1–17.

[73] Cyprian, *Ad Donatum* 4–5, 14–15.

[74] Cyprian, *Ad Donatum* 14–15. Cf. Cyprian *Epistula* 10–12, 15. Cf. Réveillaud, "Note pour une Pneumatologie Cyprienne," 184. This letter also revealed that Cyprian linked together baptism with the Holy Spirit, even as a recent convert. Cf. Cyprian *De habitu virginum* 23.

[75] For example, Stephen M. Hildebrand in his treatment Trinitarian beliefs prior to Niceae I (325) stopped about seventy-five years short by only going to Origen and not treating Cyprian or any other writer of the mid- and late-third century. Stephen M. Hildebrand, "The Trinity in the Ante-Nicene Fathers," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 95–108.

[76] Joseph H. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian: Early Defender of the Faith* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book, 1942), 25.

[77] John Alfred Faulkner, *Cyprian: The Churchman* (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1906), 38.

God."[78] However, most of the time Cyprian merely assumed Christ's divinity so that divine language for Christ permeated everything Cyprian wrote. He equated the work of Christ with the work of God. Cyprian also made Christ's precepts synonymous with divine commands and stated that he would return as the divine Judge in the eschaton.[79] Furthermore, God dwells wherever Christ dwells so that whoever has Christ is never without God.[80] Cyprian also held that a person could not become God's temple if he/she denied that Christ is God.[81] Cyprian even invoked Christ like one would invoke God.[82] In fact, Cyprian wrote that only heretics said that Christians should not pray to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.[83]

In addition, many of Cyprian's arguments required him to regard Jesus Christ as part of the Trinity.[84] The controversy over the baptism of schismatics demonstrated this principle. Cyprian argued that churches could not baptize just in the name of Jesus Christ because God exists as a triune being. Churches who baptized only in the name of Jesus Christ had too low a view of him because they were not making him equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit.[85] This argument also revealed that Cyprian did not hold to Modalism. He called Christ the priest of God and even gave Jesus the title of the Father's Christ. For Cyprian, Christ fulfilled the expectations in the Old Testament for a coming

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[78] Cyprian, *Epistula* 3.2.2; 11.5.3; 51.1.1; 63.1.1; 74.4.2.

[79] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.18.1–2; 57.1.1; 59.1.2; 66.10.3.

[80] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.27.2, 60.3.2; 73.12.1.

[81] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.27.2; 73.12.1.

[82] Cyprian, *Epistula* 51.1.1; 73.12.1

[83] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.18.1.

[84] Cyprian's reasons for using wine and bread when celebrating the eucharist might highlight his belief that salvation required Jesus Christ to have a complete humanity and a complete divinity. The wine and bread could not represent the blood and body of Christ unless he was completely human, nor could the eucharist be effective unless the elements were connected to the divine. Cyprian, *Epistula* 63, 69.

[85] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.12.1.

Redeemer from God. [86] Moreover, Cyprian pointed out that Jesus Christ said he received his power from the Father, whom he called Lord and God, and by whom he desired to be glorified, and whose will he fulfilled.[87] Hence, Cyprian held to an orthodox theology that the church later espoused at Nicaea I (325) and Constantinople I (381).

Finally, a study on Cyprian's view of Jesus Christ cannot neglect how Cyprian saw him as the exemplar for the Christian life. Cyprian believed the prophets had foreseen Christ as a teacher who would lead people to God by bringing greater revelation and perfectly modeling what he taught.[88] Christ demonstrated how to pray well and how to administer the eucharist appropriately.[89] He especially modeled how to remain patient, and he exemplified long-suffering while on the cross.[90] For this reason, Joseph H. Fichter (1908–1994) wrote that Cyprian portrayed Christ as a "suffering Master."[91] During persecution, Christians could look to him as an illustration of how to act, and they could receive comfort from knowing that he understands their suffering. Cyprian believed Christians should repay Jesus Christ for his passion by following his example of good works and patient suffering.[92] Cyprian thus rebuked Christians who did not flee persecution because they wanted to protect their property from seizure and not because they wanted to imitate Christ in suffering through persecution.[93]

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[86] Cyprian, *Epistula* 93.14; 66.5.

[87] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.18.2.

[88] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 22; *Ad Quirinum* 2.22, 3.39; *Epistula* 13.4.3; *Quod idola dii non sint* 11–12, 14. Cf. Ensor, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement," 342; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 178; Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 170–73.

[89] Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 8, 14, 29; *Epistula* 11, 63. Cf. Palmer, "Cyprian the Apologist," 50.

[90] Cyprian, *De bono patientiae* 6–7; *Epistula* 3.2.2; 58.3.1. Cf. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 168–70.

[91] Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian¸* 180.

[92] Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 5; *De bono patientiae* 9; *De zelo et livere* 11; *De opere et eleemosynis* 23. Cf. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 178.

[93] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 12. Cf. Wilhite, *Ancient African Christianity*, 143.

While Cyprian saw Jesus Christ as an example for Christians, he never spoke of Christ as exemplifying divine love while on the cross, nor did he say that Christ died on the cross primarily to serve as an example for believers. Moreover, Cyprian did not believe Christ just taught people about divine love nor that Christ spent most of his time advocating against violence. Christ's death exemplified how to die well, but Cyprian emphasized the objective effects of the cross. Primarily, it defeated the devil by paying the penalty of sin: "who is not enrolled in the cross and passion of Christ; he may fear to die, who from this death shall pass over to a second death."[94] Furthermore, Cyprian wrote that the one hope of Christians is "in the wood" of the cross.[95] Hence, Cyprian believed the cross did not serve principally as a subjective attempt to draw people to God. Rather it objectively restored humanity's relationship with God through serving as the penalty for sin and as a victory over the devil.

Cyprian and the Atonement

Christus Victor

With the above theology in the background, Cyprian developed his position concerning Christ's work upon the cross. Cyprian saw a connection between Christology and soteriology in that one's understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ determined whether one was saved.[96] Cyprian thus had a pastoral concern that led him to emphasize the importance of the cross for salvation.[97] For this reason, he routinely pointed out types for the cross in the Old Testament, like when Moses stretched out his

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[94] Cyprian, *De mortalitate* 14.

[95] "For a Christian body is not very greatly terrified at clubs, seeing all its hope is in the Wood." Cyprian, *Epistula* 76.2.1.

[96] Van Loon, "Cyprian's Christology," 136–38.

[97] Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 5–6; *Ad Quirinum* 1.4; 2.21; 3.11, 69; *De bono patientiae* 9; *De habitu virginum* 6; *Epistula* 13.

arms in Exodus 17 during the battle with the Amalekites.[98] Moreover, Cyprian equated

the theme of the suffering servant in Zechariah 12 and Isaiah 53 to the suffering of Jesus

Christ upon the cross.[99]

Oftentimes, Cyprian's explanations for Christ's work upon the cross fit well

within a *Christus Victor* model of the atonement. Like many patristic theologians,

Cyprian believed Christ's work on the cross defeated death as well as the devil, whom

Cyprian maintained was a real, powerful, malevolent being.[100] For Cyprian, the Son came

to heal the wounds made by the serpent's poison in Genesis 3, and the Holy Spirit

applied that healing at conversion, freeing the believer from the "filth of the old

contagion."[101] Jesus Christ revealed his divine power over the devil by removing this

contagion inherited from Adam, and Christ's death conquered death, shielding believers

from the power of death.[102]

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[98] Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 8. For other examples of Old Testament typology concerning the cross, see *Ad Demetrianum* 22; *Ad Quirinum* 2.15, 21–22; 3.11; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 8; *De habitu virginum* 16; *Epistula* 63.16.2

[99] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.13–15, 20; *De habitu virginum* 23.

[100] Augustine inherited this notion from Cyprian. Augustine, *De Trinitate* 4.10.13, in Augustine of Hippo, *The Trinity* (1991; rev. ed., trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2017). Augustine, *De civitate Dei contra paganos* 9.15, in Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God against the Pagans* (1998; repr., ed. and trans. R. W. Dyson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Cf. Russell, "The Work of Christ," 5.

[101] Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis* 1. "Innouati Spiritu sancto a sordibus contagionis antiquae." Cyprian, *De habitu virginum* 23. 424–25. Cf. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 176; *A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian by an Anonymous Bishop* 6, in *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Hereafter, all citations will be given as *A Treatise against the Heretic Novatian* 6.

[102] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 25; *Ad Fortunatum* 5; *Ad Quirinum* 2.13, 15, 21; *De lapsis* 17; *De mortalitate* 21; *Epistula* 11.4.2, 7.2; *Quod idola dii non sint* 14. "That they would [kill him] he himself also had foretold; and the testimony of all the prophets had in like manner preceded him, that it behooved him to suffer, not that he might feel death, but that he might conquer death, and that, when he should have suffered, he should return again into heaven, to show the power of the divine majesty. Therefore, the course of events fulfilled the promise. For when crucified, the office of the executioner being forestalled, he himself of his own will yielded up his spirit, and on the third day freely rose again from the dead." Cyprian, *Quod idola dii non sint* 14. When Cyprian wrote that Jesus Christ shielded Christians from death, Ensor interpreted Cyprian to mean Christ shielded Christians by taking on the penalty that they deserve for their sin, which implies penal substitution rather than *Christus Victor*. Ensor, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement," 343.

Part of salvation involved not just freedom from demonic influence but also expiation from sin itself. Cyprian believed that this aspect of salvation occurred at baptism. When the Holy Spirit applied the atoning work of Jesus Christ upon believers at baptism, it cleansed them of their sins so that they could live holy lives: "And from the sixth hour to the ninth, the Lord, being crucified, washed away our sins by [his] blood; and that [he] might redeem and quicken us, [he] then accomplished [his] victory by [his] passion."[103] Hence, Christ's work upon the cross expiated sin.

While Cyprian used a variety of images to describe Christ's victory upon the cross, he especially liked to say that Jesus Christ redeemed humanity with his blood.[104] Cyprian at one point helped pay the ransom for some Christians taken captive by barbaric invaders. When he sent the money for redemption, he wrote:

> And so we ought to behold Christ in our captive brethren, and we ought to redeem [him] from the peril of captivity who has redeemed us from the peril of death. Hence, just as [he] rescued us from the jaws of the devil, so too now [he] who abides and dwells within us is to be rescued from the hands of the barbarians, and [he] who redeemed us on the cross through [his] blood is now to be redeemed by us through the payment of money.[105]

From whom did Christ redeem Christians? The passage described Christians as rescued from the jaws of the devil, but they were redeemed from "the peril of death," not from the devil. Likewise, elsewhere Cyprian talked about Christians as freed from the devil, but Cyprian never wrote that Christ redeemed Christians from Satan.[106] Usually, Cyprian just

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[103] "Et Dominus hora sexta crucifixus ad noman peccata nostra sanguine suo abluit et ut redimere et uiuificare nos posset, tunc uictoriam suam passione perfecit." Cyprian, *Ad Dominica oratione* 34.649–51. Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.2.3; 69.15.2; Tertullian, *De baptismo* 4, in *Latin Christianity: Its Founder Tertullian* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Hereafter all citations will be given as Tertullian, *De baptismo* 4. See also Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 358; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 82–85.

[104] Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement*, 327.

[105] "In captivis fratribus nostris contemplandus est Christus et *redimendus* de periculo captivitatis, qui nos *redemit* de periculo mortis, ut qui nos de diaboli faucibus exuit nunc ipse qui manet et habitat in nobis de barbarorum minibus exuatur et *redimatur* nummaria quantitate qui nos crude *redemit* et sanguine." Cyprian, *Epistula* 62.2.2.27–33 (italics added).

[106] Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 4, 7; *De mortalitate* 3.

said Jesus Christ redeemed Christians, though sometimes Cyprian talked about Christ redeeming Christians from either sin or death, as in the above passage.[107] Cyprian's language came primarily from Scripture, which also describes Christians as redeemed without indicating a recipient of the payment (Luke 1:68; Gal 3:13; Titus 2:14; Heb 9; Rev 14:3–4).[108]

Therefore, Cyprian clearly held a nascent form of *Christus Victor* in line with the biblical portrayal that Jesus Christ defeated Satan and the power of sin at his death.[109] Furthermore, Cyprian liked to talk about Christians as redeemed by Christ, but Cyprian did not believe Christ made any sort of payment to the devil. Ultimately, the opening lines of *De opere et eleemosynis* summarized well Cyprian's view of the cross as defeat of the devil and liberation from sin:

> Many and great, beloved brethren, are the divine benefits wherewith the large and abundant mercy of God the Father and Christ both have labored and are always laboring for our salvation: that the Father sent the Son to preserve us and give us life, in order that [he] might restore us; and that the Son was willing to be sent and to become the Son of man, that [he] might make us sons of God; humbled [himself], that [he] might raise up the people who before were prostrate; was wounded that [he] might heal our wounds; served, that [he] might draw out to liberty those who were in bondage; underwent death, that [he] might set forth immortality to mortals. These are many and great boons of divine compassion.[110]

Thus, Christ freed Christians by his death. However, how did his death accomplish this, especially if Jesus Christ did not save humanity by paying a redemption to the devil?

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[107] Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 3, 4, 6; *Epistula* 62.2.2; 63.2.2; *De Dominica Oratione* 34.

[108] Normally redemption required three parties: the redeemer, the redeemed, and the one receiving the payment. However, in late antiquity, *redimere* was used figuratively to mean to fulfill a promise or to atone for something, so the biblical pattern did not require Cyprian to use the word contrary to its normal usage. *Oxford Latin Dictionary,* rev.ed, vol. 2, s.v. "redimiō."

[109] Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 8; *Ad Quirinum* 2.16; *Quod idola dii non sint* 14.

[110] "Multa et magna sunt, fratres carissimi, beneficia divina quibus in salutem nostrum Dei patris et Christi larga et copiosa clementia et operata sit et semper operetur, quod conservandis ac vivificandis nobis pater filium misit ut reparare nos posset quodque filius, missus, esse et hominis filius voluit ut nos Dei filios faceret: humiliavit se ut populum qui prius iacebat erigeret, vulneratus es tut vulnera nostra curare, servivit ut ad liberatem servientes extraheret. Multa haec sunt et magna divinae misericordiae munera." Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis* 1.1–10.

Penal Substitution

As mentioned earlier, Aulén relegated any penal substitutionary notions to a secondary view in the patristic period, but some studies moved beyond his arguments. Following Aulén, Michael Hardin and Wayne Northey claimed that the early church held only the *Christus Victor* view.[111] Thus, the modern church should forsake satisfaction views of the atonement and return to this original understanding of the atonement in the New Testament and early church.[112]

In response, other scholarship has pointed out the many occurrences of penal substitutionary themes in patristic thought, even if the terms did not develop until later.[113] Young divided the various patristic views into four categories. Origen of Alexandria (c. 184–c. 253) and early Alexandrians saw Jesus Christ as an illuminator, meaning a philosophical teacher. Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130 – c. 202), Athanasius, and the Cappadocians viewed Christ as a restorer, meaning the one who restored fallen human nature. All patristic theologians emphasized Christ as a victor, meaning the one who fulfilled Jewish apocalyptic literature. The understanding of Christ as a sacrifice existed in Greek thought, but it dominated Latin theology because the Latin North African tradition was especially willing to talk about divine wrath upon sin, a tradition which Cyprian inherited and perpetuated.[114] Similarly, Grensted claimed that Luther rejected the late medieval view of the atonement for a stronger position on the atonement found in the

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[111] Michael Hardin, "Out of the Fog: New Horizons for Atonement Theory," in *Stricken by God? Nonviolent Identification and the Victory of Christ* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 55; Wayne Northey, "The Cross: God's Peace—Towards a Restorative Peacemaking Understanding of the Atonement," in *Stricken by God? Nonviolent Identification and the Victory of Christ* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 358.

[112] Hardin, "Out of the Fog,"55; Northey, "The Cross: God's Peace," 358.

[113] Sean David House, "Theories of Atonement and the Developments of Soteriological Paradigms: Implications of a Pentecostal Appropriation of the Christus Victor Model," (Th.D. diss., University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa, 2011), 36; Blaine Anthony Swen, "The Logic of Divine-Human Reconciliation: A Critical Analysis of Penal Substitution as an Explanatory Feature of Atonement," (PhD diss., Loyola University, 2012), 4.

[114] Young, "Atonement," 143–147.

patristic period, especially in the Latin tradition.[115] Likewise, Andrew P. Klager called

penal substitution the "prevailing atonement motif in Western Christianity," which

included Irenaeus, who talked about propitiating divine wrath.[116] Kelly said that a hint of

the doctrine of substitution appeared when Cyprian talked about Christ as a sacrifice to

God.[117] Rashdall admitted that Cyprian often used sacrificial language whenever talking

about the cross, and H. E. W. Turner (1907–1995) held that Cyprian believed Jesus Christ

died for believers.[118] More strongly, McGuckin wrote concerning the patristic period that

"in the West the idea of substitutionary sacrifice to appease the anger of God remained

the dominant and most vivid idea of the atonement."[119] This statement applied especially

to the Latin North African tradition, having both Tertullian and Cyprian as its advocates

before Augustine solidified the notion.[120] In fact, Colin Gunton (1941–2003) saw

substitutionary atonement as so prevalent in Tertullian and Cyprian that Gunton claimed

the two introduced the notion of satisfaction into western theology. He viewed this

development in a negative light. For him, *Christus Victor* was the pure teaching of the

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[115] Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine*, 191.

[116] Andrew Pl. Klager, "Retaining and Reclaiming the Divine: Identification and Recapitulation of Peace in St. Irenaeus of Lyon's Atonement Narrative," in *Stricken by God? Nonviolent Identification and the Victory of Christ* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 435.

[117] Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 178.

[118] Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement*, 327; H. E. W. Turner, *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption: A Study of the Development of Doctrine During the First Five Centuries* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Company, 1952), 104. Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 58.

[119] McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook*, 38.

[120] According to John P. Joy, Aulén, McGuckin, and Young, Greek theologians focused more upon Jesus Christ as victor over death and restorer of fallen nature, especially after Athanasius. In contrast, Latin theologians (especially the North African tradition) emphasized Christ's sacrificial death. These emphases in the western church culminated in Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* (1098) and the satisfaction theory of the atonement. Aulén, *Christus Victor,* 81–84; McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook*, 38; John P. Joy, "Poena Satisfactiorum: Locating Thomas Aquinas' Doctrine of Vicarious Satisfaction between Anselmian Satisfaction and Penal Substitution," (S.T.M. and Mag. theol. thesis, International Theological Institute, 2010), 11; Young, "Atonement," 145–47.

New Testament and the early church, and Tertullian and Cyprian corrupted it by introducing a penal substitution notion via Latin law.[121]

Cyprian certainly believed that God sent his Son to conquer Satan by sacrificing himself for the sins of humanity.[122] Cyprian quoted Revelation 7:14, where the blood of Christ was said to have made the robes of Christians white.[123] Cyprian also pointedly questioned how people could fear suffering for their own sins when Christ did not suffer for his own crime but for the transgressions of others.[124] In addition, Cyprian explicitly called Christ's death a sacrifice to God the Father.[125] Cyprian preached Christ as the Passover lamb, who died during the hour of sacrifice, and saw types of Christ in the brazen serpent of Numbers 21 and in the righteous sufferer of Isaiah 53 and Zechariah 12.[126] Notably, Cyprian never connected his view of post-baptismal works to the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, though he easily could have strengthened his arguments in *De opere et eleemosynis* by making this connection.[127] For Cyprian, Christ's sacrifice uniquely fulfilled the role of the Old Testament sacrificial system. Ultimately, Cyprian said that true Christians "bind themselves inseparably to Christ."[128] Taking Romans 8:35 as a promise given to the third-century church, Cyprian wrote, "[Nothing] can separate those who believe, [nobody] can pry away those who cling to [his] body and

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[121] Colin Gunton, "Christus Victor Revisited: A Study in Metaphor and the Transformation of Meaning," *Journal of Theological Studies* 36, no.1 (April 1985): 129.

[122] David Paull Knievim, "Christ, the Gospel, and the Church: The Church's Participation in the Salvation of Its Members," (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 14.

[123] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.16.

[124] Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 11.

[125] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.13; *De lapsis* 17; *Epistula* 63.17.

[126] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.13, 20; 15; *De bono patientiae* 23. Cf. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian¸* 160.

[127] Downs, *Alms*, 97.

[128] "Indiuiduis Christi nexibus adhaeserunt." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 11.220–21.

blood."[129] As long as people continually repented of their sin and remained pledged to Jesus Christ, he would serve as their advocate.[130]

Hence, Cyprian certainly believed in a substitutionary, sacrificial view of the atonement, which healed both the original sin of Adam and the sins of individuals through union with Jesus Christ, but did Cyprian believe Christ made a propitiatory sacrifice or merely an expiatory one? Cyprian certainly had no problem talking about divine wrath. The phrase "wrath of God" appeared fourteen times in his writings, and allusions to divine wrath occurs throughout Cyprian's works, always in reference to God's reaction against sin.[131] Ensor wrote that "few describe the terrors of hell quite as graphically as [Cyprian] does."[132] Cyprian described the final judgment as a place of never-ending torment, where everyone would experience the full wrath of God for their sins if Jesus Christ had not died in their place to propitiate God.[133]

Therefore, Cyprian certainly believed Jesus Christ had to propitiate divine wrath, but how did his death propitiate that wrath? Cyprian often focused upon the moral and eschatological impact of sin, so atonement meant Christians could stand before the Judge at the final judgment and incur no eternal condemnation.[134] Therefore, Cyprian spoke of Christ bearing the sins of his people upon the cross.[135] Ultimately, in *De bono patientiae* 6 Cyprian directly said that Christ bore humanity's sin and guilt upon himself:

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[129] "Nihil horum potest separare credentes, nihil potest auellere corpori eius et sanguini cohaerentes." Cyprian, *Epistula* 11.5.3. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trial or tribulation or persecution or hunger or nakedness or peril or sword?" (Rom 8:35a).

[130] Cyprian, *Epistula* 11.5.3

[131] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 21; *Ad Fortunatum* 3, 11; *Ad Quirinum* 2.27, 2.31; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 23, 26; *De lapsis* 26; *Epistula* 6.2.1; 55.6.1; 58.7.1; 59.3.2; 65.1.1; 73.8.2, 10.2.

[132] Ensor, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement," 338.

[133] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 9, 23–24; *Ad Quirinum* 2.27; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6, 26; *De lapsis* 7; *Epistula* 55.18.2; 58.7.1; 65.1.1.

[134] Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 174.

[135] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.13; *De bono patientiae* 6; *Epistula* 11.5.2; 58.6.3; 63.13.1; 73.5.2.

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"Although [Christ] himself was not a sinner, [he bore] the sins of others. His immortality being in the meantime laid aside, [he] suffers [himself] to become mortal so that the guiltless (*innocens*) may be put to death for the salvation of the guilty (*nocens*)."[136] These words carried legal notions in late antiquity, with *innocens* indicating someone who was blameless of a crime and *nocens* meaning a person who had committed a crime.[137] Cyprian wrote something similar in *Epistula* 58, where he described Jesus Christ as taking upon himself the full legal judgment of God while upon the cross, a judgment that would lead non-believers into a perpetual fire of punishment.

In other words, the Son became fully mortal so that he could die a substitutionary death to pay the penalty of sin in order to render guilty humans guiltless.[138] The Passover lamb protected the Israelites from divine punishment through its blood substituting for theirs; this episode for Cyprian served as a type for Christ's sacrifice upon the cross.[139] Cyprian argued that God forgave his children when they showed remorse, and even that he rejoiced when his children truly were repentant.[140] God "no longer threaten(s) them with [his] wrath if they are repentant or with punishment if

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[136] "Dei filius carnem hominis induere et cum peccator ipse non esset aliena peccata portare, immortalitate interim posita fieri se mortem patitur ut *innocens* pro *nocentium* salute perimatur." Cyprian, *De bono patientiae* 6.108–111. Cf. *Epistula* 11. While guilt and punishment have been separated in modern thought, Cyprian joined the two. He held the legal view of guilt as being liable for punishment so that innocence meant not being liable for punishment. Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 200–5. This legal definition not only further justifies the claim that Cyprian held a nascent view of penal substitution, but it also gives further credence to the idea that he practiced law prior to becoming the bishop of Carthage.

[137] *Oxford Latin Dictionary,* rev.ed, vol. 1–2, s.v.v. "innocens" and "nocens." Cyprian's use of legal terms here strengthens the case that he held a law career prior to his conversion.

[138] This act did not constitute some sort of "divine child abuse." Not only would such a notion run counter to Cyprian's nascent understanding of the inseparable operations of the Trinity, but he also explicitly wrote in his *Epistula* 63 that the wine (as well as the bread) in the eucharist symbolized that Jesus Christ offered his own body and blood to the Father as a sacrifice. In other words, Cyprian believed that Christ sacrificed himself willingly to pay the penalty of sin and propitiate divine wrath. Cf. Ensor, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement," 339–40.

[139] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 22; *Ad Quirinum* 2.22.

[140] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.23.

they weep and mourn, but promise to them instead [his] pardon and forgiveness."[141]

Because of Christ's work upon the cross, divine wrath no longer hangs over Christians if

they persist in the faith. Ensor summarized Cyprian as believing that "as both 'the chief

priest of God' and at the same time a 'sacrifice,' [Christ] offered up himself and became

our advocate, intercessor and propitiation (*deprecatio*), with the result that we are

forgiven, justified washed, reconciled, and restored (*reparati*) to God."[142] Hence, Cyprian

held to the basic notion of penal substitutionary atonement, though he lived prior to the

full development of that position. Christ's death propitiated divine wrath towards sinful

humans, paying the debt of sin so that God could declare believers "not guilty."

For these reasons, Cyprian called Jesus Christ his Savior, who washed away

sin and built his flock through his blood by bearing humanity's sin upon the cross.[143]

Christ suffered the penalty for humanity's sin, healed humanity's wounds, and destroyed

death by his blood so that Christians would not have to suffer the second death.[144] Hence,

Cyprian could say that, when a person was baptized, "the remission of sin is granted once

for all [sins]."[145] Cyprian hence professed an early form of penal substitutionary

atonement, though he lived before the coining of the term, and he passed along a tradition

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[141] "Nec iram paenitentibus aut plagentibus et lamentantibus poenam comminatur, sed ueniam magis et indulgentiam pollicetur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.23.404–6.

[142] Ensor, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement," 341. Ensor also wrote, "We have seen what penalties Cyprian believed awaited the lost hereafter. We have also seen that those same penalties no longer await believers, and that this is so because Christ suffered for us." Ensor, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement," 342. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 25; *Ad Fortunatum* 3, 5, 11; *Ad Quirinum* 2.13–15, 27; 3.11, 16, 63; *De bono patientiae* 6; *De Dominica oration* 11, 30, 34; *De habitu virginum* 2; *De lapsis* 17; *De mortalitate* 21; *De opere et eleemosynis* 2, 17; *Epistula* 11.5; 55.18; 58.6; 62.2; 63.13; 73.5.

[143] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.7, 13; *De bono patientiae* 6; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 8; *Epistula* 11.5.2; 58.6.3; *Epistula* 63.13.1; 64.2.3; 69.15.2; 73.5.2.

[144] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17; *De opere et eleemosynis* 2, 26. Cf. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 178.

[145] "Semel in baptismo remissa peccatorum datur." Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis* 2.30–31. After his ascension, Christ continually intercedes before God for the sins of his people. Cyprian, *Epistula*, 11.5.2–3, 55.18.2.

of using legal language to describe the atonement to later generations, setting a trajectory that passed through Anselm to the Reformers.[146]

Conclusion

Thus, Cyprian believed Jesus Christ came to defeat demonic powers and restore humanity's relationship with God through his penal substitutionary sacrifice. Christ's death on the cross paid the penalty for sin and defeated death itself so that people could come to the Father only through his crucified Son.[147] Some scholarship misunderstood Cyprian on this issue. For example, Aulén viewed *Christus Victor* as the overriding position in the patristic period. However, a thorough analysis of how Cyprian described Christ's work on the cross has revealed that Cyprian used language fitting to both *Christus Victor* and penal substitution when describing atonement for sin. This atonement served both as the foundation and the power for making satisfaction for sins committed after baptism. Cyprian succinctly summarized his robust view of the atonement by saying "This grace Christ bestows; this gift of [his] mercy [he] confers upon us, by overcoming death in the trophy of the cross, by redeeming the believer with the price of [his] blood, by reconciling man to God the Father, by quickening our mortal nature with a heavenly regeneration."[148] In other words, Christians received salvation as a merciful gift because Jesus Christ overcame death on the cross, redeemed believers with his blood, reconciled humanity to God, and regenerated human nature. Cyprian described the cross as both a heavenly victory and a penal substitution.

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[146] Aulén, *Christus Victor,* 81–84; McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook*, 38; Joy, "Poena Satisfactiorum," 11; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 178; Young, "Atonement," 145–47.

[147] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.27; *Quod idola dii non sint* 11.

[148] "Hanc gratiam Christus inpertit, hoc munus misericordiae suae tribuit subigendo mortem trophaeo crucis, redimendo credentem pretio sui sanguinis, reconciliando hominem Deo patri, vivificando mortalem regeneratione caelesti." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 26.515–58.

CHAPTER 4

WORKS AND SATISFACTION

Introduction

While Cyprian talked about the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross, for pastoral reasons he focused more upon what Christians should do after committing a post-baptismal sin. Cyprian's views concerning the process of discipline was shaped by his belief that the spiritual and visible church remained united and together. Like many preachers in the history of the church, Cyprian argued that true Christians fight the temptation to sin, and he connected this desire for holiness to Christ's redemption: "Since we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, let us obey and give furtherance to the empire of our Redeemer by all the obedience of service."[1] In other words, through Christ's blood Christians were redeemed; based on this redemption, they should now live holy lives. In Cyprian's perspective, good works and purity did not atone for the guilt of sin, but they did cleanse a person from the filth of sin. Good works also demonstrated that the person was persevering in the faith, especially when he/she did good works to make satisfaction for disobeying God. To demonstrate that Cyprian did not believe that works atoned for the guilt of sin but rather made satisfaction for post-baptismal sin, this chapter discusses his views of almsgiving and good works done through the church.

The State of the Question

Some studies have placed Cyprian among those in the early church who developed an early penitential system that eventually became the sacrament of penance in

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[1] "Et qui per sanguinem Christi redempti sumus, per omnia seruitutis obsequie redemptoris imperio pareamus demusque operam." Cyprian, *De habitu virginum* 2.34–36.

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the medieval period. Young mentioned that Cyprian's treatise *De opere et eleemosynis* made a "seminal contribution" to the emerging idea of alms and penitence atoning for post-baptismal sin.[2] Similarly, Aulén saw the penitential process as the primary mode for atonement in Cyprian's thought.[3] However, Aulén imposed later developments onto Cyprian's ideas of satisfaction and reconciliation. Aulén believed that Jesus Christ for Cyprian earned superabundant merit through his active and passive obedience, merit which Christ could then give to whom he willed, like those undergoing penance.[4] However, Cyprian never explained Christ's work in this way, much less in this detail.

Like Young and Aulén, Downs wrote that *De opere* became a *tour de force* because Cyprian pulled from biblical passages to argue that almsgiving atoned for post-baptismal sin.[5] Cyprian believed people could not avoid sinning, even after Jesus Christ had redeemed them from sin through his death. Therefore, God mercifully gave humans a way to atone for their sins after baptism, and that way was almsgiving and good works. This system demonstrated divine sovereignty and love because God gave grace to do good works and mercifully forgave people when their good works inevitably could not make full atonement:

> Cyprian's two stage chronology of atonement does not, therefore, portray the forgiveness of sins before baptism as a divine endeavor and the cleansing of sins after baptism through merciful deeds as a human one disconnected from God's power and mercy. Instead, Cyprian frames the washing away of human sins by *eleemosyna* as a divine mercy.[6]

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[2] Frances Young, "Atonement," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 1990, ed., Everett Ferguson, vol. 1, *A–K*, rev. ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 147. *De opere et eleemosynis* has been shortened to *De opere* for the remainder of this chapter.

[3] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Herbert (1931; 2nd repr., London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1937), 98.

[4] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 98.

[5] Cf. David T. Downs, *Alms: Charity, Reward, and Atonement in Early Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 95, 269.

[6] Downs, *Alms*, 244, 256–57, 267, 269. Cf. Downs, *Alms*, 264, 268.

For Downs, Cyprian saw salvation as a process that constantly required God's mercy and grace, so the bishop of Carthage beseeched people to atone continually for their post-baptismal sins.[7] He saw many post-baptismal works as atoning for sin. However, Cyprian did not see every work as equally efficacious because he believed almsgiving atoned better than prayer and fasting.[8]

However, Downs's argument had two weaknesses that shaped his interpretation of salvation and works in Cyprian's thought. First, Downs did not consider how Cyprian's emphases changed due to the Decian persecution. Cyprian probably published *De opere* around 249, early in his career as the bishop of Carthage. He wrote it during a time when the Carthaginian church contained many nominal Christians and before the Decian persecution created a bigger problem with the *lapsi*. In *De opere* 4, he maintained that almsgiving sometimes remained the only act that could make satisfaction for a sin. In contrast, Cyprian in his later writings placed more attention upon sincere contrition for sin. He even wrote in *De lapsis* that only repentance could satisfy the church and God.[9] Cyprian's letters also reflected an attention to prayer and repentance as the means of satisfying God for post-baptismal sins.[10] Downs thus focused too heavily upon *De opere* and did not give Cyprian's other works enough consideration.[11]

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[7] Downs, *Alms*, 269. Dunn believed Cyprian also saw practical benefits for emphasizing almsgiving to atone for post-baptismal sins. Almsgiving gave the church more money to put into its ministry to the poor, thus preventing the poor from allowing the *lapsi* back into the church solely for their money. In other words, members under discipline could still give money to the poor. Hence, for both theological and practical reasons, Cyprian promoted almsgiving to atone for sins committed after baptism. Geoffrey D. Dunn, "The White Crown of Works: Cyprian's Early Pastoral Ministry of Almsgiving in Carthage," *Church History* 73, no. 4 (December 2004): 735–36.

[8] Downs, *Alms*, 95, 269.

[9] Cyprian *De lapsis* 14, 17, 28–30, 34–36.

[10] Cyprian *Epistula* 55, 59, 65.

[11] Dunn correctly stated that the disciplinary process for Cyprian involved repentance, prayer, weeping, fasting, and almsgiving all together. However, after the Decian persecution, Cyprian emphasized the necessity of true repentance. Dunn, "The White Crown of Works,"737.

Second, Downs assumed that Cyprian meant the English word atonement when he wrote the Latin word *satisfactio*. However, as detailed below, *satisfactio* entailed payment given to satisfy a creditor or an apologetic act done to recompense for an injury inflicted on someone else.[12] *Satisfactio* did not mean reconciliation, as atonement has often been defined in contemporary theological discussions, so *satisfactio* for Cyprian should not always be equated with modern articulations of atonement.[13]

As a final introductory note, when scholarship has talked about Cyprian's view of good works, the discussion has often occurred within the context of the role of the bishop because some scholarship has claimed that, for Cyprian, the bishop could forgive sins.[14] However, chapter eight of this dissertation will reveal that this interpretation has imposed later developments upon Cyprian's thought and that it has failed to consider passages where he stated that only God could forgive sins. Cyprian wrote in *De lapsis* 17:

> "[God] alone is able to bestow the pardon for our sins that have been committed against *him*, who bore our sins, who suffered for us, whom God delivered up for our sins. A human being is unable to be greater than God, nor is a servant able to remit or grant by his own leniency what has been committed against the Lord as a very serious offence."[15]

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[12] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, rev. ed., vol. 2, "*satisfactiō*."

[13] For example, Johnson defined the atonement as "God was in Christ, reconciling all things to himself." This definition of the atonement does not match the meaning of the Latin word *satisfactio*. Adam J. Johnson, *Atonement: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 179. A proper understanding of Cyprian's view of the church and satisfaction should also consider his position of the cross, as well as his hamartiology, anthropology, and pneumatology, as discussed in the previous chapter.

[14] Maurice Bévenot, "The Sacrament of Penance and St. Cyprian's *De lapsis*," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 16 (June 1955):175–213; J. Patout Burns and Gerald M. Fagin, *The Holy Spirit* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), 80.

[15] "Veniam peccatis quae in ipsum commissa sunt solus potest ille largiri qui peccata nostra portauit, qui pro nobis doluit, whem Deus tradidit pro peccatis nostris. Homo Deo esse non potest maior nec remittere aut donare indulgentia sua seruus potest quod in Dominum delicto grauiore commissum est." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17.338–43. Translation in this chapter of Cyprian's work *De lapsis* come from Allen Brent, trans. and ed., *On the Church,* vol. 1, *Select Treatises* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006).

Cyprian then warned the laxist bishops that granting reconciliation on earth too quickly would lead God to pour out his wrath upon them for acting contrary to his judgment.[16] In other words, bishops had the keys to allow people back into the church, but they could not forgive sins in the same way that God forgives sins.[17] Hence, a proper understanding of satisfaction should not read later developments back into Cyprian's thoughts.

Satisfactio in Late Antiquity

The word atonement has historically carried a lot of theological weight, making it difficult to define succinctly. Outside of theological circles, the word seems to have originally meant to set people at discord back into accord.[18] In *Richard III* by William Shakespeare (1564–1616), the Duke of Buckingham informed Queen Elizabeth that the king wanted to "make atonement," meaning he wanted to bring the Duke of Gloucester and the queen's brothers back into harmony.[19] However, for the church the word indicated what Jesus Christ accomplished upon the cross, especially propitiation for an offense through making reparations, as well as expiation from the stain of sin. John Owen (1616–1683) thus defined atonement as Christ's work upon the cross that brought reconciliation, justification, sanctification, and adoption.[20]

More recent treatments of the term have instead opted to pare back the definition to merely reconciliation, while at the same time expanding the scope to include virtually all of God's saving acts, not just Christ's work upon the cross. Moreover, current discussions often have used this new definition of atonement as the starting point for

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[16] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 18.

[17] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17–20; *Epistula* 57.3.1–2.

[18] *Oxford English Dictionary,* rev.ed, vol. 1, s.v. "atonement."

[19] Shakespeare, *Richard III* 1.3.36, in William Shakespeare, *Richard III* (ed. John Crowther, New York: Spark Publishing, 2004).

[20] John Owen, *Death of Death in the Death of Christ* 1.1.2, in *The Works of John Owen*, vol 10, 139–428 (ed. William H. Goold. 1850–1853; 2nd repr., Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976).

theologizing. For instance, Adam J. Johnson defined atonement as reconciliation, which required him to broaden the scope of atonement to include Christ's life, resurrection, and ascension, alongside his death, since all these acts brought reconciliation with God in some way. Atonement as reconciliation also forced Johnson to expand the extent of the atonement to include all creation, not just humans, because Scripture states that God will eventually bring the whole cosmos back into harmony.[21]

This current attempt to redefine atonement has led some studies to attack views of the atonement associated with the satisfaction theory developed by Anselm of Canterbury (bishop 1093–1109). Eleonore Stump defined the atonement as Christ's act of drawing people back into a relationship with God. For Stump, reconciliation with God does not require propitiation, so people only need to turn to God, who is waiting to accept them.[22] Holding a version of the moral influence view of the atonement, she believed that the cross event in itself must draw people towards God.[23] Therefore, she called the older theological definition of the word (as exemplified by Owen) a "misconception regarding the meaning of the word," and she criticized Anselm's understanding of the atonement for being unable by itself to turn people's hearts to God.[24] Hence, the definition of atonement in current theological discussions has shifted from its traditional theological focus concerning Christ's work on the cross to more generally Christ's work of reconciliation.

Regardless of the biblical and theological strengths and weaknesses for this new approach to the atonement, imposing contemporary definitions upon ancient words has led to misrepresentations and unfair critiques. Katherine Sonderegger argued well

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[21] Adam J. Johnson, "Atonement: The Shape and State of the Doctrine," in *T. & T. Clark Companion to Atonement*, ed., Adam J. Johnson (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 4. Cf. Johnson, *Atonement*, 143–73, 179.

[22] Eleonore Stump. *Atonement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 176–96.

[23] Stump. *Atonement*, 143–75.

[24] Stump. *Atonement*, 7, 71–112.

that scholarship must understand Anselm in his own historical context and theological worldview to evaluate his position fairly.[25] Similarly, scholarship on Cyprian must interpret his language by looking at what the words meant in his own historical context and within his own theological worldview.

The Latin noun *satisfactio* specifically meant payment given to fulfill a debt, but more generally it could mean any act (whether a financial gift or otherwise) designed to rectify an offense. It was basically an act of apology. This definition of *satisfactio* can be seen in Tacitus' *Germania* 21.1: "even homicide is atoned for (*luitur*) by a fixed number of cattle and sheep, and the whole family thereby receives satisfaction (*satisfactionem*)."[26] Through an act of apology, a person makes satisfaction for his harmful deed. This passage also places *satisfactio* in a synonymous parallel with *luitio*, which meant the payment of a debt.[27]

The equivalent verb *satisfacere* carried a similar meaning. *Satisfacere* primarily meant to satisfy a claim on a debt or to make amends to an injured party, whether through financial compensation, punishment, or merely an apology. Cicero wrote about some men in debt, one of whom "pays (*satis facit*) the Fufii in Rome and so discharges his guarantee."[28] The word sometimes also meant to give enough attention to someone or to give enough assurance of something. Pliny the Elder talked about a painter who gave enough attention to the details of his work that he satisfied his own desires for

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[25] Katherine Sonderegger, "Anselmian Atonement", in *T. & T. Clark Companion to Atonement*, ed., Adam J. Johnson (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 175–93.

[26] "Luitur enim etiam homicidium certo armentorum ac pecorum numero recipitque satisfactionem universa domus," Tacitus, *Germania* 21.1, in Tacitus, *Germany* (1914; trans. M. Hutton, rev. E. H. Warmington, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970). Hereafter, all citations will be given as Tacitus, *Germania* 21.1.

[27] *Oxford Latin Dictionary,* rev.ed, vol. 1–2, s.v. "luitiō."

[28] "Ipse tamen Fufiis satis facit absentibus et fidem suam liberat." Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 47, in Cicero, *To Flaccus* (trans. and ed. C. MacDonald, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977).

perfection.[29] Similarly, Livy wrote "[Hannibal] should not remain unpunished for [waging war] …if the Carthaginians wished to satisfy (*satisfacere*) the Roman people [they should say] that none of his activities had their approval or had been officially sanctioned."[30] In other words, to give proper assurance to the Romans that they did not want war, the Carthaginians had to reject Hannibal. Hence, the verb *satisfacere* carried the same meaning as *satisfactio*, but it also had a broader usage dealing with giving attention or providing assurance.

Therefore, definitions of atonement in current theological works do not match *satisfacere* in ancient literature but rather are more similar to words like *reconcilio*, which meant to bring two discordant parties back into harmony or to restore to a previous condition.[31] According to Tacitus, the Germanic people often held banquets that led enemies to reconcile (*reconciliandis*) with one another.[32] Similarly, Pliny used the word to indicate that two warring parties could be reconciled (*reconciliatur*) back into harmony by something as simple as sweetened milk.[33] Hence, if Cyprian believed that good works had a direct impact upon reconciliation with God, he had clearer options available besides *satisfactio* to portray this meaning, like *reconcilio, in gratiam restituere*, or *in concordiam redigere*. However, Cyprian chose *satisfactio* because it portrayed his notion that people needed to apologize to God for their post-baptismal sins, and true repentance manifested

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[29] Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historiae* 35.10, in Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* (10 vols, trans. H. Rackham, W. H. S. Stone, and D. E. Eichholz, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938–1962). Hereafter, citations will be given as Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historiae* 35.102.

[30] "Id ei non debere impune esse, si satisfacere Carthaginienses populo Romano vellent nihil eorum sua voluntate nec publico consilio factum esse." Livy, *History of Rome* 33.49.3, in Livy. *History of Rome* (trans. and ed. J. C. Yardley. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

[31] *Oxford Latin Dictionary,* rev.ed, vol. 1–2, s.v. "reconciliō."

[32] "Sed et *de reconciliandis invicem inimicis* et iungendis adfinitatibus et adsciscendis principibus, de pace denique ac bello plerumque in conviviis consultant." Tacitus, *Germania* 22.3.

[33] "Ex aliis quoque saepe dimicant causis, duasque acies contrarias duo ipmeratores instruunt, maxime rixa in convehendis floribus exorta et suos quibusque evocantibus; quae dimicatio iniectu pulveris aut fumo tota discutitur, reconciliatur vero lacte vel aqua mulsa." Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historiae* 11.18.58.

itself in acts of apology. Even if a person had already received reconciliation with God (*reconcilio*) through Christ's work upon the cross, the reasonable act after offending any person (much more so God) was to make satisfaction (*satisfactio*). Hence, scholarship should not merely transpose the English definition of atonement back onto the Latin *satisfactio* in Cyprian's literature.

However, some Cyprianic scholarship has anachronistically imposed the English meaning of the word atonement upon the Latin word *satisfactio*, which has led to a conflation of Cyprian's understanding of atonement (*reconcilio* with God) with his belief in making satisfaction for sins (*satisfactio*). Most notably, Downs claimed that Cyprian stood in a long line of patristic theologians who believed good works could atone for sins.[34] However, Downs largely assumed Cyprian's *satisfactio* meant the same as the English term atonement. Downs also reduced Cyprian's view of sin to merely a stain. Instead, Cyprian held a more robust hamartiology that included guilt and shame as well. While he believed good works could serve as satisfaction for post-baptismal sins, the works removed only the stain of the sin. A person's guilt was forgiven through beseeching God for forgiveness. Thus, Downs misunderstood the limits that Cyprian placed upon works. Downs thus did not grasp why Cyprian refused to equate almsgiving with Old Testament sacrifices.[35] For Cyprian, the sacrificial system of the Old Testament pointed to Jesus Christ, who took away the penalty of sin. Good works dealt with making satisfaction. In other words, they served as an act of apology for a sin.[36] Thus, to understand Cyprian, his words must be understood in their own context.

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[34] Downs, *Alms*, 5, 43, 49, 56–57.

[35] Downs, *Alms,* 97.

[36] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.15.

Good Works in *De opere et eleemosynis*

Of Cyprian's writings, many studies have turned to his *De opere* to argue for a strong connection between works and salvation in his thought. Truly, to understand his ideas on the subject, this work must be known well. Downs called it a *tour de force* and the first systematic treatment of the relationship between works and salvation, He held that Cyprian primarily wanted to articulate what he had been taught. He was not trying to be innovative.[37] Clement of Alexandria had written that God remitted sins that occurred prior to baptism, but people had to repent and beseech divine mercy to receive forgiveness after baptism.[38] Similarly, Origen of Alexandria assumed that Christ's work on the cross was applied at baptism to atone for pre-baptismal sins. God had given six other ways to atone for sins committed after baptism.[39] Essentially, Downs argued that Cyprian inherited a tradition that said both Christ's work on the cross and good works

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[37] Downs, *Alms*, 234, 270. Some scholarship has derided Cyprian as not being a good theological thinker. However, he was not trying to be innovative but rather wanted to pass down what he had been taught. Additionally, he eventually stood in the shadows of later theologians like Augustine, so scholarship has often missed Cyprian's rich theological understanding, as well as his historical impact. To view the dichotomy between the copious praise from the patristic era compared to some modern rebuke, see Jerome*, Epistula* 22.22; 84.2, in *The Principle Works of St. Jerome* (1893; repr., American ed., trans. W. H. Fremantle, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995); Augustine, *Epistula* 93.4.15; alongside Geoffrey Bromiley, *Historical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 59–61; Stanley Greenslade, *Early Latin Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 117–18; Ronald E. Heine, "Cyprian and Novatian," in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature,* ed. Frances Young, Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 156; Raymond Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage," in *The Eucharist of the Early Church,* 156–82, ed. Willy Rordorf, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1978), 156; Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 114; Paul Parvis, "The Teaching of the Fathers: Cyprian and the Hours of Prayer," *Clergy* 69 (1984): 206. Downs rebuked such scholarship for requiring theologizing to be speculative or systematic, thus disregarding the contextual drive behind Cyprian's writings. Downs, *Alms*, 258.

[38] Clement of Alexandria, *Τις ὁ σωιζομενος πλουσιος* 40, in Clement of Alexandria, *The Rich Man's Salvation* (repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001).

[39] Origen listed seven ways by which sins were atoned. Pre-baptismal sins were atoned at baptism directly because of Christ's work on the cross. After baptism, people could atone for sin by martyrdom, almsgiving, forgiving others, evangelizing, and doing penance. Ultimately, Origen also said that atonement came post-baptism through God's love, which might imply that the above five ways served more for atoning from a human perspective since ultimately divine love atoned for post-baptismal sin. Origen of Alexandria, *Homilies on Leviticus 1–16* 2.4.4, in Origen of Alexandria, *Homilies on Leviticus 1–16* (trans. Gary Wayne Barkley, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990).

(especially almsgiving) atoned for sin, and Cyprian attempted to explain how this seeming contradiction could be possible in *De opere*.[40]

   While an important work that might have looked at the subject of works and salvation more systematically than previous treatments, Cyprian did not intend *De opere* to be a systematic treatise on that issue. Instead, he wanted to exhort Christians (especially rich ones) to act mercifully and to give alms, if not for the sake of helping their fellow Christian than for the sake of receiving heavenly rewards. Hence, the work fits better in the genre of exhortation than of systematics.[41] In fact, lack of systematic treatment in *De opere* has led scholarship to debate even the basic notion of why Cyprian emphasized almsgiving. While Downs thought almsgiving for Cyprian atoned for sins, Geoffrey D. Dunn wrote that Cyprian saw almsgiving as a major discipline of the Christian life. In contrast, Charles Arnold Bobertz believed Cyprian used almsgiving to establish control through a patron-client relationship.[42] Hence, while an important theological work for understanding Cyprian's view of the relationship between salvation and works, *De opere* should not be understood as a systematic attempt to reconcile a theological contradiction.

   The dating for the book has remained under dispute, with some scholarship claiming an early composition (249) and others holding to a later drafting (253). Those that contend for a later publication have seen the plague in Carthage as the context for the

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[40] Downs, *Alms,* 95, 256–57. According to Downs, few Christians prior to Cyprian saw any tension. Downs, *Alms*, 5, 251, 268.

[41] For a study on Cyprian's use of exhortation, see Rolf Noorman, *Ad salute consulere: Die Paränese Cyprians im Kontext antiken und frühchristlichen Denkens* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009). Rolf Noorman rightly saw that most of Cyprian's literature should fall into the genre of exhortation. Cyprian focused upon dealing with specific issues in his day, so he usually did not cover a subject systematically and comprehensively.

[42] Charles Arnold Bobertz, "Cyprian of Carthage as Patron: A Social Historical Study of the Role of Bishop in Ancient Christian Community of North Africa" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1988); Downs, *Alms*, 256–71; Dunn, "The White Crown of Works," 719–29.

work.[43] However, internal evidence indicates that Cyprian wrote the work prior to the issue of satisfying for the egregious sin of sacrificing to idols. The text also matches how Cyprian himself described the church prior to the Decian persecution, namely that "there was a lack of good faith in administrations to the poor, there was no compassion in works of mercy."[44] Additionally, the information in *De opere* is similar to Cyprian's teachings found in his earlier text *Ad Quirinum* 3.1, rather than his later work *De lapsis* 35.[45] Ultimately, *De lapsis* should be the lens through which to interpret *De opere*. *De opere* focused upon exhorting Christians to minister to the poor; in contrast, *De lapsis* dealt more explicitly with the question of the church and salvation. Hence, even if Cyprian wrote *De opere* in 253, the treatise should be understood as a situational exhortation to rich Carthaginians during the plague in Carthage and not as a systematic treatise on works and salvation.

Regardless of when Cyprian wrote the work, *De opere* 1 laid the foundation for the rest of his exhortation. Before getting to the necessity of works and alms, Cyprian first praised the atoning work of Jesus Christ. In doing so, Cyprian gave one of his clearest explanations of Christ's work upon the cross. Through his substitutionary sacrifice, a great exchange occurred so that Christians received a restored life and

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[43] Downs, *Alms*, 234n3; Michael Andrew Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in Third-Century Exegesis* (Tübingen, Germany: JC. B. Mohr, 1971), 20; Joseph H. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian: Early Defender of the Faith* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book, 1942), 134; Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 380–81.

[44] "Non in sacerdotiis religio deuota, non in ministeriis fides integra, non in operibus misericordia, non in moribus disciplina." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 6. This chapter also situated *De opere* as a work written prior to the persecution because in this chapter Cyprian talked about how some of the wealthier Christians prior to the persecution used to dress flamboyantly, a problem mentioned in Cyprian's early work *De habitu virginum*.

[45] Downs, *Alms*, 234n3; William L. Countryman, *The Rich Christian in the Church of the Ealry Empire: Contraditions and Accomodations* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1980), 195; Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible,* 20; Edward V. Rebenack, "*De opere et eleemosynis*: A Translation with an Introduction and a Commentary" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1962), 1–17. Cf. Geoffrey D. Dunn, "Cyprian's Care for the Poor: The Evidence of *De opere et eleemosynis,*" *Studia Patristica* 42 (2006): 363–68; Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian*, 134; Michel Poirier, *Cyprien de Carthage: La bienfaisance et les aumônes* (Paris: Le cerf, 1999), 19–21; Helen Rhee, *Loving the Poor, Saving the Rich: Wealth, Poverty, and Early Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 99–101. Sage, *Cyprian*, 383.

adoption from God.[46] Atonement did not come through works but came through Christ's work upon the cross. After conversion and baptism, Christians had to do good works for three reasons. First, they served as an act of worship for what Christ had done. They also demonstrated perseverance in the faith, a persistence that was necessary for salvation. Finally, they washed away the stain of post-baptismal sin. Based upon salvation through Jesus Christ, Cyprian proceeded to argue that God mercifully allowed Christians to wash away the uncleanliness (*ut sordes postmodum quascumque contrahimus*) of any post-baptismal sins through works of mercy within the church.[47] In other words, Christians had to make satisfaction for post-baptismal sins to worship God, to demonstrate that they were still persevering in the faith, and to wash away the stain left by post-baptismal sins.

This summary of *De opere* 1 contradicts the interpretation given by Downs, who maintained that this chapter taught Christ's death atoned for pre-baptismal sins and that works atoned for post-baptismal sins.[48] The difference in these readings of *De opere* 1 is traceable to Down's faulty definition of atonement for Cyprian. Downs reduced atonement to merely expiation. Since both Christ's death and works cleansed people of their sin, then they had the same purpose and function.[49] However, while Cyprian certainly saw both Christ's death and human works as having a cleansing effect, Cyprian believed atonement involved more than just expiation. Jesus Christ on the cross took away the guilt of sin and allowed Christians to receive a renewed nature at baptism.

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[46] "Many and great, beloved brethren, are the divine benefits wherewith the large and abundant mercy of God the Father and Christ both has labored and is always laboring for our salvation: that the Father sent the Son to preserve us and give us live, in order that He might restore us; and that the Son was willing to be sent and to become the Son of man, that He might make us sons of God; humbled Himself, that He might raise up the people who before were prostrate; was wounded that He might heal our wounds; served, that He might draw out to liberty those who were in bondage; underwent death, that He might set forth immortality to mortals…(He) cured those wounds which Adam had borne and healed the old poisons of the serpent." Cyprian, *De opere et leemosynis* 1.

[47] Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis* 1.20–21.

[48] Downs, *Alms*, 268–270.

[49] Downs argued for a slight difference between the two, in that the former empowered the latter. Downs, *Alms*, 269.

Therefore, Cyprian did not believe human works atoned for sins in the same way that Jesus Christ atoned for sin because his work upon the cross did much more than cleanse the filth of sin. Post-baptismal works for Cyprian merely renewed the washing received at baptism, cleansing the believer again after committing a post-baptismal sin.[50]

After establishing this foundation, Cyprian set forth the benefits and the necessity of works in chapters two through eight. In *De opere* 2, he saw ecclesiological typology in Proverbs 16:6 and Sirach 3:29–30, and he used prosopological exegesis to claim the Holy Spirit spoke them, thus giving these passages divine authority. Therefore, God taught the church in these passages that the remission of sins occurred once for all at baptism, but people had to cleanse themselves from post-baptismal sins through good works.[51] These good works in a way recapitulated the cleansing effect of baptism.

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[50] Rahner likewise noticed the difference between atonement and satisfaction in Cyprian's thought. Rahner called this difference "remission of sin" versus "*remissa peccatorum*" so that he could use Cyprianic language while also distinguishing the two: "There is a clear distinction [in Cyprian's writings] between the post-baptismal remission of sins and the *remissa peccatorum* in baptism. Sins committed before baptism are remitted *Christi sanguine et sanctificatione, semel in baptismo*, whereas sins committed after baptism find forgiveness through *assidua et iugis operatio*." Karl Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 171.

[51] Downs rightly noted that Cyprian's high level of Scriptural engagement served as a distinctive feature of this treatise, if not a distinctive feature of all his writings. Downs, *Alms,* 257–58; cf. Hans von Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), 39. However, most scholarship has not labeled Cyprian a model of good biblical exegesis. Indeed, Cyprian often merely quoted Scripture with little or no interpretation, assuming the perspicuity of the passages. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible,* 624–25; cf. Richard D. Finn, *Almsgiving in the Later Roman Empire: Christian Promotion and Practice (313–450)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 125; Rowan A. Greer, *Broken Light and Mended Lives: Theology and Common Life in the Early Church* (University Park, PN: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), 126–27. However, Cyprian's practice should not drive scholarship to degrade him as an exegete because his writings revealed he had memorized much of Scripture and that he tried to read passages within their literary context (cf. Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 12). Furthermore, Downs pointed out that the condemnation of pre-modern exegesis as mostly "proof-texting" has involved imposing modern requirements upon pre-modern people, rather than reading those people within their own contexts. Downs, *Alms,* 258–60; cf. John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Charles Kannengiesser, "The Bible as Read in the Early Church: Patristic Exegesis and Its Presuppositions," in *The Bible and Its Readers,* ed. W. Beuken, S. Freyne, and A. Weiler (London: SCM Press, 1991), 29–36; Charles Kannengiesser, H*andbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); David E. Wilhite, "Cyprian's Scriptural Hermeneutic of Identity: The Laxist 'Heresy'," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 32, no. 1 (2010): 58–98; Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Cyprian's biblical quotations are placed in the footnotes and come from the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Pulling biblical quotations directly from Cyprian's text should clarify his arguments since he did not argue from a modern English translation, from the Latin Vulgate, nor from a modern Greek New Testament. For a summary concerning what the manuscripts reveal concerning Cyprian's Latin translation of the Bible, see H. A. G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to Its Early History, Text, and Manuscripts* (2016; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 9–14. "By almsgiving and faith sins are purged" (summary of Proverbs 16:6). "As

From here, Downs argued that Cyprian used Luke 11:41 as his biblical basis for almsgiving as a way of atonement for post-baptismal sins.[52] Close analysis reveals, however, that Cyprian did not use this verse to argue for post-baptismal atonement; rather it was cited to prevent anyone from thinking they were saved due to his/her good works. Cyprian argued that outward works flowed from an inward change.[53] Immediately after quoting Luke 11:41, Cyprian stated:

> Teaching hereby and showing that not the hands are to be washed but the heart and that the foulness from inside is to be done away rather than that from outside; but that he who shall have cleansed what is within has cleansed also that which is without; and that if the mind is cleansed, a man has begun to be clean also in skin and body.[54]

This text is one of the few cases where Cyprian explicitly interpreted his biblical quotation. He saw Christ's statement to the religious leaders as directly applicable to the third-century church. The Carthaginian bishop did not interpret the passage as works atoning for sins but rather as works demonstrating that atonement had already been accomplished. When a person sinned after baptism, the stain of the sin needed to be cleansed, and this cleansing occurred when that person gave alms.[55]

These statements then led Cyprian in chapters three and four to draw universal axioms from Proverbs 20:9 and 1 John 1:8, which taught that all people are prone to sin.

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water extinguishes fire, so almsgiving quenches sin" (Sir 3:29–30). See chapter two of this dissertation for a discussion on Cyprian's hermeneutic and view of the canon. Notably, deuterocanonical works appeared more frequently in his earlier works like *Ad Quirinum, Quod idola dii non sint,* and *De opere et eleemosynis*, revealing that he might have shifted his focus away from the deuterocanonical works over the course of his ministry as bishop.

[52] Downs, *Alms*, 261; David T. Downs, "Prosopological Exegesis in Cyprian's *De opere et eleemoynis*," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 2 (2012): 290, 293.

[53] "He that made that which is within, made also that which is without. But give alms, and behold all things are clean unto you" (Luke 11:41). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.1.

[54] "Docens scilicet et ostendens non manus lauandas esse sed pectus et sordes intrinsecus potius quam extrinsecus detrahendas, uerum qui purgauerit quod est intus eum quoque id quod foris est repurgasse et emundata mente cute quoque et corpore mundum esse coepisse." Cyprian *De opere et eleemosynis* 2.36–41.

[55] "Further, admonishing, and showing whence we may be clean and purged, He added that alms must be given." Cyprian *De opere et eleemosynis* 2.

He argued that people, therefore, should accept divine mercy and do good works so that they might cleanse themselves of post-baptismal sins.[56] By the use of prosopological exegesis that identified the Holy Spirit as the author of Isaiah 58:1–9, Cyprian concluded that God commanded almsgiving and that sometimes only almsgiving could make satisfaction for post-baptismal sins.[57]

Other biblical commands for almsgiving were presented in chapters five through eight. Applying Sirach 22:12 and Proverbs 21:13 to his context, Cyprian noted that Solomon taught Christians to give alms.[58] Cyprian again used prosopological exegesis to emphasize that the Holy Spirit commanded almsgiving in Psalm 41:2.[59] Daniel and the angel Raphael also taught the good of almsgiving (Dan 4:24; Tob12:8–9).[60] Cyprian argued that God would reward almsgiving since he rewarded Tabitha by bringing her back to life because of her ministry to the widows (Acts 9). Finally, since Cyprian saw Christ's commands as precepts for the third-century church, Cyprian was eager in chapters seven and eight of *De opere* to cite Christ's commands of generosity

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[56] "Who shall boast that he has a clean heart, or who shall boast that he is pure from sins" (Prov 20:9). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.54; *De Dominica oratione* 22.

[57] "Cry, says He, with strength, and spare not. Lift up your voice as a trumpet, and declare to my people their transgressions, and to the house of Jacob their sins. Break your bread to the hungry and bring the poor that are without a home into your house. If you see the naked, clothe him; and despise not the household of your own seed. Then shall your light break forth in season, and your garments shall arise speedily; and righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of God shall surround you. Then shall you cry, and God shall hear you; while yet you are speaking, He shall say, Here I am" (Isa 58:1–9). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.1, 75; *De Dominica oratione* 33.

[58] "Whoever stops his ears that he may not hear the weak, he also shall call upon Go, and there will be none to hear him" (Prov 21:13). "Shut up alms in your heart of the poor, and these shall intercede for you from all evil" (Sir 22:12). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.1. Cyprian directly attributed the authorship of Sirach to Solomon. Cyprian *De opere et eleemosynis* 5.

[59] "Blessed is he that considers of the poor and needy; the Lord will deliver him in the evil day" (Ps 41:2). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.1.

[60] "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you; and redeem your sins by almsgiving, and your unrighteousness by mercies to the poor, and God will be patient to your sins" (Dan 4:24). "Prayer is good, with fasting and alms; because alms deliver from death, and they purge away sins" (Tob 12:8–9). Cf. Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 32.

(Matt 6:19–21; 13:45–46; 19:21; Luke 12:33).[61] Jesus Christ wanted Christians to obtain treasures in heaven through doing good works. Applying the texts to his contemporary audience, Cyprian argued that good works enabled third-century Christian to be called the true children of Abraham (Luke 16:11–12; 19:8–9).[62]

Alongside these commands from God given to the church via the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, chapters nine through thirteen of *De opere* highlighted the fact that Christians were not to let fear keep them from doing acts of mercy. As support, Cyprian turned to Solomon (Prov 28:27), Paul (2 Cor 2:9–10; 9:12), and Christ himself (Matt 6:31–33; Luke 18:29). God has always taken care of his people, so they should not fear falling into poverty (Prov 10:3; 28:27; Matt 5:26;).[63] Similarly, Paul taught that Christians should not fear losing their estate through ministering to others (1 Tim 6:7–10).[64] Finally, Christians should not fear weakening their patrimony through liberal generosity. For proof, Cyprian turned to Proverbs 10:3 as an axiom applicable for the church: "The Lord

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[61] "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt 6:19–21). "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man seeking goodly pearls. And when he found a precious pearl, he went away and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matt 13:45–46). "If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me" (Matt 19:21). "Sell your goods and give alms" (Luke 12:33). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.1; *De Dominica oratione* 20; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 2, 26; *De habitu virginum* 11; *De lapsis* 11; *De zelo et livore* 12.

[62] "If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to you that which is true? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (Luke 16:11–12).

[63] "He that gives unto the poor shall never lack, but he that turns away his eye shall be in great poverty" (Prov 28:27). "What shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? Or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? For these things the Gentiles seek. And your Father knows that you have need of all these things. Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt 6:31–33). "He that ministers seed to the sower, shall both minister bread for your food, and shall multiply your seed sown, and shall increase the growth of the fruits of your righteousness, that in all things you may be enriched" (2 Cor 2:9–10). "The administration of this service shall not only supply the wants of the saints but shall be abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God" (2 Cor 9:12). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.1; *De Dominica oratione* 21, 33; *De habitu virginum* 11; *De lapsis* 35.

[64] "We brought nothing into this world, neither indeed can we carry anything out. Therefore, having food and clothing, let us therewith be content. For they who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many and hurtful desires, which drown a man in perdition and in destruction. For covetousness is a root of all evils, which some desiring, have mad e shipwreck form the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim 6:7–10). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.61; *De Dominica oratione* 19; *De lapsis* 12.

will not slay with famine the righteous soul."[65] Cyprian illustrated this principle by pointing to God feeding Elijah in the desert with ravens and keeping Daniel safe in the lions' den (1 Kgs 17: Dan 6).[66] Christ also spoke to his church when he said, "Behold the fowls of heaven, that they sow not, nor reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feeds them: are you not of more value than they?" (Matt 5:26).[67] For Cyprian, Jesus Christ was thus teaching the church in his day that they should not let avarice and anxiety excuse their duty to do good works and prevent them from storing up heavenly treasures (Luke 12:20).[68]

In chapters fourteen and fifteen, Cyprian specifically addressed wealthier Christians like himself. He quoted the risen Christ's words in Revelation 3:17–18 as a command to rich Christians in the third century to perform works of mercy so that they might attain true riches.[69] As a rebuke to rich Christians for not giving alms, Cyprian in chapter fifteen gave an ecclesiological interpretation of the story of the widows mite (Luke 21).[70] While widows should receive alms, Jesus Christ praised the poor woman for giving alms. Therefore, Christ even lauded the impoverished for their almsgiving. How much more should rich Christians give alms to such destitute people?

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[65] "Non occident fame Dominus animam iustam." Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis* 11.218–19.

[66] "The Lord will not slay with famine the righteous soul" (Prov 10:3). Cf. Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 21.

[67] "Aspicite uolatilia caeli quoniam non seminnant neque metunt neque colligunt in horrea, et pater uester caelestis alit illa. Nonne uos pluris illis estis?" Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis* 11.224–27.

[68] "You fool, this night your soul is required of you; then whose things shall they be which you have provided?" (Luke 12:20). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.61; *De Dominica oratione* 20.

[69] "You say 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing'; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness may not appear in you; and anoint your eyes with eye-salve, that you may see" (Rev 3:17–18).

[70] In chapters fourteen and fifteen, Cyprian focused upon rich women who wore a lot of make-up. For Cyprian's view on women and cosmetics, see *De habitu virginum* 7, 14.

In chapters sixteen through twenty, Cyprian tackled a common objection to almsgiving, namely that one would not have enough money to support one's children. Cyprian appealed to the commands of the law, Christ, and John to stress that greater allegiance should be given to God than to children and parents (Deut 33:9; Matt 10:37; 1 John 3:17).[71] Cyprian then illustrated this divine command with the story of Elijah and the widow (1 Kgs 17). The widow did not preserve food for her son and herself but gave it all to Elijah to eat as much as he pleased. For Cyprian, the woman illustrated the desire to give alms and do acts of mercy, even if it meant one's children went without the necessities of life. In response, Elijah acted as a type of Christ by miraculously providing enough food to sustain them. Following these commands, Cyprian argued in chapter twenty that Christians should see God as the spiritual Father of their children. For Cyprian, the axioms given to the Israelites in Psalms 27:35 and Proverbs 20:7 were true for the third-century church as well, so he told his readers that the best way for Christians to protect their children was to commit them to their heavenly Father.[72] In chapter eighteen Cyprian used Job as an example of a father who commended his children to God through good works, and Cyprian in chapter twenty itself pointed to Tobias as an example for Christians of a parent who both modeled almsgiving for his children and commanded them to do acts of mercy.[73]

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[71] "Who say unto their father or mother, 'I have not known you'; neither did they acknowledge their children, these have observed Your words, and kept Your covenant" (Deut 33:9). "He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Mat 10:37). "Whoso has this world's goods and sees his brother has need and shuts up his bowels from him, how dwells the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17). Cf. *Ad Fortunatum* 6; *ad Quirinum* 3.1, 18; *De Dominica oratione* 9.

[72] "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed wanted bread. All day long he is merciful and lends; and his seed is blessed" (Ps 27:35). "He who walks without reproach in his integrity shall leave blessed children after him" (Prov 20:7). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.1; *De Dominica oratione* 33; *De habitu virginum* 11; *De lapsis* 35.

[73] "All the days of your life, most dear son, have God in your mind, and be not willing to transgress His commandments. Do righteousness all the days of your life and be not willing to walk in the way of iniquity; because if you deal truly, there will be respect of your works. Give alms of your substance and turn not away your face from any poor man. So, shall it be, that neither shall the face of God be turned away from you. As you have, my son, so do. If your substance is abundant, give alms of it the more. If you have little, communicate of that little. And fear not when you do alms; for you lay up a good reward for yourself against the day of necessity, because that alms do deliver from death, and suffer not to come into

Cyprian then returned in chapters twenty-one through twenty-three to exhorting rich Christians, using the Roman spectacles as an illustration. If pagans were willing to spend a lot of money for some earthly rewards, how much more should Christians be willing to spend for heavenly rewards? Those with high status in the Greco-Roman world might watch the Roman circuses, but God and his angels were watching the church. In fact, Cyprian argued that the Roman officials who supervised the games spent a lot of time and money on events that virtually served as gifts to Satan. Cyprian asked how much more should rich Christians willingly give their money as a gift to God to help the poor in the church. In chapter twenty-three Cyprian thus applied to his church Christ's teaching in Matthew 25:31–46: rich Christians should give alms because Jesus Christ had commanded them to do so.[74]

Finally, Cyprian concluded in chapters twenty-four through twenty-six with an admonition to Christians that they should do works of mercy to receive heavenly rewards. To the Carthaginian church, Cyprian applied Paul's exhortation to the Galatians (Gal 6:10), and Cyprian pointed to the first-century church as an example for third-century

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Gehenna. Alms is a good gift to all that give it, in the sight of the highest God" (Tob 4:5–11). "And now, my son, I command you, serve God in truth, and do before Him that which pleases Him; and command your sons, that they exercise righteousness and alms, and be mindful of God, and bless His name always" (Tob 14:10–11). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.1.

[74] "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit in the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them that shall be on His right hand, 'Come, you bless of my Father, (and) receive the kingdom that is prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me.' Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when saw we You a hungered, and fed You? Thirsty, and gave You drink? When saw we You a stranger, and took you in? Naked, and clothed You? Or when saw we You sick, and in prison, and came unto You?' Then shall the King answer and say unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, insomuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me.' Then shall He say also unto those that shall be at His left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father has prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and you gave me not to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me not in: naked, and you clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and you visited me not.' Then shall they also answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when saw we You a hungered, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and ministered not unto You?' And He shall answer them, 'Verily I say unto you, insofar as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not unto me.' And these shall go away into everlasting burning: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt 25:31–46). Cf. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.30; 3.1, 109; *De Dominica oratione* 13, 33; *De zelo et livore* 15; *Epistula* 62.3.

Christians (Acts 2–4).[75] He reminded Christians that they imitated God when they gave alms because he has always been generous. Cyprian finished by encouraging his readers to keep their eyes focused upon heavenly rewards so that they might persevere. Summarizing what good works within the church do for Christians, he wrote that good works are "a great comfort of believers, a wholesome guard of our security, a protection of hope, a safeguard of faith, a remedy of sin."[76] Taken out of context, a person might think that Cyprian was arguing for atonement through works.[77] However, this passage dealt with perseverance rather than atonement, as indicated by the words comfort, guard, protection, safeguard, and remedy. Good works helped Christians persevere in the faith; they did not pay for the guilt of sin.

Therefore, just as Cyprian prefaced his work in *De opere* 1 by emphasizing Christ's work of salvation, he ended in *De opere* 26 doing the same. The first and last chapters are the interpretative lens through which *De opere* 2–25 should be read. Christ redeemed Christians while on the cross. Consequently, Christians should do good works as a form of worship, as well as to make satisfaction and to expiate the stain of any post-baptismal sins. Christians also must persist to receive salvation, including persevering in good deeds, and Christians inherit heavenly rewards based upon their works.[78]

Good Works in Cyprian's Other Writings

In some of Cyprian's other literature, he also exhorted people to make satisfaction through works.[79] In his early piece *De habitu virginum* (248/249), Cyprian

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[75] "Therefore, while we have time, let us labor I what is good unto all men, but especially to them that are of the household of faith" (Gal 6:10). Cf. Cyprian, *De bono patientiae* 13.

[76] "Praeclara et diuina res, fratres carissimi, salutaris operatio, solacium grande credentium, securitatis nostrae salubre prasidium, munimentum spei, tutela fidei, medela peccati." Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis* 26.542–45.

[77] Downs, *Alms*, 270.

[78] Cf. Matthew 25:31–46; Hebrews 5:11–6:12; 1 John 2:19; Revelation 20:11–15.

[79] If *De opere* was composed early, then Cyprian focused upon good works as the primary means for making satisfaction at the beginning of his career as bishop, prior to the persecution. The view

called upon the rich to redeem their transgressions through almsgiving.[80] Dunn argued

that Cyprian thought people could obtain forgiveness for their sins through almsgiving.[81]

However, Dunn did not adequately account for Cyprian's use of a rhetorical question to

break down the arguments of those who believed God had blessed them with money for

them to use on themselves. God had given them money to bless others. Instead of

heaping up sin with their money, they should "redeem" their sins with their money. In

other words, Cyprian was employing rhetorical flourish to exhort rich Christians to use

their money for ministry rather spending it on themselves.

In addition, Cyprian's other writings reveal that confession and martyrdom

remained the supreme acts of obedience. Just as almsgiving and good works expiated the

filth of sin, martyrdom also cleansed believers from sin, bringing them into immediate

sanctification.[82] Cyprian called martyrdom "a baptism of blood" (*baptismo sanguinis*),

because martyrdom had an expiatory effect that mirrored baptism.[83] For this reason, the

lapsi who had remained loyal to the church could die as martyrs. Moreover, they could be

reconciled with the church if they later confessed their faith and underwent torture, since

the confession and torture expiated the filth of their previous apostasy.[84]

Finally, Cyprian uniquely saw withdrawal from persecution as an act of

obedience, akin to confession though not as great. He defended his own withdrawal

during the Decian persecution by claiming it was a non-verbal form of confession.

Fleeing away from persecution revealed that the Christian knew he/she would never

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presented in his letters and later treatises then indicate that he shifted his emphasis to true repentance because of the Decian persecution and the problem of the *lapsi*.

[80] Cyprian, *De habitu virginum* 11.

[81] Dunn, "The White Crown of Works," 727.

[82] Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* pref.4; *De Dominica oratione* 24; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 14; *Epistula* 73.22.

[83] Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 24.467. Cf. *Epistula* 73.21.1; see also *De rebaptismate* 14.

[84] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 13; *Epistula* 19.2.3; 55.3.2–.4.3; 57.4.3–4.

recant, even when tortured, so flight was the only way to avoid the torture.[85] Thus, Cyprian not only justified his departure as having practical and pastoral benefits, but he also saw his self-imposed exile as a demonstration of his devotion to God, an act that satisfied God for his post-baptismal sins.

Conclusion

Therefore, good works did not atone for the guilt of sin but rather cleansed a Christian from the filth of sin and demonstrated a perseverance in the faith. Additionally, true Christians wanted to make satisfaction to God for disobeying him, especially after the Holy Spirit had renewed them at their baptism. To understand Cyprian, his words must be understood within their contexts. He used the term *satisfactio* according to his day, meaning an act of apology for an offense. The word did not carry the notion of reconciliation as the English word atonement has often been defined in contemporary theological discussions. Cyprian believed that Christians did good works to expiate the filth of their post-baptismal sin and to make satisfaction for offending the God who saved them. Cyprian elevated certain acts as especially beneficial for making atonement, including almsgiving, martyrdom, confession, and even flight during persecution. However, the *lapsi* forced Cyprian to declare that no good work would satisfy God or the church without true repentance, as the next chapter will demonstrate.

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[85] Cyprian, *De lapsis,* 10–12.

CHAPTER 5

REPENTANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Introduction

Cyprian's belief in a strong link between the visible and spiritual church not only shaped his conviction that sins deserved acts of apology; it also influenced his theology concerning repentance and reconciliation with the church. The Decian persecution was a pivotal turning point in Cyprian's ministry as bishop of Carthage. Dunn argued that the persecution forced Cyprian to change both his attitude and his thought. He shifted from exhorting his congregants that they should make satisfaction through good works to urging them that no good works could satisfy God or the church without true repentance. Dunn incorrectly stated that Cyprian changed his beliefs, but Dunn correctly noted that Cyprian shifted his emphases.[1] After the Decian persecution Cyprian began urging Christians that they needed personal repentance for their sin, not merely an outward demonstration of works. He saw repentance as necessary when making satisfaction to God for post-baptismal sins and when seeking reconciliation with the church. Hence, this chapter looks at Cyprian's thought concerning the necessity of true repentance both for salvation and for entrance into the church.

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[1] Geoffrey D. Dunn, "The White Crown of Works: Cyprian's Early Pastoral Ministry of Almsgiving in Carthage," *Church History*, no. 4 (December 2004): 730. Dunn exaggerated the effect that the Decian persecution had upon Cyprian's thought. The persecution did not change his theological beliefs but convinced him to change his pastoral emphases. Chapters four and five demonstrate that Cyprian stressed good works prior to the Decian persecution and true repentance afterwards. However, he saw both as necessary for making satisfaction and reconciling with the church. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 35–36.

Paenitentia in Late Antiquity

Even as modern scholarship has sometimes defined the Latin word *satisfactio* in accordance with the English word atonement, so has it sometimes imposed later developments concerning the sacrament of penance onto the Latin word *paenitentia* of late antiquity.[2] A correct interpretation of Cyprian's view of reconciliation and repentance must consider the meaning of *paenitentia* in the first few centuries AD rather than merely defining it according to its usage in the medieval period. To begin, the word did not mean acts of penance but rather regret for one's actions, though sometimes it had a weaker meaning of merely changing one's attitude or mind.[3] Tacitus described how Agricola generally did not punish a person for an offense if the person showed genuine regret (*paenitentia*).[4] Similarly, the verb form *paeniteō* meant to give reasons for a feeling of remorse, but it could carry the simpler idea of feeling regret.[5] Cicero argued against the idea that irascibility had its usefulness because people would then need to repent of what they did in their anger (*poeniteret quod fecisset per iram*).[6] Similarly, Cyprian usually linked *paenitentia* with lamentation and weeping because the word carried the notion of feeling regret. Thus, the word in the first few centuries dealt with notions of remorse and repentance, not with doing acts of penance.

Scholarship must also consider the idiomatic meaning of the phrase *paenitentiam agere* in late antiquity. Latin speakers of the first few centuries often did not use the verb *paeniteō* but the idiomatic phrase *paenitentiam agere* when they meant 'to

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[2] Bévenot duly noted that readers should not see too much of a connection to the modern sacrament of penance, which did not develop until centuries after Cyprian. Maurice Bévenot, trans. and ed., *St. Cyprian* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1957), 93.

[3] *Oxford Latin Dictionary,* rev.ed, vol. 2, s.v. "paenitentia."

[4] *"Nec poena semper, sed saepius paenitentia contentus esse."* Tacitus, *Agricola* 19.3, in Tacitus, *Agricola* (1914; trans. M. Hutton, rev. R. M. Ogilvie, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

[5] *Oxford Latin Dictionary,* rev.ed, vol. 2, s.v. "paeniteō."

[6] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 4.37.79, in Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* (trans. J. E. King, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927). *Paeniteō* had the alternate form of *poeniteō. Oxford Latin Dictionary,* rev.ed, vol. 2, s.v. "paeniteō."

repent.' Pliny the Younger (61–c. 113) employed this phrase when he wrote that that he hoped the Bithynians would not repent of their repentance (*agatque paenitentiam paenitentiae suae*).[7] Cyprian similarly used *paenitentiam agere* as an idiomatic phrase for 'to repent.' For Cyprian, repentance logically entailed doing good works, but the phrase did not carry the later sacramental meaning of penance.

Despite this usage in the first few centuries AD, *paenitentia* and *paenitentiam agere* in Cyprian's writings have often been translated into English as "to do penance," especially since these terms later became connected to doing the sacrament of penance. Campbell even relied upon this formal translation of the phrase to argue for the sacrament of penance within the third century.[8] Similarly, while Rahner wrote that Cyprian did not give enough information to serve as conclusive evidence for private Penance in the early patristic period, Rahner still defined *paenitentiam agere* as "works of penance by which the sinner, on his part, attempts to reconcile himself with God. It is like *satisfacere* and *satisfactio.*"[9] However, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, *satisfactio* for Cyprian did not mean reconciliation but rather an act or payment to apologize for an offense. Additionally, Rahner did not account for the idiomatic meaning of *paenitentiam agere* in the early centuries, so he equated the phrase with the sacrament of penance of modern Catholicism. He thus missed how Cyprian used *paenitentiam agere* to mean "to repent" and not "to do acts of penance."

Ecclesial Reconciliation in *De lapsis*

By taking into consideration the third-century usage of *paenitentia,* Cyprian's writings concerning reconciliation with the church can be better understood. By the mid-

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[7] Pliny the Younger, *Epistula* 7.10.3, in Pliny the Younger, *Letters* (trans. Betty Radice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969).

[8] Phillip Campbell, *The Complete Works of Saint Cyprian of Carthage* (Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing, 2013), 70.

[9] Karl Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 153, 221–22.

third century, the process of reconciliation was well established in Carthage, but not to the point that it could not be modified. Cyprian outlined the normal process as a period of repentance (*paenitentia*), followed by a public confession of the sin (*exhomologesis*). Afterwards, the bishop laid his hands upon the repentant person, symbolizing reconciliation (*pax*) with the church, and allowing for admittance to the eucharist.[10] These steps always occurred in this order, but Cyprian allowed some variation.[11] Sometimes circumstances like sickness prevented the *exhomologesis* from occurring publicly before the church.[12] Additionally, while he believed the bishop alone had the authority to grant reconciliation with the church, Cyprian held that a bishop could assign a presbyter to lay his hands upon the penitent person if the bishop was not available, or even a deacon if neither a bishop nor a presbyter could do so.[13]

While Cyprian inherited this normal procedure for reconciliation, the large number of Christians who temporarily apostatized during the Decian persecution led many within the church to begin to question whether the process was too slow. Moreover, some *lapsi* sought letters of peace *(libelli pacis)* from confessors (a few of whom later became martyrs). Many in the church believed the confessors had enough authority to grant immediate reconciliation with the church through these letters. Cyprian fought against such a notion.[14] Unless a *lapsus* was on his/her deathbed, presbyters could not accept *lapsi* back into the church until the bishops held a general council to discuss the

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[10] *Pax* for Cyprian in his context meant reconciliation with the church. Bévenot, *St. Cyprian*, 84–85. Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 16.2; 17.2. For a detailed exploration of the process of reconciliation in the early church, see Everett Ferguson, "Early Church Penance," *Restoration Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1994): 81–100. For a detailed explanation concerning specifically the church in mid-third century Carthage through Cyprian's writings, see Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church,* 152–71.

[11] Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 153–54.

[12] Cyprian, *Epistula* 18.1.2; 19.2.

[13] Cyprian, *Epistula* 18.1.2.

[14] Cyprian, *Epistula* 18–27.

situation.[15] Cyprian's stance led his deacon Felicissimus and others to break from the Carthaginian church, creating a schismatic congregation that immediately recognized the *libelli pacis* and thus did not require repentance before readmitting *lapsi* to the eucharist. These problems concerning confessors and schismatics served as the backdrop for Cyprian as he penned *De lapsis.*[16]

Cyprian wrote *De lapsis* upon returning from self-imposed exile before a Carthaginian council in the spring of 251, which was going to decide what to do with the *lapsi*.[17] Bévenot contended that *De lapsis* would make little sense unless the church could forgive sins.[18] On the contrary, Cyprian's claims would not work unless the church could not forgive sins. The work argued against Felicissimus and the laxist party by saying that the *lapsi* had to demonstrate true repentance before they could be reconciled with the church. Even a certificate from a martyr or confessor (*libellus pacis*) could not render immediate entrance into the church because the *lapsi* needed to repent of their sin or face the eternal consequences of their apostasy. In fact, God was going to judge churches, bishops, and presbyters who granted reconciliation prematurely. At the final judgment, God would punish sinners for their lack of repentance, and he would also punish the laxists for working against his judgment. Hence, Cyprian called the *lapsi* to return to the church in *De lapsis*. He exhorted them to repent, and he warned the laxist schismatics that they would face divine judgment for reconciling the *lapsi* with the church too hastily precisely because the church could not grant forgiveness of sins.

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[15] Cyprian, *Epistula* 18.1.2; 19.2.

[16] For a detailed discussion on the background to *De lapsis,* including the various parties that Cyprian addressed in the work, see Maurice Bévenot, "The Sacrament of Penance and St. Cyprian's *De lapsis,*" *The Journal of Theological Studies* 16 (June 1955): 176–84.

[17] Brent, *On the Church*, 1:99.

[18] Bévenot, "The Sacrament of Penance," 175–213.

In *De lapsis* 4, Cyprian described the sin of apostasy as defiling the Christian, and Cyprian likened post-baptismal sin to a disease in *De lapsis* 14. The bishops had to try to help the *lapsi* with the symptoms of sin, rather than make the symptoms worse. Someone who committed an egregious, post-baptismal transgression needed to "petition the [court] that they be allowed to pay their dues for the offence (*satisfactionibus*) with which they are charged."[19] A severe sin like sacrificing to idols revoked a person's full membership in the visible church so that he/she needed to make satisfaction for his/her sin to be reconciled with the church and partake in the eucharist again. The laxist party trusted either in a mere show of works by the *lapsi* or in the works of the martyrs and confessors transferred to the *lapsi* via the *libelli pacis*. In contrast, Cyprian believed no works could make satisfaction for post-baptismal sin without true repentance.

Cyprian claimed in *De lapsis* 15 that those who allowed a person back into communion too early offered a "reconciliation (*pax*) that is null and void" so that the *lapsi* "no longer seek the slow painful road to recovery, nor the genuine cure through satisfaction (*satisfactione*) done; what remorse (*paenitentia*) they had has been snatched from their breasts."[20] Some *lapsi* were seeking to make peace with the church through reconciling with schismatic churches, but schismatics could not grant true reconciliation, as they were outside the church. These *lapsi* in schismatic churches were thus not receiving the healing that they needed for their sins, a treatment that came only through the church. Additionally, those who sacrificed to idols acquired a filth that needed cleansing before they could partake of the eucharist again. This cleansing came through remorse (*paenitentia*). Sorrow had a medicinal effect, helping the person recover from the

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[19] "Nec hoc eo dico ut fratrum causas onerem, sedut magis fratres ad precem satisfactionis instigem." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 14.271–72. Translations come from Brent, *On the Church,* 1:118, who rightly saw the legal overtones in this section of *De lapsis*. For a summary of the legal language see Brent, *On the Church,* 1:115–16.

[20] "Inrita et falsa pax." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 15.292. "Non quaerunt santitatis patientiam nec ueram de satisfaction medicinam: paenitentia de pectoribus excussa est." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 15.293–95.

sin committed, and it had a cleansing effect, washing away the filth received by committing the sin.

Cyprian then wrote *De lapsis* 16–18, but these chapters have generated several interpretations within scholarship. Rahner stated the schismatics for Cyprian were already condemned by God because they had separated from the church. Reconciliation with the church gave people an opportunity to receive forgiveness at the final judgment and thus inherit eternal life.[21] On the contrary, Cyprian envisioned the church more corporately than individually. Since he virtually equated the spiritual and visible church, (almost) all whom Christ would find within the church would receive eternal life, not merely get the opportunity to escape condemnation.

Bévenot argued against Rahner by taking the opposite stance, saying Cyprian believed the church could forgive sins. When the church reconciled with a person, his/her sins were forgiven, and he/she did not need to fear a future judgment.[22] However, Cyprian did not go to this extreme either because he did not see the spiritual and visible church as the same thing. Admittance into the visible church usually meant admittance into the spiritual church and thus salvation, but entry into the spiritual church also required true repentance. Without genuine contrition, a person was not saved and would face divine judgment, even if a church had brought him/her into the fold and offered peace (*pax*).[23] Bévenot rested his argument upon the notion that Cyprian invalidated the hasty reconciliations of the laxists because they were acting contrary to his rule.[24] While they were usurping his governance, Cyprian argued against their position by pointing to

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[21] Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 195.

[22] Bévenot, "The Sacrament of Penance," 207–13; Bévenot, *St. Cyprian*, 85.

[23] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 16–18.

[24] Bévenot, *St. Cyprian*, 85.

God's authority, not his own.[25] Additionally, Bévenot falsely assumed that the church's ability to reconcile sinners with itself necessarily meant the church could also absolve sins as God pardons them. However, Cyprian emphasized in *De lapsis* that a lack of repentance prevented true forgiveness. Indeed, the argument of *De lapsis* could be summarized as 'the lack of repentance among the *lapsi* has invalidated their attempts to seek pardon from God.'

Cyprian also wrote that the laxist party was dishonoring the eucharist and administering it in an unworthy manner when they allowed the *lapsi* to receive the elements without truly repenting first: "They do not entreat the Lord whom they have deeply offended with a long and full penance (*paenitentia*)."[26] This true repentance would have led them to become cleansed of their sins (*expiata delicta*), and it would have turned away God's anger (*placatam indignantis Domini*), because it served as adequate satisfaction for the sin. However, the *lapsi* had only angered God more by taking the eucharist while unclean. In fact, their refusal to demonstrate full repentance revealed that they had lost salvation.

Therefore, Cyprian's argument in *De lapsis* 17–20 did not revolve around the power of the bishop or martyrs but rather the authority of God. Campbell wrote that Cyprian was pointing hearers to the judgments of the bishops rather than to the opinions of the martyrs.[27] However, Cyprian was emphasizing the judgement of God not the bishops, because Cyprian was warning the confessors against using their influence to make bishops act contrary to the divine will. Contrary to Campbell, Bévenot correctly saw Cyprian's emphasis on God's authority in *De lapsis* 17, but Bévenot missed how this

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[25] Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.1.2.

[26] "Nec Dominum grauiter offensum longa et plena paenitentia deprecetur." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 16.334–35.

[27] Bévenot, *St. Cyprian*, 68; Campbell, *The Complete Works,* 69.

chapter helps with the interpretation of *De lapsis* 16. [28] True satisfaction required true

repentance and the desire to "propitiate (*placandus est*) [God] by the settlement of our

account (*satisfactione*)."[29] While bishops served as deputized judges for God, Cyprian

argued that God held the final verdict, not the bishops.[30] Those who too hastily allowed

for reconciliation with the church would face divine judgement.[31] Even martyrs and

confessors did not have the authority to forgive sins for God. Cyprian saw the victims

under the altar in Revelation 6:10–11 as exemplifying the principle that God would not

always act according to the wishes of the martyrs but would act in line with his own

will.[32] Similarly, Moses, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel appealed to God to forgive the Israelites,

but he punished them anyway (Exod 32:31–33; Jer 1:5; 11:14; Ezek 14:13–16).[33]

Because of divine immutability, these passages illustrated Cyprian's point that nobody

had the authority to forgive sins and change the divine verdict.

 After pointing to these Old Testament examples, Cyprian climaxed this

portion of his argument by turning the contention of the schismatics on its head. Matthew

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[28] Bévenot, *St. Cyprian*, 85.

[29] "Dominus nostra satisfactione placandus." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17.345–46. Cf. *Epistula* 57.3.1–2.

[30] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17–20; *Epistula* 57.3.1–2; 59.14.2–15.1.

[31] Similarly, Cyprian believed a bishop would face divine judgment if he dealt too harshly with a *lapsus* by refusing to grant reconciliation with the church when the person had demonstrated proper repentance. Cyprian, *Epistula* 57.4.3–5.2.

[32] "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou judge not and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev 6:10–11). Cyprian, *De lapsis* 18. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.16; *De bono patientiae* 21.

[33] "I beseech Thee, Lord, this people hath committed a grievous crime; and now if Thou wouldst forgive them their crime, forgive them; but if not, strike me out of the book that Thou hast written. And the Lord said to Moses: 'If a man hath sinned before me, him will I strike out of my book'" (Exod 32:31–33). "Before I formed thee in the bowels of thy mother, I knew thee, and before thou came forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee and appointed thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer 1:5). "Pray not for this people and ask not for them in prayer and petition; for I will not hear them in the time when they shall call upon me, in the time of their affliction" (Jer 11:14). "Whatever land shall sin against me to commit iniquity, I will stretch forth my hand upon it and will destroy its support of bread, and I will send famine upon it and will carry off man and beast from it. Even if these three men, [Noah], Daniel, and Job, shall be in it…they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they themselves alone shall be saved" (Ezek 14:13–16). Cyprian, *De lapsis* 19. Cf. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* 4; *Ad Quirinum* 1.1.

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10:32–33 said, "He that shall confess me before men, I (Jesus) will also confess him before my Father, who is in heaven; but he that shall deny me, I will also deny him."[34] Cyprian took Christ's axiom as directed at professing Christians, so Cyprian argued that the laxist party were not venerating the martyrs with their position but were denigrating them. Jesus Christ confesses those who confess him, but he also denies those who deny him. The laxist party were contradicting the latter portion of the passage for the sake of promoting the former. However, if Christ does not deny those who deny him, he also does not confess those who confess him. Hence, those who did not require much from the *lapsi* were not venerating the martyrs but rather were denigrating them. Cyprian believed the confessors and martyrs had some authority because their *libelli pacis* could convince the bishop that a person had truly repented.[35] However, they could not overturn the bishop's judgment, much less overturn God's, and they could not grant the forgiveness of sin. Pardon required true repentance, which was demonstrated through prayers and tears, while accepting healing discipline from the bishops of the church.[36]

Hence, this dissertation has argued that Cyprian virtually wed the spiritual and visible church, but he did not completely equate them. He strongly connected his ecclesiology and soteriology, but he did not see them as the same thing. While only those within the church would receive salvation, a person also needed true repentance and personal faith. The church's ruling served only as a preliminary hearing (*praeiudicio*).[37] God might overturn the church's decision at the final judgment, so the bishops had to take reconciliation seriously, making their decisions only on a case-by-case basis. Hence,

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[34] "Qui confessus me fuerit coram hominibus, et ego confitebor eum coram Patre meo qui in caelis est; qui autem me negauerit, et ego negabo eum." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 20.403–6.

[35] Bévenot, *St. Cyprian*, 87; Campbell, *The Complete Works*, 69. Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 15–27.

[36] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 22–23, 24.

[37] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 19.400.

Cyprian did not believe that the church forgave sins but rather granted reconciliation between the visible church and the sinner.[38]

Cyprian then turned from discussing the *sacrificati* (those who sacrificed) to addressing the *libellatici* (those who attained a certificate of sacrifice without sacrificing). In *De lapsis* 27–28, he argued that the *libellatici* also needed to repent and make satisfaction because people should make satisfaction for mild sins too. Even if a person merely considered denying Jesus Christ, then he/she should make satisfaction because God knew his/her heart. Satisfaction came through sorrow for entertaining the idea and through confessing the thought to the bishop, both which allowed the subjective feelings of guilt and shame to be removed:

> Let him persevere in [repenting] (*in agenda paenitentia*) and imploring God's mercy, lest what made for the mitigation of his crime turn to its increase through the neglect of reparation (*in neglecta satisfactione*) …Nay, your wounds are even greater, your guilt (*delicta*) still deeper: for after sinning you make no [satisfaction] (*nec satisfacere*), you have fallen and you do not repent (*nec delicta deflere*).[39]

Cyprian ended the section saying, "Carry out your penance (*paenitentiam*) to the full, [in other words] show proof of the sorrow of a repentant and contrite heart (*dolentis ac lamentis animi*)."[40]

If a person did not repent, then he/she lost salvation. Cyprian thus made repentance a demonstration of perseverance in the faith. He illustrated this view in *De lapsis* 31–32 by comparing the attitude of some *lapsi* with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: "Though they were clear in conscience, having often earned God's favor by the service of their faith and reverence, yet they persevered in humility and in making

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[38] Cf. Bernhard Poschmann, *Paenitentia Secunda* (Bonn, Germany: Hannstein, 1940), 404; Bévenot, "The Sacrament of Penance," 185–191; Bévenot, *St. Cyprian*, 85.

[39] "Nec cesset in agenda paenitentia adque in Domini misericordia deprecanda, ne quod minus esse in qualitate delicti uidetur in neglecta satisfactione cumuletur." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 28.567–70. "Ecce peiora adhuc peccandi uulnera, ecce maiora delicta: peccasse nec satisfacere, deliquisse nec delicta deflere." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 30.607–9.

[40] "Agite paenitentiam plenam, dolentis ac lamentantis animi probate maestitiam." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 32.638.

satisfaction (*satisfacere*)."[41] Since Cyprian saw such a strong connection between the Old

and New Testaments, he could use this Old Testament story as an example for Christians

in the third century. Even those with a relatively clear conscience demonstrated their

perseverance by continually making satisfaction for the sins that they had committed.

Cyprian concluded his work in *De lapsis* 34–36 by returning to the

relationship between the schismatics and the *lapsi*. Without repentance people stepped

outside the church, persisted in their sins, and ultimately lost salvation. Peace with

schismatic congregations was not reconciliation with the true church because the visible

unity of the church defined the limits of the spiritual church as well. Therefore, anybody

who participated in a eucharistic rite within schismatic congregations was not partaking

of the true eucharist.[42] The *lapsi* who had joined the schismatics took "as valid the

communion [i.e., the eucharist] of those who are themselves not in communion [with the

church]."[43] No ministries done within schismatic churches were efficacious because those

congregations had stepped outside the spiritual church when they departed from the

visible church.

The schismatic churches also offered a false hope of salvation because their

casualness towards sin was leading people to forsake repentance, without which no

forgiveness was given. Cyprian wrote "Those do away with [repentance] (*paenitentiam*)

for sin [and] shut the door against satisfaction (*satisfactionis*) altogether. And so, it is that

through the presumption of certain folk who beguile with false promises of salvation all

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[41] "Bene sibi licet conscii et Deum fidei ac timoris obsequio saepe promeriti, humilitatem tamen tenere et Domino satisfacere nec inter ipsa gloriosa uirtutum suarum martyria destiterunt." Cyprian, *De lapsis*. 31.612–15.

[42] "[The *lapsi*] have yielded to false promises and, joining apostates and renegades, they are receiving a sham in place of the reality, taking as valid the communion of those who are themselves no in communion; they are putting their faith in men in despite of God, after failing to profess their faith in God in despite of men." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 33. Cf. *Epistula* 59.13.6.

[43] "Communicationem non communicantium ratam ducunt." Cyprian, *De lapsis*, 33.655–56. Cf. *Epistula* 59.13.6.

true hope of salvation is destroyed."[44] Campbell saw this statement as proof that doing

the sacrament of penance led to the pardon of sin.[45] However, Cyprian had said that

unrepentance led to a loss of salvation, and he had mentioned continual satisfaction in *De

lapsis* 28. Therefore, the quotation should be interpreted as true repentance demonstrated

a person's perseverance in the faith. If people persevered in the faith, then they had

pardon for their sins. Hence, Cyprian's main point in *De lapsis* was the necessity of true

repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Ecclesial Reconciliation in Cyprian's Letters

Cyprian portrayed a similar view in his letters that he wrote during the Decian

persecution.[46] In the spring of 250, at the beginning of the persecution, he said that God

had allowed the persecution because Christians were not doing good works nor making

satisfaction for their sins.[47] Now, they could only appease him through lamentation and

tears, begging him for mercy. Satisfaction came through remorse.[48]

Then, in the summer of 250, a plague hit Carthage so that many of the *lapsi*

fell ill and seemed on the verge of death.[49] Cyprian thus created an initial policy of

granting reconciliation if a *lapsus* had truly repented and were on his/her deathbed.[50]

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[44] "Qui autem paenitentiam criminis tollunt satisfactionis uiam cludunt. Ita fit ut, dum temeritate quorundam uel promittitur salus falsa uel creditor, spes uerae salutis adimatur." Cyprian, *De lapsis* 34. 662–65.

[45] Campbell, *The Complete Works*, 71.

[46] For discussions on the dates of Cyprian's letters, see G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian* (4 volumes, New York: Newman Press, 1986).

[47] Cyprian, *Epistula* 11.1.2.–2.1.

[48] Cyprian, *Epistula* 11.1.1, 2.2, 5.1–3, 7.3–8.1.

[49] Cyprian, *Epistula* 18.1.2.

[50] Cyprian, *Epistula* 16.2.3; 18.1.2; 19.2.1. Clarke incorrectly stated that Cyprian believed in the ministry of absolution. The notion of absolution did not appear until the penitential system of the medieval period. Cyprian saw satisfaction as expiation from the filth of sin and reconciliation with the church, not absolving the guilt of sin before God, since Jesus Christ had already done that, and since God held the final judgment on the forgiveness of sins. G. W. Clarke, trans. and ed., *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* vol. 1, *Letters 1–27* (New York: Newman Press, 1984), 298.

Cyprian also addressed the situation of people sacrificing the first time while under duress but refusing a second time. According to Cyprian, the second act washed away the filth of the first (*abluerint omne delictum*), so he believed they ought to be reconciled with the church. They had repented and confessed Jesus Christ.[51] Cyprian warned that the church had to treat the *lapsi* fairly; otherwise, God would correct the church's decisions in the eschaton and chastise them for being too harsh. Hence, unlike the Novatianists in Rome, Cyprian never took a rigorist position towards the *lapsi*.[52]

Towards the end of the persecution in the spring of 251, Fortunatianus (the lapsed bishop of Assurae) began claiming the rights of episcopacy. In response, Cyprian contended that the *lapsi* should continually make satisfaction for their sin through entreating divine mercy and asking for readmittance with the church. Those who scorned making satisfaction had necessarily gone to the laxist schismatics.[53] Therefore, Fortunatianus should be continually making satisfaction for his sin through prayers and tears rather than claiming the rights of the episcopacy, which he had lost.

In the summer of 252, Cyprian wrote his *Epistula* 59. He was growing weary with the obstinacy of the schismatics, so he said that their blood would not be on the hands of the bishops because they had exhorted the schismatics to repent and return to the church. Because they would not repent and return, they had lost their salvation.[54] A council at Carthage in the spring of 251 had decided that no person could be reconciled (*pacem daret*) with the church without first repenting (*paenitentiam agentibus*). Remorse

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[51] Cyprian, *Epistula* 25.1.9.

[52] "But in the case of those whose death is imminent and who cannot, therefore, be deferred, if they have done penance and frequently declared their detestation for their actions, if by their tears, their sights, their sobbing they have revealed the signs of a contrite and truly penitent heart (*uere paenitentis animi*), when there no longer remains, so far as man can tell, any hope of life, then and only then, with all due care and caution, should we bring them comfort" Cyprian, *Epistula* 30.8.

[53] Cyprian, *Epistula* 43.7.2; 65.

[54] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.8.1.

was the cure when someone lost the expiating grace received at baptism.[55] However, the laxist party were preventing the *lapsi* from repenting so that they were not satisfying an angry God (*ne deo indignanti satisfiat*) nor were they making peace with the true church in which they would find salvation.[56] Instead of listening to the schismatics, the *lapsi* should be banging upon the doors of the church and seeking to make public confession of their sins (*ulla exomologesis criminis facta*) so that they might escape the wrath of God.[57] Some schismatics were already realizing their need for the church, so they were beginning to beat upon the ecclesial doors already.[58] To escape divine wrath, they needed to observe repentance (*sequatur paenitentia*), and Cyprian described this act as petitioning God and making public confession.[59] True followers of Jesus Christ would not become schismatics but would incessantly intreat the church for reconciliation. A refusal to petition God and make satisfaction meant breaking from the visible church and thus a loss of salvation.

Additionally, the schismatics were preventing people from returning to the church and receiving salvation because they were deceivingly saying that they were a true church. According to Cyprian, schismatics were outside the church and thus could not administer true sacraments because they were no longer in communion with the spiritual church.[60] They also did not have an appropriate reverence for the eucharist nor proper fear of God because they were not requiring repentance before coming to the

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[55] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.13.4.

[56] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.13.2, 14.1

[57] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.13.5.

[58] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.13–14.

[59] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59. 13.3–4–14.1.

[60] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.13.6. "Communion is then offered to them by men who are themselves no longer in communion. *De lapsis* 33.

Lord's Supper.[61] Cyprian said that rejecting temptation in the first place was the best option, but the second best was repenting of sin. The schismatics and the *lapsi* with them were not even taking this second choice. Instead, they preached a premature peace and offered the eucharist without lamentation for sin.[62] Moreover, because Fortunatus (the laxist anti-bishop of Carthage) had only received ordination from schismatics and not from the true church, he did not have the ability to administer a valid eucharist, nor the ability to grant reconciliation.[63] Schismatics were also bringing divine wrath against themselves by embracing a more fallen nature. Since they would not repent, "their minds have now become disordered, their consciences deadened, their senses deranged."[64] Therefore, the *lapsi* should not listen to the laxists but should ask God for forgiveness with prayers and satisfaction (*precibus et satisfactionibus*), with "tears of remorse and acts of reparation" (*lamentationibus et satisfactionibus*).[65] These acts allowed for reentrance into the church because it demonstrated that they had repented (*paenitentiam agerent*).[66] Cyprian thus virtually equated the visible and spiritual church so that peace with the visible church usually meant re-entry into the spiritual church and thus the ability to receive salvation.

Cyprian held a relatively strict stance towards the *lapsi* (especially compared to the laxist party in Carthage), so he needed to defend himself in his letters. He feared

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[61] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.13.5.

[62] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.13.5–6.

[63] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.15.1. Felicissimus was one of Cyprian's deacons who led a section of his congregation to split from the Carthaginian church and create a schismatic church. Felicissimus and a few others ordained Fortunatus as the new bishop of Carthage. Fortunatus was one of Cyprian's presbyters who had left with Felicissimus to form the laxist church. Fortunatus was likely one of the presbyters who had resisted Cyprian's episcopal election and had reconciled *lapsi* to the church contrary to his wishes. Cyprian, *Epistula* 15–20; 59; Pontus, *Vita Cypriani* 5.

[64] "Denique hinc illis percussa mens et hebes animus et sensus alienus est." Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.13.4.349–50.

[65] Cyprian in *Epistula* 59.12.2.321, 17.1.477.

[66] Cyprian in *Epistula* 59.12.2.321.

that allowing stained people into the church would corrupt those who had not sinned.[67] Cyprian had previously allowed a few *lapsi* into the church whose actions afterwards proved that they had not truly repented, so he had learned the hard way the necessity of requiring a demonstration of true repentance.[68] Therefore, Cyprian told Cornelius that the bishop of Carthage would gladly welcome Felicissimus and the other laxists back into the church if they would only demonstrate they had repented: "I give a ready welcome and an embrace of wholehearted affection to all who return in a spirit of repentance (*paenitentia*), to all those who confess to their sins in a spirit of sincere and humble atonement (*satisfactio*)."[69] In other words, Cyprian considered genuine sorrow (expressed with humility) as a satisfactory act for reconciliation with the church. Instead of showing remorse, however, the schismatics were threatening both Cyprian and Cornelius.[70] Cyprian thus asked, "If they seek to make satisfaction (*satisfaciunt*), why do they need to menace us?"[71] He was praying God would change their hearts and minds so that, instead of provoking and harassing God (*prouocare illi et exacerbare*), they might repent (*paenitentiae lumen*). Cyprian ended his letter saying, "If they come with prayers of supplication and works of reparation (*satisfactionibus*), let them be heard."[72]

Therefore, *Epistula* 59 emphasized that reconciliation with the church and the forgiveness of sins required genuine repentance, expressed through lamentation and good works. In fact, the need to demonstrate true regret sometimes led Cyprian to equate sorrow and acts of satisfaction with true repentance. Furthermore, the letter revealed how

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[67] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.15.

[68] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.15.

[69] "Amplector prompta et plena dilectione cum paenitentia reuertentes, peccatum suum satisfactio humili et simplici confitentes." Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.16.3.472–74.

[70] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.17.1.

[71] "Si pacem postulant, arma deponant: si satisfaciunt, quid minantur?" Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.18.2.507–8.

[72] "Si cum precibus et satisfactionibus ueniunt, audiantur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.20.2.569–70.

he envisioned satisfaction and repentance. The two cleansed the person from the filth of sin, satisfied God for breaking his law, and led to reconciliation with the church. People did not need to atone for their sins by post-baptismal works, but they did demonstrate their perseverance in the faith through their sorrow and acts of apology. The loss of salvation only came after a person refused to repent and make satisfaction for sin. The person had failed to persevere and had thus left the visible church. Residing outside the visible church necessarily meant dwelling outside the spiritual church, and thus the loss of salvation. People also did not reacquire salvation by works but through truly repenting of their sin and seeking to reenter the church.

In *Epistula* 55 (251/252) Cyprian described further what he meant by satisfaction and repentance.[73] The letter was written as a polemic against the Novatian schism. A bishop named Antonianus was questioning Cornelius' authority because he was fellowshipping with Trophimus, a former bishop who had become a *sacrificati* during the persecution but had later repented and returned to the church. Cyprian did not provide a systematic treatment on satisfaction and repentance, but his response did possess several statements concerning satisfaction and repentance.

Much of the letter narrated the debates held at the Carthaginian council of 251, which occurred soon after the persecution subsided. To understand the importance of their arguments from Scripture, the tradition of reconciliation must be briefly explained. Prior to the council of 251, much of the church saw apostasy as an irreconcilable sin, and the delegates inherited a tradition where egregious sins could only be forgiven after baptism once. Cyprian reflected this tradition in his early text *Ad Quirinum* 3.28, where he stated that a person could only receive reconciliation for an egregious sin one time. After the Decian persecution, Cyprian did not talk about how often a person could become reconciled with the church. Bévenot contended that Cyprian had relaxed his

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[73] Clark, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 3:163–64, 188–89.

policies so that reconciliation could happen more than once.[74] While possible, Rahner rightly pointed out that Cyprian routinely confined himself to discussing important topics of his day, and those topics did not involve whether a person could receive reconciliation more than once.[75] Since Cyprian normally followed tradition, he probably believed a person could only be granted peace with the church once, but scholarship does not have enough evidence to know for certain his position after the Decian persecution.

Be this as it may, the sheer number of *lapsi* forced the council to re-evaluate whether apostasy [i.e., sacrificing to idols] was an irreconcilable sin. Cyprian and the council decided that *lapsi* could be reconciled with the church, and the bishops came to this decision by studying Scripture. In *Epistula* 55, Cyprian wrote at least fifty biblical quotations and illusions, and the letter hinted that the council spent long sessions discussing the correct interpretation and application of select biblical passages.[76] Over the course of this biblical study, Cyprian and the council decided that God would forgive any sin if they showed true repentance so that sinners could receive reconciliation with the church. Cyprian juxtaposed this study with Novatian's approach. Cyprian accused Novatian of having been influenced too much by the Stoics, who saw all sin as equally bad and as having no place among them.[77]

Therefore, Cyprian remained open to any person receiving reconciliation with the church, even if he/she committed an egregious sin. Cyprian wrote:

> In my zeal and longing to reunite our brotherhood, there is nothing that I do not forgive…I give a ready welcome and an embrace of whole-hearted affection to all who return in a spirit of repentance (*cum paenitentia reuertentes*), to all those who

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[74] Bévenot, "The Sacrament of Penance,"188–91.

[75] Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 173–78.

[76] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.13.5; 60.3.1.

[77] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.13.5; 60.3.1.

confess to their sins in a spirit of sincere and humble [satisfaction] (*satisfactione humili et simplici confitentes*).[78]

Cyprian also pointed to Christ's teaching in Matthew 7:9–11.[79] While Christ was talking about prayer, Cyprian took the description of God as a loving Father as an example of mercy for Christians to follow. Cyprian thus said that the church should not withhold peace from those who repented.[80] In other words, when people truly repented, then they should be allowed back into the church, regardless of how egregious the sin was.

After studying Scripture, the council also decided to distinguish two groups of *lapsi:* the *sacrificati* (those who had sacrificed to idols) and the *libellatici* (those who had obtained a certificate without sacrificing).[81] The church should not treat the two groups the same.[82] Cyprian hoped the *libellatici* would repent and lament their pollution, with the result that the church would accept them back as members relatively quickly. Otherwise, the *libellatici* could easily be tempted to join the schismatics, thus committing a worse sin.[83]

The council's decision to allow the *lapsi* back into the church was also influenced by their fear that another persecution would soon follow from Gallus (r. 251–253), so they wanted to strengthen all Christians for the upcoming fight. However, the

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[78] "Remitto omnia, multa dissimulo studio et uoto colligendae fraternitatis…Amplector prompta et plena dilectione cum paenitentia reuertentes, peccatum suum satisfactione humili et simplici confitentes." Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.16.3.468–69, 472–74.

[79] "What man is there among you who, if his son should ask for bread, would hand him a stone, or if he should ask for a fish would hand him a snake? If you, then, evil as you are, know how to give good gifts to your sons, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him" (Matt 7:9–11). Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.23.1.

[80] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.23.

[81] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.13–18. In *Epistula* 20.3.2–3, Cyprian had grouped together all the *lapsi* until a time when the bishops could come together and decide on a general policy. Later, the council of 251 subdivided the *lapsi* into the *sacrificati* and the *libellatici*, and it said they that should be treated differently. Hence, *Epistula* 55 demonstrated Cyprian's development as he wrestled with the problem of the *lapsi*, combined with the realities of the plague and the presence of two schismatic groups that held radically opposing positions.

[82] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.13.

[83] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.14–17.

council held that even for this reason churches should not grant peace with the church

and admittance to communion without the *lapsi* first demonstrating repentance with

visible sorrow because the church could not grant the forgiveness for sins. God remained

the final judge, and he would correct the church's mistakes since they lacked

omniscience:

> But the Lord is the one who will come to judge; we pass no prejudgment ourselves. If [he] finds the sinner's repentance to have been fully and satisfactorily completed, then [he] can ratify the verdict which we have determined here on earth. If, on the other hand, we have been fooled by someone's sham repentance, God, who is not mocked and who can see into the hearts of men, will pass judgement on matters which we have discerned ourselves but imperfectly, and the Lord will amend the sentence of [his] servants.[84]

In other words, the church did not forgive sin but rather gave peace to those who had

been placed outside the church because of an egregious transgression. Additionally, the

passage warned people of merely faking lamentation just to receive reconciliation with

the church because ultimately God would judge them for their false repentance. The

visible and spiritual church were connected but not the exact same thing, so tricking the

church into granting entrance did not automatically grant salvation. Contrary to this false

repentance, Trophimus had returned to the church and made satisfaction with a true

confession, sorrow, and prayer. The church was thus satisfied with him, and allowed him

back into their midst, though they never permitted him to serve as a bishop again.[85]

Trophimus needed to make satisfaction to the church for his schism; his satisfaction came

through true confession and prayer; and the effect was reunification with the church.

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[84] "Neque enim praeiudicamus domino iudicaturo quominus, si paenitentiam plenam et iustam peccatoris inuenerit, tunc ratum faciat quod a nobis fuerit hic statutum. Si uero nos aliquis paenitentiae simulation deluserit, deus qui non deridetur et qui cor hominis intuetur de his quae no minus perspeximus iudicet et seruorum sententiam dominus emendet." Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.18.292–97. Cf. G. W. Clarke, trans. and ed., *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* vol. 9, *Letters 55–66* (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 162.

[85] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.11–12.

After defending this *via media* policy, Cyprian then clarified his position on almsgiving and satisfaction.[86] Almsgiving could deliver from death, but "clearly [it is] meant not deliverance from that death which the blood of Christ has quenched once and for all…but deliverance from that death which afterwards creeps in through sin."[87] In other words, when Cyprian had spoken about almsgiving delivering people from death, he did not mean the death from which Christ's blood had once for all redeemed Christians [i.e., eternal death]. Rather, Cyprian was speaking about a death that came through sin while the person was still living [i.e., a metaphorical death, a living death]. This passage was one of the clearest examples of how he thought Christs' death atoned for all sins, restoring a person's relationship with God, and that post-baptismal works only rid the person of the filth of sin and demonstrated perseverance in the faith.[88]

Cyprian also denounced Novatian's character in *Epistula* 55. Novatian was arrogant because he dared "to do, or even imagine himself able to do, what the Lord did not allow even the apostles to do, that he should think he is able to divide the tares from the wheat."[89] In other words, Novatian did not adjudicate with humility, knowing that he could make a mistake. Instead, he judged assuming heaven would always validate his decision. If he forgave a sin, then the sin necessarily was pardoned; if he denied forgiveness, then the sin could not be absolved.[90] As an example of Novatian's poor judgment, Cyprian pointed out that Novatian held a stricter policy against the *libellatici*

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[86] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.22–23.

[87] "Et non utique ab illa morte quam semel Christi sanguinis extinxit…sed ab ea quae per delicta postmodum serpit." Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.22.1.362–64.

[88] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.22.

[89] "Ut quis aut audeat aut facere posse se credat quod ne apostolis concessit dominus, ut zizania a frumento putet se posse discernere." Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.25.1.454–56.

[90] This statement demonstrated Cyprian view of Novatian's position in the winter of 251/252 and is not a statement on what Novatian might have actually believed.

than against adulterers, even though the former transgressed out of necessity while the latter sinned from their own desires.[91]

Cyprian also excoriated Novatian for denying "the fruit of satisfaction (*satisfactionis*) and the hope of reconciliation (*pacis*)" for the *lapsi*, forming a hendiadys that equated the fruit of satisfaction with the hope of reconciliation.[92] Cyprian denounced Novatian for exhorting the *lapsi* to repent, while taking away the result of making satisfaction, which was peace with the church.[93] Cyprian ended the letter saying the Novatianists had cut off from the *lapsi* the way of grief and repentance, which prevented the fruits of repentance (*paenitentiae fructus*) that he again described as peace granted by the church.[94] He thus pleaded with the Novatianists to return to the church. God would one day condemn them, even if they died as martyrs, because they had separated from the spiritual church when they separated from the visible church.[95]

Hence, in *Epistula* 55 Cyprian exhorted those who had committed an egregious sin to make satisfaction so that they could receive the peace of the church and be welcomed back to communion. Satisfaction did not come solely through works but through true repentance, as demonstrated by visible signs of grief. Repentance not only cleansed the believer from the filth of sin, but it also allowed for the believer to receive peace with the church. Christians were reconciled with God through the work of Jesus Christ if they stayed within the church. If they departed from the church, they again became enemies of God. Salvation was reacquired through genuine sorrow and seeking

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[91] Cf. Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 22, in *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Hereafter, all citations will be given as Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 22. However, Cyprian wrote that even adulterers had hope to "make amends" (*satisfaciendi*) for their sin if they showed proper sorrow. Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.26.2.

[92] "Quod legentes scilicet et tenentes neminem putamus a fructu satisfactionis et spe pacis arcendum." Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.27.3.506–7.

[93] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.28.1.

[94] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.29.1.

[95] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.29.

to reenter the church. Hence, good works did not bring reconciliation with God nor the forgiveness of sins but rather demonstrated one's true repentance, which led to reconciliation with the church and expiation from the filth of sin.

Conclusion

Therefore, Cyprian believed that Christ's work upon the cross atoned for sin and that the truly repentant person made satisfaction for post-baptismal sins. When repentance was accompanied by lamentation and acts of apology, the regret was thought to be genuine, and the person was granted peace with the church. Scholarship concerning the connection between works and salvation in Cyprian's thought has often focused too much upon his work *De opere et eleemosynis*. However, this work was not a comprehensive investigation on the relationship between works and salvation but rather was an exhortation to Christians to do acts of mercy during a time of rampant nominalism.[96] Rich Christians (like Cyprian) especially needed to use their resources to help the Christian poor (as Cyprian did). Furthermore, in chapters one and twenty-six of that work, Cyprian gave his clearest statements that atonement (or reconciliation with God) came through Jesus Christ alone. These chapters framed his discussion in chapters two through twenty-five concerning the necessity of doing good works and almsgiving.

Scholarship has mislabeled *De opere et eleemosynis* as a comprehensive work and thus has erred in giving it too much attention, neglecting Cyprian's teaching in his other treatises and his letters. Especially after the Decian persecution, Cyprian did not emphasize works (like almsgiving). Rather, he called for signs of true repentance (especially lamentation) as the means of making satisfaction to God and receiving a

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[96] If the late date is correct, then he was exhorting for acts of mercy during the plague of 253.

renewed cleansing from sin, as well as reconciliation with the church.[97] Cyprian wrote

that reconciliation came by Jesus Christ from "his subjection to death in the victory of the

cross, by his redemption of the believer at the price of his own blood, by his

reconciliation of humanity to his God and Father."[98] By the modern definition of

atonement as reconciliation, Cyprian thus based atonement upon the cross, which took

away the guilt of sin and freed Christians from the power of sin. Expiation (or cleansing

from the stain of sins) occurred at baptism based upon Christ's work. When people

committed sin after their baptism, they retained their salvation if they repented of their

sin and sought to make amends to God and to be reconciled with the church through good

works and lamentation. Sin, however, left behind a filth. Expiation came through the

process of truly repenting and doing acts of apology for the sin.[99]

However, while Cyprian believed people should make satisfaction to God for

post-baptismal sins, Rahner rightly noted that Cyprian emphasized the ecclesiological

effects of post-baptismal sin, namely that sin separated a person from fellowship with the

church. Therefore, Cyprian talked more about the necessity of making satisfaction to be

reconciled with the church than to appease God.[100] After committing a sin, if people

remained faithful to God and the church, the sin did not separate them from fellowship

with God but merely revoked their full membership within the church: "There is nothing

that can separate the union between Christ and the [church], that is, the people who are

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[97] Bévenot, "The Sacrament of Penance," 190. Rahner even boldly said that lamentation and repentance were "completely identical" for Cyprian since lamentation served as "penance in action." Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 182–83.

[98] "Hanc gratiam Christus inpertit, hoc munus misericordiae suae tribuit subigendo mortem trophaeo crucis, redimendo credentem pretio sui sanguinis, reconciliando hominem Deo patri." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 26.515–18. Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 26. English translation came from Brent, *On the Church,* vol. 1, *Select Treatises*. Reconciliation with God might have occurred prior to baptism. Cyprian mentioned that the expiation of his heart came at baptism, but his heart had already been reconciled with God prior to that event. Cyprian, *Ad Donatum* 4.

[99] Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 171.

[100] Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 174, 194.

established within the [church] and who steadfastly and faithfully persevere in their beliefs." [101] For this reason, Cyprian focused upon reconciliation with the church when discussing satisfaction for post-baptismal sins.

Therefore, Cyprian joined the church and salvation not by connecting salvation to works but rather by maintaining that people had to persevere within the church to receive salvation, and that perseverance meant continually repenting and making satisfaction for sins.[102] While Cyprian placed great emphasis upon works, he did not believe that people could be reconciled with God by their works. Rather, works cleansed a person from the stain of post-baptismal sins and demonstrated perseverance in the faith.

In the end, *De lapsis* 36 best summarized Cyprian's view concerning works, satisfaction, and repentance:

> Let the earnestness of our repentance (*magna delinquimus*) correspond to the gravity of our sin. When the wound is so serious, let it have the exacting and prolonged treatment it needs; let the penance (*paenitentia*) do full justice to the crime. Do you think that God will be appeased (*placari*) in a moment...You must [first] beg and pray assiduously, spend the day sorrowing and the night in vigils and tears, fill every moment with weeping and lamentation; you must lie on the ground amidst clinging ashes, toss about chafing in the sackcloth of mourning...[and also] apply yourself to good deeds (*operibus*) which can wash away your sins [i.e., expiation], be constant and generous in giving alms (*eleemosynis*)...Let what remains of [your wealth] serve only to make reparations for the guilt of sin (*culpa redimatur*). Let your largess be without delay, without stint, let all your wealth be expended on the healing of your wound: let us use our goods and our riches to make Our Lord beholden to us, for He is one day to be our Judge...To him who prays with all his heart, to him who mourns with tears and sighs of true repentance (*paenitentiae*), to him who by good works of persevering charity (*continuis operibus*) pleads to the Lord for mercy on his sin—to such He can extend His mercy...He can be indulgent; He can revoke His own condemnation. Towards

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[101] "Unde ecclesiam id est plebem in ecclesia constitutam fideliter et firmiter in eo quod credidit perseuerantem nulla res separare poterit a Christo quo minus haereat semper et maneat indiuiduo dilectio." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.13.2.233–36.

[102] Rahner argued that Cyprian thought a penitent person would not know for certain whether he/she had done complete satisfaction until the final judgment. However, Cyprian did not cast any doubt upon people's eternal states unless they had separated from the church. Therefore, he did not believe that salvation was uncertain for people in the church prior to the final judgment. Rather, Christians had assurance of salvation if they continued to make satisfaction for their sins, both egregious and simple, thus demonstrating perseverance within the church. Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 180–81.

sorrow (*paenitenti*), good works (*operanti*), pleadings (*roganti*), He can show clemency and forgive; (though) He can consider what the martyrs have asked for on [the *lapsi*'s] behalf [i.e., *libelli pacis*] and what the bishops have done for them. Nay, when a man's reparation (*satisfactionibus*) is such as to touch His heart still more, when the sincerity of his pleading appeases His anger (*placauerit*) at the offence, he equips the vanquished with arms once more, and restores and reinforces the vitality whereby faith is ren ewed and can bear fruit.[103]

Repentance and acts of apology satisfied God for post-baptismal sin and allowed for reconciliation with the church. It also had a medicinal and cleansing effect for the believer. Making satisfaction often involved doing good works, but good works alone could not suffice without true repentance.

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[103] "Quam magne delinquimus, tam granditer defleamus. Alto uulnere diligens et longa medicina non desit, paenitentia crimine minor non sit. Putasne tu Deum cito posse placari…Orare oportet inpensius et rogare; diem luctu transigere, uigiliis noctes ac fletibus ducere, tempus omne lacrimosis lamentationibus occupare; stratos solo adhaerere cineri, in cilicio et sordibu uolutari…iustus operibus incumbere quibus peccata purgantur, elemosynis frequenter insistere…Ad hoc tantum profuerit quod remansit ut inde crimen et culpa redimatur; incunctanter et largiter fiat operatio, census omnis in medellam uulneris erogetur: opibus et facultatibus nostris qui de nobis iudicaturus est Dominus faeneretur…Si precem toto corde quis faciat, si ueris paenitentiae lamentis et lacrimis ingemescat, si ad ueniam delicti sui Dominum iustis et continuis operibus inflectat, miserere talium potest…Potest ille indulgentiam dare, sententiam suam potest ipse deflectere; paenitenti, operanti, roganti potest clementer ignoscere; potest in acceptum referre quidquid pro talibus et petieerint martyres et fecerint sacerdotes. Vel si quis plus eum suis satisfactionibus mouerit, si eius iram, si indignantis offensam iussta deprecation placauerit, dat ille et arma rursum quibus uictus armetur reparat et corroborat uires quibus fides instaurata uegetetur. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 35.673–76, 679–82, 684–85, 689–93; 36.697–700, 707–14. While Bévenot wrongly thought that the church for Cyprian could forgive sins, Bévenot rightly noted that divine forgiveness could not be separated from the church. Only those within the church were saved. Bévenot, *St. Cyprian*, 98–99. Campbell on the other hand misunderstood Cyprian. Campbell said this passage revealed that penance and the *libelli pacis* atoned for sin. However, Cyprian emphasized that God forgives sin on his own authority. Penance and the *libelli pacis* did not automatically grant pardon. Campbell, *The Complete Works,* 71.

PART 3

THE SACRAMENTS AND SALVATION

CHAPTER 6

BAPTISM, THE CHURCH, AND SALVATION

Introduction

The virtual wedding of the spiritual and visible church in Cyprian's thought

led him to see works as a demonstration of salvation, but they did not merit salvation

because for Cyprian the visible and spiritual church were not the same thing. *Lapsi* might

gain re-entry into the church by giving alms and feigning repentance, but God would

judge the person for their apostasy. Similarly, Cyprian's vision of the spiritual and visible

church as united shaped his understanding of the sacraments. The union of the spiritual

and visible church especially meant for Cyprian that baptism had to be the seminal

moment of the Christian life, and the sacrament had to be done within the true church to

be valid. He held the event in such esteem that people's lives prior to their baptisms were

of little consequence. In fact, when the deacon Pontus wrote a biography on Cyprian just

after his martyrdom, Pontius began with Cyprian's baptism since life prior to that

moment held little significance for Christians of the mid-third century. Pontus wrote:

> At what point, then, shall I begin—from what direction shall I approach the
> description of [Cyprian's] goodness, except from the beginning of his faith and from
> his heavenly birth? Inasmuch as the doings of a man of God should not be reckoned
> from any point except from the time that he was born of God [i.e., baptism].[1]

Therefore, Cyprian did not take lightly the theological differences between

himself and Stephen concerning baptism. Since the Roman church saw the baptismal rites

within schismatic churches as valid but not efficacious, they traditionally only laid hands

upon people who came from those churches into the true church. The baptism of the

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[1] Pontius of Carthage, *Vita et passio Cypriani* 2, in *The Complete Works of Saint Cyprian of Carthage*, ed. Phillip Campbell (Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing, 2013), 3.

former heretic or schismatic became efficacious when a true bishop laid his hands upon them. In contrast to this practice, most churches of North Africa and Asia Minor baptized those who had gone through baptismal rites in heretical or schismatic churches because they did not believe heretics or schismatics could perform valid baptisms.[2]

When Stephen became bishop of Rome (bishop 254–257), he tried to impose the Roman tradition upon churches in Asia Minor and North Africa, to the point that he broke fellowship with some churches in Asia Minor for not following his directives.[3] Cyprian not only protested Stephen's actions as stepping outside his sphere of authority, but he also argued against the very idea of seeing heretical and schismatic baptisms as valid. Ultimately, Stephen and Cyprian did not settle their disagreement before both were martyred during the Valerian persecution (Stephen in 257 and Cyprian in 258). Therefore, while Cyprian did not write a treatise on baptism, his later letters dealt heavily with the

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[2] Thomas M. Finn said that Cyprian wrote *Epistulae* 69–75 against Novatianists who were traveling to North Africa from Rome. Thomas M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 129. However, Karl Shuve rightly pointed out that Cyprian primarily wrote against the laxist schism that originated in Carthage. In fact, only his letters to Magnus and Jubaianus dealt specifically with Novatianists. The other letters focused on combatting baptism in laxist churches. Karl Shuve, "Cyprian of Carthage's Writings from the Rebaptism Controversy: Two Revisionary Proposals Reconsidered," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 61, no. 2 (October 2010): 627–43.

[3] While found among Cyprian's corpus, *Epistula* 75 was written to Cyprian from Firmilianus, one of the bishops in Asia Minor with whom Stephen disfellowshipped. Cyprian, *Epistula* 75. A synodal roll says that Stephen held a Roman council that decided to break fellowship with Cyprian and the other African bishops over their rejection of the baptismal rites within heretical and schismatic churches at the Carthaginian council of 256. However, no other records mention this Roman council. A. Cleveland Coxe, ed. and trans, *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; American ed., repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 653. Parts of this chapter juxtaposes the North African view of baptism held by Cyprian with the Roman position on the sacrament, as exemplified by Stephen. However, Bévenot and Van de Beek rightly pointed out that nuisances existed between bishops within each tradition. Maurice Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform in the Rebaptism Controversy," *Heythrop Journal* 19 (1978): 133; Abraham van de Beek, "Cyprian on Baptism," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, ed. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010): 150–53. Bévenot and Dunn argued that Cyprian did not fully understand Stephen's position and instead quoted him out of context. They, however, rested their claim upon silence and speculation. Since Stephen's letters no longer are extant, Cyprian might have been portraying him accurately. Additionally, *De rebaptimate* cannot be taken as portraying Stephen's view perfectly since he did not write it. Moreover, Cyprian usually interpreted Scripture within its literary context, so proof-texting Stephen would have worked against his normal reading patterns. Despite the weaknesses of their argument, this dissertation explores Cyprian's thought, so this chapter does not attempt to reconstruct Stephen's view but rather presents his views as Cyprian depicted them. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 137; Geoffrey D. Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination in the African Response to the 'Rebaptism' Crisis: Cyprian of Carthage's Synod of Spring 256," *Theological Studies* 62, no. 2 (May 2006): 265.

issue. Ultimately, these letters reveal Cyprian's convictions that schismatics and heretics could not perform baptisms because the sacrament was linked to the saving work of the Holy Spirit within the spiritual church, and the limits of the spiritual church were marked by the limits of the visible church.

Baptism and Salvation

While catechists were technically Christians since they could die as martyrs prior to receiving baptism, for Cyprian baptism formally began the Christian life. He drew from 1 Peter 3:20–21: "In the ark of Noah a very few men (eight souls all told) were saved by water. And it is in just the same manner that baptism will save you also."[4] Cyprian interpreted this passage ecclesiologically so that salvation only came to those who sought baptism within the true church.[5] Since he believed salvation formally started at baptism, he was willing to call it "the bath of life and baptism of salvation" (*lauacri uitalis et salutaris baptismi*), "faithful, saving, and holy"(*fidelis et salutaris et sancta*), "waters of regeneration" (*lauacrum regenerationis*), and "waters of salvation" (*aqua salutari*).[6] By this nomenclature, he meant that Christ's work upon the cross was formally applied at baptism, marking the official time when a person's sins were forgiven.[7] For

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[4] "In carca Noe pauci, id est octo animae hominum saluae factae sunt per aquam, quod et uos similiter saluos faciet baptisma." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.11.3.235–37. Cf. *Epistula* 69.2.2. Cyprian quoted this passage to combat Stephen, whom Cyprian believed sat in Peter's seat but was contradicting the apostle's teaching. G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* vol. 4, (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 246. See *A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian* 2–6, which contains a more allegorical interpretation of Noah's Ark in an attempt to connect the Ark to the church. The treatise was written by an anonymous bishop in Latin North Africa around 255.

[5] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.11.3.

[6] Cyprian, *De bono patientiae* 6; *Epistula* 69.12.1.254; 73.3.1.53; 73.11.2.187; 74.5.4.104–5. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.65; *De lapsis* 13; *Epistula* 19.2.3; 55.3.2–4.3; 57.4.3–4; 69.15.2; 73.19.3, 24.3; also, *A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian* 3 and Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 357–59. Cyprian drew from the language of Titus 3:5, which he interpreted as referring to baptism: "[Jesus Christ] saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to [his] own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (ESV).

[7] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.7.

this reason, Cyprian chastised Stephen and those who held the Roman position. They were withholding the true baptism of the church from those who needed salvation.[8]

The Christian life began at baptism because several salvific events occurred at that time. First of all, Christians put on Jesus Christ at baptism, so that only after baptism did they then have the power to imitate him.[9] Cyprian wrote, "And because [at] baptism remission of sins is granted once for all [time], constant and ceaseless labor, following the likeness of baptism, [is befitting of Christians]."[10] He saw a type of Jesus Christ in the manna of Exodus 16 so that Christ gave himself completely and equally to all who received valid baptisms.[11] Similarly, Cyprian saw the sun as a type of the Son, so that the Son of God gave himself equally and fully to all at a valid baptism, just as the sun shone its light upon all.[12]

Additionally, victory over demonic forces occurred at baptism. During the baptismal rite, the Holy Spirit came to indwell the believer, and demons could not remain where the Spirit was dwelling because the Spirit is God.[13] Cyprian interpreted Paul's mention of the crossing of the Israelites over the Red Sea as a type for baptism (1 Cor

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[8] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 11; *Epistula* 73.20. Bévenot rightly stated that Cyprian did not confront Stephen for religio-political reasons. Cyprian was not trying to enhance his own standing within the church, nor did he believe he had the authority to order Stephen. Rather, Cyprian thought Stephen's position had serious pastoral and theological problems that needed to be addressed. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 124, 133.

[9] Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 12; *De bono patientiae* 9; *De habitu virginum* 23; *De opere et eleemosynis* 2; *De zelo et livore* 12–14; *Epistula* 13.5; 66.5.2. Cf. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 124; Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 360–61; John D. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ: The Leader of the Eucharist in Salvation History according to Cyprian of Carthage* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 161–62; Van de Beek, "Cyprian on Baptism," 144.

[10] "Et quia semel in baptismo remissa peccatorum datur, adsidua et iugis operatio baptismi instar imitate Dei rursus indulgentiam largiatur." Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis* 2.30–32.

[11] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.14.1.

[12] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.14.1. The parable of the owner and works also illustrated this principle for Cyprian (Matt 20). Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.14.2.

[13] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.15.2. Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 359–60; Van de Beek, "Cyprian on Baptism," 144.

10).[14] Even as Pharaoh maintained power over the Israelites until he was washed away by the Red Sea, so do demonic forces maintain power over people until their baptism. Cyprian also argued for this effect of baptism by pointing to such natural phenomena as serpents and scorpions losing their ability to harm when cast into water. As natural types for demons, this occurrence typified the spiritual reality that demons lost their control over people when they went through baptism.[15] Moreover, Cyprian had seen unbaptized people tormented by spirits. Sometimes exorcists could not remove these demons, or they could remove them only temporarily. However, after baptism, those people were never bothered by demons again.[16] Possibly drawing from Minucius Felix (died c. 250), Cyprian saw demonic forces as a major cause of illnesses.[17] Thus, he also claimed that he had seen people healed by going through baptism, and these healings served as further proof that at baptism a person became freed from demonic forces.[18] In fact, they remained freed, unless they returned to their old sins.[19]

Cyprian also understood baptism as typifying a spiritual bath so that the Holy Spirit expiated sin at that moment.[20] Cyprian drew this idea from Ephesians 5:25–26, which he quoted as "Christ loved the [church] and [he] gave [himself] up for her so that

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[14] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.15.1. "I would not have you ignorant, my brothers, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized in Moses both in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor 10:1–2). "All these things came to pass as symbols for us" (1 Cor 10:6). Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 1.4.

[15] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.15.2.

[16] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.15.2–16.1.

[17] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.15–16. Cf. Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 27.2.

[18] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.16.1.

[19] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.16.1. People also became ill through the natural degeneration of the world, regardless of their faith, so Cyprian did not hold to an early version of the Prosperity Gospel.

[20] Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.2.3; 69.15.2; cf. Tertullian, *De baptismo* 4. Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 358; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine: Some Historical Prolegomena* (New Haven, CT: Yale, University Press, 1969), 82–85.

[he] might sanctify her, washing and cleansing her by water."[21] Cyprian and the

Carthaginian council of 254 argued against the validity of schismatic and heretical

baptisms partly by assuming that sin was expiated during the sacrament: "Now if it is to

be possible for water to clean away by its baptismal washing the sins of a man who is

being baptized, then it is essential that that water should first be cleansed and sanctified

by a bishop."[22] The baptismal rite of the heretical and schismatic churches had the

opposite effect, so that those who went through a baptismal rite in those churches further

polluted themselves.[23] Baptism into the true church expiated the filth of even that

blemish.[24] During a council in the spring of 256, Cyprian and other North African bishops

reiterated that the cleansing of sin occurred at baptism within the true church. Those who

had gone through the ceremony outside the genuine church needed true baptism for their

sins to be expiated.[25]

Therefore, baptism was linked to the Trinity. Salvation came from the Father

and was applied by the Holy Spirit at baptism upon the basis of the Son's work. Baptism

in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit symbolized that the Trinity together

granted the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 28:19).[26] While the Marcionites were baptizing

in name of Jesus Christ, true Christians administered the sacrament in the name of the

Trinity because they were saved by the Trinity and not just by Christ.[27] Cyprian wrote,

"Baptism, we conclude, cannot be common to us and to heretics, for we have in common

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[21] "Christus dilexit ecclesiam et se ipsum tradidit pro ea, u team sanctificaret purgans eam lauacro aquae." Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.2.3.57–58.

[22] "Oportet uero mundari et sanctificari aquam prius a sacerdote, ut possit baptismo suo peccata hominis qui baptizatur abluere." Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.1.3.29–31. Cf. *Epistula* 74.5–6.

[23] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.16.2; 73.21.2; 74.2.1.

[24] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.2.3.

[25] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.1.2.

[26] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.18.3.

[27] Cyprian, *Epistula* 27.3.3.

with them neither God the Father nor Christ the Son nor the Holy Spirit nor faith nor [church] itself."[28] For true baptism to occur, a person had to have proper belief concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[29] While heretics might baptize in the name of Jesus Christ, they were blaspheming the Trinitarian God, so their baptism necessarily could not be valid.[30] Cyprian was certain that God would cast some people found within the church into eternal fire because they lacked proper belief in the Trinity.[31] In other words, even those who went through a baptismal rite within the true church necessarily had to profess a proper belief in the Trinitarian God to be saved because the visible and spiritual church were connected but not the same thing.

For these reasons, Cyprian saw Stephen's position as illogical. At baptism the Holy Spirit applied the forgiveness and expiation of sins to new believers, as well as regenerating them, giving them a spiritual birth.[32] If heretics and schismatics could perform valid baptisms, then they had received salvation in full and did not need the addition of laying on hands.[33] Cyprian's opponents said that heretics and schismatics

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[28] "Quare baptism nobis et haaereticis commune esse non potest, cum quibus nec pater deus nec filius Christus nec sanctus spiritus nec fides nec pater deus nec filius Christus nec sanctus spiritus nec fides nec ecclesia ipsa communis est." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.21.3.383–86.

[29] Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 124.

[30] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.21.3; 74.5.1, 7.3.

[31] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.10.3, 21.3.

[32] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.25, 65; *De Dominica oratione* 12; *De habitu virginum* 23; *De opere et eleemosynis* 2; *Epistula* 13.5; 27.3.3; 62.2.2; 63.8.1; 64.5.2; 69.1.1, 2.2, 8.3, 13.1; 73.12.1; 74.5.4, 7.3. Cf. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 154, 161. Cf. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 124; Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 354; David Paull Knievim, "Christ, the Gospel, and the Church: The Church's Participation in the Salvation of Its Members," (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 15.

[33] Differences existed between the Roman and the Carthaginian baptismal rites, and these variations were one reason Stephen and Cyprian differed over heretical and schismatic baptisms. *De rebaptismate* countered Cyprian's arguments by saying that baptism by itself could never confer complete salvation, even if done within the church. For salvation to occur, baptism needed to be supplemented with the laying of hands, which fixed any errors that occurred in the baptismal rite, whether great or little. *De rebaptismate* 6–7, 10–15. In Rome, the laying of hands was a separate ritual that did not always occur right after baptism. In Carthage, hands were laid upon the new believer immediately after the immersion, making it part of the baptismal ceremony. Thus, unlike Cyprian who looked at the baptismal rite as a unified whole and saw the laying of hands as part of that sacrament, Stephen's position divided Christian initiation into several rites so that even baptisms within the church were not efficacious until episcopal hands were laid on the new believer. Additionally, by seeing initiation into the church as a sequence of rituals rather than as

offered valid baptisms that instilled a measure of salvation that needed to be completed

by entering the church and having the bishop lay his hands on the former heretic or

schismatic.[34] Cyprian argued against the validity of baptism outside the true church by

saying that the Holy Spirit gives himself and salvation completely and equally to all who

receive a valid baptism.

For these reasons, Cyprian also argued for infant baptism.[35] Fidus (probably a

bishop of western Africa) sent a letter to the other bishops of North Africa stating that he

believed they should wait until infants were eight days old to administer baptism.[36]

Tertullian had argued that the church should not baptize children until they were old

enough to ask for salvation and commit to obey Christ.[37] Fidus, however, was not arguing

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one united ceremony, Stephen could claim that heretics and schismatics had certain valid rites and certain invalid ones, whereas Cyprian could only claim the whole package as valid or invalid. Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination," 264–65, 272; Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 354; J. Ysebaert, "L'Imposition des Mains, Rite de Reconciliation," *La Maison-Dieu* 90 (1967): 101–2. Bévenot similarly said that Cyprian understood the laying of hands as part of the baptismal rite and not as a separate ritual. Bévenot also claimed that Cyprian did not fully develop his thoughts. For Cyprian, the laying of hands at baptism was the point at which the Holy Spirit indwelled a person. According to Bévenot, the bishops of that time might have laid hands on people to do exorcisms and at the end of the reconciliation process, but Cyprian was more following tradition than theological application. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 125–30, 140. Rahner, however, rightly pointed out that Cyprian did not need the laying of hands to mean only the impartation of the Spirit. The same act could have had different meanings and effects when used in different ceremonies. Karl Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 156–71. Dunn also disagreed with Bévenot. Cyprian did not confuse the two imposition of hands. Rather, he did not accept Stephen's premise that they were laying their hands on the heretics and schismatics to reconcile them with the church; rather they were initiating them into the church for the first time. Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination," 265n40. However, if Dunn was correct, then the Roman tradition held that the laying of hands at baptism was also valid for schismatics and heretics. They just needed to be reconciled with the church, since they had already received initiation into it. Cyprian believed that the Roman position logically led to this conclusion, but he also thought that Roman Christians found this notion repulsive. According to *De rebaptismate,* the Roman tradition help that heretics and schismatics had valid baptisms, but they did not have the Holy Spirit and had not yet received initiation into the church. *De rebaptismate* 10.

[34] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.14, 16. Cyprian wrote that people could diminish the grace and impact of the Spirit given at baptism through their personal conduct, but Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit gave themselves equally to all. Cyprian illustrated this notion by drawing from the parable of the sower, who sows his seeds equally upon all soil, but the soil changes the results (Matt 13). Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.14.2.

[35] Ferguson divided the baptismal debates of the 250s into three controversies concerning infant, sickbed, and schismatic baptisms. While Cyprian talked about infant and sickbed baptisms, Ferguson exaggerated when he placed them alongside the issue of schismatic baptism because Cyprian only dealt with these topics in a couple of letters. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 351.

[36] Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.2.1. Cf. G. W. Clarke, "Cyprian's Epistle 64 and the Kissing of Feet in Baptism," *Harvard Theological Review* 66, no. 1 (January 1973): 147–48.

[37] Tertullian, *De baptismo* 18.

against infant baptism but only against baptizing infants immediately after their birth. His letter is lost, and Cyprian's *Epistula* 64 did not state the details of Fidus' argument other than that he argued for circumcision as a type for baptism. The Jews had to wait eight days before circumcision because infants were unclean before then. Likewise, the church needed to wait eight days to baptize infants because they were unclean the first seven days.[38] While most Christians in North Africa were not Jewish, some communities were influenced by various Jewish ideas and practices.[39] Additionally, Fidus followed a hermeneutical approach to Scripture that mirrored the one taken by Cyprian. Fidus saw much ecclesiological typology in the Old Testament, which easily allowed him to equate circumcision with baptism.[40] However, at a council in Carthage during the spring of 252, Cyprian and the other bishops of North Africa rejected Fidus' call to forestall baptism. While infants had inherited the sin of Adam, they were pure from committing any sins of their own. Therefore, they could receive baptism immediately after birth.[41]

To make this argument, Cyprian drew from 2 Kings 4, where Elisha resurrected the Shulammite's son. To perform this miracle, Elisha spread his body over the child face-to-face, limb-to-limb. Cyprian believed that the text should not be interpreted plainly since an adult could not literally spread himself over a child limb-to-limb. Therefore, Cyprian believed the passage held a spiritual meaning for the church, namely that all people receive the Holy Spirit in equal measure at baptism, regardless of

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[38] Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.2.1.

[39] Clarke, "Cyprian's Epistle 64," 147–48; *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 3:301–5.

[40] Van de Beek argued that Cyprian interpreted the old covenant as fulfilled only in Jesus Christ, so Cyprian led the council to form a united front against Fidus' idea of baptism. However, Van de Beek missed the numerous times Cyprian interpreted the old covenant as ecclesiological typology. Therefore, Cyprian probably called the council to discuss the issue of how to interpret circumcision in the Old Testament rather than to form a united front against Fidus' hermeneutical approach to the Old Testament. Van de Beek, "Cyprian on Baptism," 146–48.

[41] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 9; *Epistula* 64.2.1, 5.2–6.2. Cf. Pier Franco Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin: Augustine and the Pre-Augustinian Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 142–58; Hugo Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchgen* (Bonn, Germany: A. Marcus and E. Weber, 1926), 79–82.

their age. The church should thus not deny baptism to even the youngest infant, who could receive the same salvific benefits of baptism as an adult and would remain saved if he/she persevered in the faith and in the church.[42] Cyprian also argued against seeing circumcision as a type for baptism. The eight days signified that Jesus Christ would rise again on the eighth day, making it the Lord's day for worship under the new covenant.[43] Finally, Fidus had argued practically that many people found the notion of kissing a newborn repugnant.[44] Since the baptismal rite often included a kiss, baptism should wait a few days until the baby was literally clean.[45] In response, Cyprian wrote that the literal uncleanliness of newborns should not hinder the bishop from baptizing them because he should never find a baby repugnant. Cyprian saw infants as just having come from the hands of God, so kissing a young child was symbolic of kissing those divine hands.[46] Therefore, Cyprian and the Carthaginian council ruled that infants should be baptized.

Cyprian's view of baptism also led him to denounce Lucianus for writing *libelli pacis* for large groups of *lapsi* in the name of confessors and martyrs.[47] Fahey was convinced that in *Epistula* 27 Cyprian was denouncing Lucianus for giving *libelli pacis*

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[42] Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.3. Cf. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 587. Pelikan rightly admitted that certain theologians prior to Cyprian had expounded a nascent view of original sin, and Pelikan argued well that Cyprian first connected the expiation of that sin to baptism, an idea that Augustine later developed. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine,* 87. Cf. Origen of Alexandria, *Homiliae super Lucam* 14.5, in Origen of Alexandria, *Homilies on Luke* (1996; repr., trans. Joseph T. Lienhard, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009).

[43] Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.4.3; cf. *Ad Quirinum* 1.8–12, 20–21. Cf. Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 85–87.

[44] For a discussion of this argument and Cyprian's response, see Clarke, "Cyprian's Epistle 64," 147–52.

[45] Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.4.1. In Cyprian's day, newborn babies were often merely wrapped in clothes first and washed later. Clarke, "Cyprian's Epistle 64," 151. Pier Franco Beatrice claimed that this repugnance came not so much from hygiene but more so from the idea that the contagion of concupiscence was found primarily in the feet. However, Cyprian never mentioned this belief in his writings, even in *Epistula* 64, where he most clearly disclosed his acceptance of original sin. Pier Franco Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin: Augustine and the Pre-Augustinian Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 156n48.

[46] Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.4.

[47] Cyprian, *Epistula* 27.

too hastily.[48] However, Cyprian did not merely say that Lucianus should not grant the letters too hastily. Rather, Cyprian argued that Lucianus and others were giving the letters too much authority, essentially handing the martyrs and confessors the divine prerogative to pardon sins. Since Lucianus was granting *libelli pacis* to whole groups of people, many unrepentant people were demanding (and sometimes threatening) that the bishops grant them reconciliation with the church. These unremorseful church members thought they had received the forgiveness of sins according to the works of the confessors and martyrs, merit which they believed had been transferred to them via the *libelli pacis*. Cyprian denounced such a notion. People were baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because only the Trinitarian God could grant indulgence for sin. Therefore, people could not rely upon the works of the martyrs and confessors for pardon because after baptism the forgiveness of sins still only came from God. Elevating the *libelli pacis* too high was equivalent to proclaiming another gospel.[49] Since these Christians were denying that only God could forgive sins, the gospel was at stake in this debate. Hence, Cyprian wrote that he had to stand firm on his position that God initially forgave sins at baptism and that God alone continued to forgive sins after baptism.[50]

Cyprian's opponents were arguing against his understanding of baptism by pointing to catechumens (who had not received baptism yet) or those seriously ill (too ill to be immersed in water).[51] Logically, if salvation was applied at baptism, then these

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[48] Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 472.

[49] Cyprian, *Epistula* 27.3.3. "I am astonished that in this way you are so quickly turning away to another gospel from Him who has called you to grace. But there is in fact no other gospel; all that there is, are some people who are confusing you and whose aim is to pervert the gospel of Christ. But should we or should an angel from heaven preach a different message from what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. We have already declared it—and now I say it a second time: should anyone preach to you a different message from what you have received, let him be accursed" (Gal 1:6–9). Cf. *Epistula* 63.10.

[50] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.12.1, 20.1.

[51] Cf. *De rebaptismate* 11. According to Clarke, Cyprian was arguing that in some situations people could receive baptism by sprinkling rather than pouring. Clarke denied that the Carthaginian church immersed believers at baptism. He based his claim upon the baptisteries uncovered in North Africa that were waist deep, which he argued were too shallow for immersion. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* 4:186. Clarke presented a weak argument considering most baptisteries in modern Baptist churches are

people would die unsaved, even if they professed Jesus Christ during persecution.[52] In response, Cyprian wrote, "Blessings that come from God cannot in any part be maimed or emasculated; in the case where there is complete and total faith on the parts of giver and receiver alike, there cannot possibly occur any diminution in the draught drawn from God's bounteous flow."[53] In other words, catechumens and those too sick for immersion would receive salvation if they died because they held a personal faith that included holding to primary doctrine concerning Jesus Christ and the Trinitarian nature of God.

Cyprian then juxtaposed the spiritual washing that came at baptism compared to the physical washing at a normal bath. Oftentimes Greco-Romans went to a bathhouse, which cleansed them in three stages: caldarium (steam room), tepidarium (lukewarm bath), and frigidarium (cold-water bath). However, they sometimes bathed with soap.

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only thigh deep. Additionally, Cyprian described baptism as dipping (*Epistula* 71.1.1; 70.2.3; 73.21.2). Ferguson also argued against Clarke by pointing out that Cyprian had to justify baptism by affusion for those on their deathbeds, and Cyprian argued against his opponents by drawing from secular bathing practices that used full immersion. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 356n32. In contrast to Clarke, Bévenot and Dunn claimed baptism came by immersion. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 124; Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination," 265n35. Similarly, Victor Saxer argued for a multi-faceted baptismal rite that included a blessing of the water, renunciation of the devil, triple immersion, anointing, laying of hands, consignation, and a kiss of peace. He thus argued that Cyprian held to a trine immersion. However, while Cyprian baptized in the name of the triune God, Cyprian never explicitly stated whether he baptized once or thrice. Victor Saxer, *La vie liturgique et quotidienne à Carthage vers le milieu du IIIe siècle: Le temoignage de S. Cyprien et ses contemporains d'Afrique* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Christiana, 1969), 106–44. Ferguson largely followed Saxer and his description of the baptismal ceremony in Cyprian's Carthage. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 351–55. Finn did not follow Saxer's argument but rather reduced the baptismal rite to a renunciation of the world, a consecration of the baptismal waters, a Trinitarian baptismal formula, and the imposition of hands. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate*, 131. In contrast, although mentioning Saxer, Laurance admitted that some of Saxer's study rested upon speculation because Cyprian did not describe the baptismal rite of his church in detail but focused upon immersion and the laying of hands as the two most important parts of the rite. However, Laurance still argued for the bishop as a type of Christ partly based upon Saxer's description of the baptismal rite. Since Cyprian believed Christians were soldiers of Jesus Christ, Laurance believed the administrator of baptism must have traced a cross on the new believer's forehead. Laurance also argued that, since Cyprian believed Christians put on Christ at baptism, then the baptismal rite of Carthage necessarily had to include the vesting of the newly baptized believer. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 153–57, 162–68, 178–79. While Cyprian mentioned a sign of the Lord (*signaculo dominico*) at the baptismal rite once (*Ad Quirinum* 1.8), he did not indicate what that sign was or what it meant. Laurance's argument required every occurrence of *signa* in Cyprian's writings to refer to this one act. Additionally, Cyprian did not talk about vesting the newly baptized, and someone does not need to include vestment in their baptismal rite to believe Christians have put on Jesus Christ.

[52] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.12; 73.22.1.

[53] "Nos, quantum concipit mediocritas nostra, aestimamus in nullo mutilari et debilitari posse beneficia diuina nec minus aliquid illic posse contigere, ubi plena et tota fide et dantis et sumentis accipitur quod de diuinis muneribus hauritur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.12.2.257–261. Cf. 73.22.2

Either way, Cyprian argued that just as merely rinsing oneself with water was not enough to cleanse physically, so a baptismal rite alone could not expiate sin if the person being baptized did not have faith: "whereas the heart of the believer is washed, and the soul of man is cleansed by quite different means—by the merits of faith."[54] While normally salvation was applied at baptism, people in a sense were already saved prior to the ceremony because of their faith. Contrary to heretics and schismatics, catechumens and the sick were intending to receive baptism by immersion into the true church but were prevented from doing so due to their deaths.

Regarding a person on their deathbed, Cyprian maintained that such people could receive a valid baptism through sprinkling. Some people in Carthage had created a category for those who had received baptism by sprinkling while on what they thought were their deathbeds. If they recovered, these people were called *clinici* (sickbed ones) and were not considered fully Christian by other church members, since they had received a baptism by sprinkling rather than through immersion. Cyprian argued against this sub-Christian category by claiming it came more from the writings of Greek physicians like Hippocrates and Soranus. Scripture never uses the term *clinici*.[55] Cyprian thus chastised his opponents for making such members of his church sub-Christians solely because extenuating circumstances had prevented them from receiving baptism through the ideal mode of immersion.[56] In fact, when these seriously ill people recovered,

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[54] "Aliter pectus credentis abluitur, aliter mens hominis per fidei merita mundatur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.12.2.265–66.

[55] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.13. Cyprian's opponents were saying that Christians who had received a baptism by sprinkling on their supposed deathbeds had only received a partial salvation and gift of the Holy Spirit. Cyprian countered that they had received a fully valid baptism because the Spirit never gives partial salvation to anyone. Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.14. Because of this response, Réveillaud claimed scholarship should call this debate the pneumatological controversy rather than the baptismal controversy. However, while the work of the Holy Spirit was a major part of Cyprian's understanding of baptism, Réveillaud deemphasized the connection baptism also had to the church. M. Réveillaud, "Note pour une Pneumatologie Cyprienne." *Studia Patristica* 6 (1962): 181.

[56] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.12. Cyprian said that, while his opponents were demeaning the *clinici* within the church, his adversaries were at the same time exalting heretics and schismatics by arguing for the validity of their baptisms done outside the church. Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.16.2.

Cyprian stated that they should not go through the baptismal rite again just to be immersed. Christians only have one baptism, and the previously sick had already received a valid baptism while on their supposed deathbed.[57] The mode of sprinkling did not invalidate the baptismal rite. Cyprian did not draw from any New Testament passages to argue for the validity of sprinkling, but he did reference the paralytic of John 5. Christ forgave his sins even though he could not physically walk and thus receive baptism. By forgiving the man's sins, Jesus indicated that those physically unable to be immersed were still saved based upon their faith. Thus, they did not need full immersion for their baptismal rites to qualify.[58]

However, Cyprian also defended his stance by quoting Old Testament passages, thus illustrating well how he often drew from the Old Testament to justify New Testament practices.[59] In Ezekiel 36:25–26, God had promised Israel that he would cleanse them from the sin of idolatry and give them a new heart and spirit through sprinkling clean water over them. Cyprian interpreted this passage ecclesiology so that it pointed to baptism and how it could be administered through sprinkling and did not require immersion.[60] Likewise, Numbers 19 detailed a purification ritual under the old covenant that included the sprinkling of water. By again seeing ritual purity under the old covenant as a type for spiritual purity under the new covenant, Cyprian cited this passage to prove that baptism could occur by sprinkling in special situations. The baptism just had to be performed by the church, and the new believer had to hold proper faith.[61]

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[57] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.13.3.

[58] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.13.2.

[59] Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:187.

[60] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.12.3. "I shall sprinkle over you clean water, and from all your uncleanness and from all your idolatry you will be cleansed. And I shall cleanse you, and give to you a new heart, and a new spirit I shall give within you" (Ezek 36:25–26). Cf. *Epistula* 70.1.

[61] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.12.3. "And the man, too, who has been unclean until evening shall be purified on the third and on the seventh day, and he will be cleansed. But if he has not been purified on the third and on the seventh day, he will not be cleansed, and his soul will be banished beyond the boundaries of Israel, for the water of sprinkling has not been sprinkled over him (Num 19:8). "And the Lord spoke to

For unbaptized catechumens, if they were martyred, then their deaths served as a substitute for baptism because at martyrdom they received baptism in blood rather than in water.[62] Cyprian pointed to the thief upon the cross whom Jesus Christ forgave as an example of someone who received a baptism of blood in Scripture (Luke 23:43).[63] Cyprian also took Christ's words in Luke 12:50 ("I have a baptism to be baptized with" ESV) ecclesiologically. Cyprian believed Christ was talking about receiving his own baptism of blood at his passion.[64] In fact, Laurance has argued that Cyprian thought a baptism by blood was more glorious than a baptism by water because it allowed the person to become a type of Christ.[65] Laurance rightly argued that martyrdom for Cyprian was a way to imitate of Jesus Christ. However, Cyprian elevated martyrdom as a more glorious baptism because at martyrdom a person obtained complete sanctification immediately, while at a traditional baptism a person only received initial sanctification.[66]

Some of Cyprian's contemporaries also complained that his view condemned those who came from heretical and schismatic churches but had not received baptism because their bishops followed the Roman tradition.[67] Cyprian responded that those who

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Moses saying: 'Take the Levites from out of the midst of the children of Israel and purify them. And this is what you shall do to them to purify them. You shall sprinkle over them the water of purification" (Num 8). "The water of sprinkling is a purification" (Num 19:9).

[62] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.22.2. While catechumens could receive a baptism by blood if killed during persecution, schismatics and heretics could not since they were outside the church and were not seeking baptism. Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 24. Cf. *De rebaptismate* 12–14; Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 360.

[63] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.22.2.

[64] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.22.2.

[65] Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 183–84.

[66] Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* pref.4; *Epistula* 73.22.2.

[67] Cyprian did not say where he heard this criticism. Attempting to discern the source of each argument has remained nearly impossible for scholarship. Some critique came from Stephen, but Cyprian also heard protests from the anonymous *De rebaptismate*. Additionally, opposition came verbally, not just in writing. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 133.

stubbornly resisted undergoing baptism would not receive salvation.[68] However, God would have mercy and grant salvation to those who would have been baptized but were innocently obeying their bishops in not receiving the sacrament.[69] God would judge the bishops for leading these people into error, but he would save those misled by their ecclesial leaders based upon their faith and desire to obey God.[70] In other words, while the visible church established the boundaries of the spiritual church, Cyprian did not see the two as the same. Salvation still came to people if they did not receive baptism upon the council of their pastors; these church members had the proper faith and would have received baptism if not for their bishops.

Baptism and the Church

While Cyprian articulated the connection between baptism, the Holy Spirit, and the church more fully during the baptismal controversy, he had already developed his views in earlier years. Before 255, he wrote *Epistula* 63 as a circular letter for churches in Latin-speaking North Africa. The letter contended that bishops had to mix water and wine when administrating the eucharist, contrary to those who only used water. To make his point, Cyprian maintained that Old Testament typology for the eucharist involved wine, but passages involving water were talking about baptism: "But you must realize that every time that water is named by itself in the Holy Scriptures, there is a prophetic allusion to *baptism*."[71] Isaiah had prophesied that God would one day make a way in the wilderness to bring water and that God would split open a rock to provide water for his

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[68] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.23.2.

[69] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.23.2.

[70] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.23.

[71] "Quotienscumque autem aqua sola in scripturis sanctis nominator, baptisma praedicatur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.8.1.107–8.

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people to drink (Isa 43; 48).[72] Cyprian interpreted both passages as referring to baptism. He also applied a Christological interpretation to Christ's statement in John 7: "Whoever is thirsty let him come, and whoever believes in me let him drink. As the Scripture says, 'Out of his belly will flow streams of living water.' But [he] spoke this of the Spirit whom those who believed in [him] were to receive" (John 7:37–39).[73] Since for Cyprian the split rock served as a type for Christ, the passage taught that Jesus Christ bestows the Holy Spirit upon Christians at their baptism. Therefore, Cyprian linked baptism to the Spirit and to the church before the baptismal controversy even started.

However, the election of Stephen to the see of Rome forced Cyprian to give more attention to his view of baptism. In the spring of 254, soon after Stephen's election to the episcopacy, a bishop named Magnus and later some bishops in Numidia asked Cyprian's opinion on whether they should baptize those who had previously gone through a baptismal ceremony in heretical or schismatic churches.[74] Cyprian wrote his personal response to Magnus in *Epistula* 69. A counsel at Carthage was also immediately held to discuss the issue, and the council's decision became Cyprian's *Epistula* 70, which was sent to the Numidian bishops. Both letters clearly presented the North African position that only the one, true church performed valid baptisms.

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[72] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.8.1–2. "Remember not the things of the past nor consider the things of long ago. Behold, I am making new things; they shall now spring forth and you will recognize them. I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers int eh waterless land to give water to my chosen people, my folk whom I took as my own that they might proclaim my powers." (Isa 43:18–21). "If they shall become thirsty in the desert places, he will provide them with water, he will produce it for them out of the rock; the rock will split, water will flow worth, and my people will drink" (Isa 48:21). Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 1.12.

[73] "Si quis stitit, ueniat et bibat, qui credit in me. Sicut scriptura dicit, flumina de uentre eius fluent aquae uiuae. Hoc autem dixit de spiritu quem acepturi errant qui in eum credebant." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.8.3.123–28. Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 1.22; *Epistula* 73.11.

[74] The letters do not provide enough information to determine a time of composition with any certainty. However, the date of spring 254 has the strongest case. While no other evidence exists for a council in 254 or 255 besides *Epistula* 70, discussion over schismatic baptisms was not a major issue until Stephen tried to foist the Roman tradition upon other churches, thus indicating that a council was probably held not early than spring 254, when Stephen was elected bishop. The relatively calm tone and lack of direct reference to him belies an early composition, making 254 the best option. Cf. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* 4:192–93. The location of Magnus' church remains unknown, but Clarke argued validly that Cyprian hinted that it was far from Carthage. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:177–78. The region of Numidia lay just west of Carthage in Latin North Africa.

However, the council of 254 sparked a debate that spread around the church, from western Africa and possibly Spain to the churches of Asia Minor. In the spring of 255, bishops in Mauretania thus asked Cyprian for his position on the issue.[75] He wrote *Epistula* 71 to them, and he also sent them *Epistula* 70. When the debate continued, another council was held in the spring of 256, which sent *Epistula* 72 to Stephen along with *Epistulae* 70 and 71. Contrary to Hinchliff and Young, *Epistula* 72 did not carry a fierce or condescending tone.[76] As with *Epistula* 57, Cyprian sent the letter to inform the Roman bishop of what the North African churches believed. At that point, Cyprian did not think Stephen would try to impose his views upon the other bishops.[77]

After the council, the bishop Jubaianus wrote to Cyprian to enquire about the North African position on the baptism of heretics and schismatics.[78] Cyprian responded with *Epistula* 73, his longest treatment on the subject. He sent a copy of this letter to Stephen as well. However, after having read *Epistulae* 70–72, Stephen not only elected not to read *Epistula* 73 but even refused to give Christian hospitality to the bearers of Cyprian's correspondence.[79] Instead, Stephen sent Cyprian a letter that strongly upheld the Roman position. Stephen's letter no longer remains extant, and Cyprian did not

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[75] The region of Mauretania lay in the far west of Latin North Africa, so bishops in this region could only attend the councils at Carthage with great difficulty.

[76] Peter Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1974), 91; R. G. Younge, "Cyprian of Carthage: Conversion and Influence (PhD diss. Graduate Theological Union, 1979), 98n32. Cf. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:213.

[77] Cyprian at first did not articulate the position that he believed Stephen held concerning the baptismal rites done in heretical and schismatic churches. However, Cyprian probably presumed that Stephen held to the Roman tradition, since he was the bishop of Rome, an assumption later proved correct. Eusebius wrote that the Roman tradition was ancient. Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.2, in Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History* (1999; repr., trans. with commentary by Paul L. Maier, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007). Hereafter, all citations will be given as Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.2.

[78] The location of Jubaianus' bishopric has remained completely unknown to scholarship. He might have hailed from the far west of Africa or from Spain, but any guess is pure speculation. Cyprian only hinted that it resided far from Carthage. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:221. While scholarship must keep in mind that Cyprian did not write a comprehensive, systematic treatise on baptism, nevertheless he stated that his letter to Jubaianus contained the most complete explanation of his view. *Sententiae Episcoporum LXXXVII*, 87.

[79] Cyprian, *Epistula* 75.21.1. Cf. 75.6, 24.

respond to Stephen's message directly.[80] However, Cyprian's reaction to the note and Stephen's mistreatment of the North African messengers can be found in *Epistula* 74. Cyprian sent the letter (along with *Epistula* 69–73) to the Latin North African bishop Pompeius, who had sought Cyprian's opinion concerning schismatic baptisms.[81]

Around that same time, Stephen also broke fellowship with Firmilianus of Caesarea and other bishops in Asia Minor for baptizing those who had gone through a baptismal ritual in heretical or schismatic churches. Firmilianus wrote to Cyprian to hear what position he held on the issue, so Cyprian sent *Epistulae* 69–74 to Firmilianus. The bishop of Caesarea approved of Cyprian's theology in a return letter recorded as *Epistula* 75 among Cyprian's works. By this point other North African bishops had heard of Stephen's rebuke of the North African position and his ill-treatment of Cyprian's couriers, as well as the break in fellowship with the bishops in Asia Minor. Therefore, another council was convened in Carthage during the fall of 256 to affirm unequivocally the North African position, *contra* Stephen. Cyprian read out his *Epistula* 73 to the other bishops, and the bishops ratified his theological position.[82] Thus, *Epistula* 69–75 cover the baptismal controversy. During this time, Cyprian clarified his understanding of the connections between baptism, the church, and salvation, and he revealed the position held by most other bishops in North Africa and Asia Minor.

[80] Clarke speculated that the letter might have been a short reply. If so, then Stephen would not have given Cyprian much information against which he could contend, and Stephen's letter would not have been worth preserving. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 235.

[81] Pompeius was clearly a bishop who was interested in the baptismal debate and in the proceedings of the councils at Carthage. Clarke argued cogently that the Pompeius of Cyprian's *Epistula* 74 was Pompeius of Sabrata. While a bishop of Latin North Africa, no extant evidence exists for him attending any of the Carthaginian councils. The bishop Natalis of Oea served as Pompeius' proxy at the council in the fall of 256, and Natalis recorded Pompeius' favor of Cyprian's theology. Pompeius' trip to Carthage would have entailed a 600-kilometer overland journey. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:236; *Sententiae Episcoporum LXXXVII* 84.

[82] The individual responses of the bishops were recorded as *Sententiae Episcoporum LXXXVII*, which was placed among Cyprian's body of works. A synodal roll says that, after the Carthaginian council of 256, Stephen held a Roman council that decided to break fellowship with Cyprian and the other African bishops over their rejection of the baptismal rites within heretical and schismatic churches. However, no other records mention this Roman council. A. Cleveland Coxe, ed. and trans, *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; American ed., repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 653.

Tradition and Experience

Bévenot was convinced that Cyprian departed from tradition when he said that heretics and schismatics did not administer valid baptisms.[83] However, Cyprian argue partly from tradition. He referenced a council held at Carthage around 230. In the wake of schism over Montanism, some North African bishops had declared that schismatic baptisms were invalid.[84] Cyprian's contemporary Dionysius of Alexandria (bishop 248–264) also mentioned that similar conciliar decisions had been ratified in Alexandria and throughout North Africa in the 230s at councils called to determine the validity of baptismal rites in Montanist churches.[85] Both Cyprian and Firmilianus admitted that the church had debated the issue prior to these meetings, but both bishops saw these councils as laying down the correct position.[86] Cyprian also drew his baptismal theology from Tertullian, who had admitted that the church had not settled the matter in his day but who saw heretical baptisms as invalid.[87] Therefore, Cyprian broke from the Roman tradition, but not the traditions of other Christian communities.

However, Cyprian's opponents were justifying their view from tradition as well, claiming that in the past bishops had only laid their hands upon heretics and

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[83] Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 127.

[84] This Carthaginian council was often called Agrippinus' council because he was the bishop of Carthage at that time and probably was the one who called the meeting. For works that speak about this early African council, see Augustine, *De baptismo* 4.6.8; Augustine, *De unico baptismo* 13.22 in *Sancti Aureli Augustini: Scripta contra Donatistas* (ed. M. Petschenig. Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1910); Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.2.1; 73.3.1; 75.10, 14, 19; and *De rebaptismo* 1, 28, as well as Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 123–25; Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage,* 4:196; and Charles Joseph Hefele, *A History of the Christian Councils*, trans. and ed. William R. Clark (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), 86–92.

[85] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.7.4–5.

[86] Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.2.1; 73.3.1. In contrast, *De rebaptismate* and Augustine rejected the statements of these North African and Asian councils in favor of the Roman tradition. *De rebaptismo* 1; Augustine, *De baptismo* 4.6.8. Firmillianus and the author of *De rebpatismate* asserted that the North Africans had altered their position at Agrippinus' council. *De rebaptismate* saw the council as a negative change that worked contrary to the Roman tradition. In contrast, Firmilianus praised the decision because he claimed that the churches of Asia Minor had always believed heretics and schismatics could not baptize. The churches of Asia Minor had confirmed Firmilianus' theology of baptism at a council in Iconium, which Firmilianus had attended. Cyprian, *Epistula* 75.10, 14, 19; *De rebaptismate* 28.

[87] Tertullian, *De baptismo* 15.2; Cf. *De pudicitia* 19.5.

schismatics when these repentant sinners wanted to enter the true church.[88] In response, Cyprian said that those who followed the Roman position were disobeying the teaching of the apostles concerning the connection of baptism with the church in order to continue in their tradition.[89] He told Pompeius, "For custom without truth is but error grown old…For if we go back to the source and fountainhead of divine tradition [i.e., Scripture], human error ceases."[90]

While Cyprian respected tradition and tried to follow it, tradition could not trump the truths found in Scripture. If it did, then the tradition was but an error that had persisted in the church for too long. Cyprian used the analogy of a failing waterline. Just as a person had to go back to the source of the line to fix the lack of water, so bishops had to go to Scripture to defend the church against opposition and to handle problems that arose within the church. If a bishop only turned to tradition, he might never be able to fix the issue.[91] For Cyprian, the dilemma was the existence of heretical and schismatic churches, and the solution was turning to Scripture first. His opponents were not following the example of the apostolic churches that never received a heretic into the church based upon their heretical baptism.[92] More importantly, since baptism was linked to the truths taught by the apostles, acceptance of heretical and schismatic baptism was equivalent to changing the gospel.[93] Cyprian's opponents were thus contradicting the example and the teaching passed down to the church for the sake of preserving a non-

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[88] Cf. *De rebaptismate* 1.

[89] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.13; 74.2.

[90] "Nam consuetudo sine ueritate uetustas erroris est…. Nam si ad diuinae traditionis caput et originem reuertamur, cessat error humanus" Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.9.2.181–82, 10.2.205–6. Cf. Tertullian, *De virginibus velandis* 1.1–2, in *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995).

[91] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.10.2.

[92] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.13.3.

[93] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.11.1.

apostolic tradition. Cyprian demurred that he was following apostolic tradition more truly than his opponents. He never re-baptized anyone but rather was baptizing for the first time those who had not received a valid baptism within the true church.[94]

Cyprian also reasoned from experience. To Pompeius, Cyprian wrote that he was not surprised to see heresy and schism disregarding the church when bishops like Stephen were defending them:

> all the while they are being offered authority and support by certain advocates on their behalf; their baptism is being defended, faith and truth are being betrayed; and what is being done outside the [church] in opposition to the [church] is being vindicated inside, within the very walls of the [church].[95]

While bishops should be upholding the uniqueness of the church, Stephen was destroying the church by making it obsolete.[96] Cyprian did not know of any schismatic or heretic who had refused baptism into the true church. On the contrary, Cyprian had seen many heretics and schismatics come to the church eager to learn the true teachings of Jesus Christ, even being willing to learn from catechists.[97] Instead of begrudging the need to receive baptism, "rather they have welcomed the occasion with eagerness and understanding."[98] Cyprian then exhorted, "Let us not astound such heretics by granting them our acquiescence and advocacy [i.e., to their heretical or schismatic baptisms] when in fact they are ready and eager to obey the truth [i.e., receive a true baptism]."[99] In other words, the heretics and schismatics coming into the true church welcomed their baptism

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[94] Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.2.

[95] "Dum illis aduocatione quorundam et auctoritas praestatur et firmitas, dum baptisma eorum defenditur, dum fides, dum ueritas proditur, dum id quod contra ecclesiam foris geritur intus in ipsa ecclesia uindicatur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.8.4.169–72.

[96] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.8–9.

[97] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.3.1–2.

[98] "Atque exinde in hodiernum tot milia haereticorum in prouinciiis nostris ad ecclesiam conuersi non aspernati sint neque cunctati immo et rationabiliter et libenter amplexi sunt, ut lauacri uitalis et salutaris baptismi gratiam consequerentur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.3.1.50–54.

[99] "Nos non demus stuporem haereticis patrocinii et consensus nostril, et libenter ac prompte obtemperant ueritati." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.3.2.

into the true church. Not only would Stephen's position confuse them, but Cyprian implied that only Stephen and those who followed his view had a problem with the North African tradition, not the former heretics and schismatics themselves.

Scripture and Baptism

After arguing that Cyprian departed from tradition, Bévenot later claimed that Cyprian tried to make his position credible by arguing primarily from tradition.[100] However, while Cyprian respected his tradition, Bévenot seems to have undervalued Cyprian's case from Scripture, especially considering Cyprian spent much more time arguing from Scripture than from tradition. God had ordered Joshua son of Nun to obey the law (Josh 1). Joshua served as a type of Jesus Christ, who similarly ordered his disciples to obey his commands (Matt 28:19).[101] Christians also needed to heed Christ's warning that the disciples (and thus the church) should not set aside Scripture to establish their own traditions (Mark 7:9). Similarly, Paul urged Timothy that ecclesial leaders must teach soundly and not give into the ideas of the world (1 Tim 6:3–4).[102] Reasoning from these passages, Cyprian challenged Stephen to argue from Scripture, rather than from tradition alone.[103]

Beginning with the Old Testament, Cyprian pointed to Jacob and Esau. The latter lost his birthright to Jacob when Esau chose to exchange it for some bread and stew (Gen 25). While this passage described why the covenantal promises passed to Jacob and not to the firstborn, Cyprian gave it an ecclesiological interpretation. The church had to

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[100] Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 141.

[101] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.2.3.

[102] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.3.2. "You cast aside the commandment of God in order to establish a tradition of your own" (Mark 7:9). "If any man teaches otherwise and does not give his assent to the sound words and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, being carried away by his own foolishness and acting in utter ignorance, you should avoid such a man' (1 Tim 6:3–4). Cf. *De Dominica oratione* 2; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 19; *Epistula* 43.6; 63.14; 67.2.

[103] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.2.2, 3.1.

watch itself lest it gives up its God-given privileges and abilities. However, Stephen was handing those outside the church the rights of the church by granting heretics and schismatics the ability to perform valid baptisms. God might take the privileges of the church away completely if it persisted in such action.[104] Similarly, God punished Ahijah the prophet for eating and drinking with Jeroboam, even though God had told Ahijah not to do so (1 Kgs 13).[105] Cyprian regarded Jeroboam as a type for a schismatic since he had split the united Israelite kingdom, so Cyprian applied the divine warning to Ahijah to the third-century church.[106] Cyprian thus questioned how his opponents could dare to say that heretics and schismatics had valid baptisms, when God had warned true believers not even to share a drink with false Christians.[107]

Cyprian also gave Proverbs 9:18, as well as Jeremiah 2:13 and 15:18, an ecclesiological spin so that in his reading these passages warned people in his day to flee from schismatic and heretical baptisms because they were not valid.[108] In the case of the last passage, Cyprian was convinced that the Holy Spirit was speaking through the prophet to third-century Christians. The Spirit's authorship not only gave the warning a divine authority but also justified Cyprian in seeing direct application for his congregation. Thus, when the passage spoke of "lying water," Cyprian asked, "what else can this lying and faithless water be but that water which assumes the lying resemblance

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[104] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.25.2.

[105] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.6.2.

[106] Cyprian made a similar interpretive move with the Samaritans. He saw them as a schismatic group from the Jews, so he believed he could apply Christ's words concerning them directly to the schismatics of the third century. Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.6.3.

[107] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.5.2.

[108] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.1.2. "Keep away from alien water; do not drink from an alien fountain" (Prov 9:18). "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and they have dug out for themselves crumbling cisterns which are incapable of holding water" (Jer 2:13). "Why are they who afflict me all powerful? My wound is stubborn; how shall I be healed? When it was made, it became to me as lying water without faith" (Jer 15:18). Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 1.3; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 11; *Epistula* 75.23; *Sententiae Episcoporum LXXXVII* 5.

of baptism and thwarts the grace of faith by its shadowy imitation?"[109] He also quoted Sirach 34:25 to ask the question "If a man is baptized by one who is dead, what does his washing avail him?"[110] While written concerning Jewish baptism, Cyprian applied the text to Christian baptism. Heretics and schismatics were spiritually dead because only the true church had the Holy Spirit. As spiritually dead "churches," they could not perform valid baptisms, which marked the point in the Christian life when believers became spiritually alive.[111]

Turning to the New Testament, Cyprian cited Jesus Christ in Matthew 12:30 and John 3:5. Christ said, ""He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Matt 12:30). For Cyprian, this statement was a direct warning against the schismatics of the third century.[112] As for John 3:5, Cyprian read "born of water" as a clear reference to baptism, and thus he argued that the passage was referring to a singular event of being born of the Holy Spirit when a person was baptized. Since this passage connected the renewal of the Holy Spirit to baptism, Christians could not separate the Spirit's work from baptism to say that heretics and schismatics performed valid baptisms.[113]

Additionally, Cyprian referenced the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles (Acts 10) and the baptism of the disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19). The

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[109] "Quae est haec aqua mendax et perfida? Vtique ea quae baptismi imaginem mentitur et gratiam fidei adumbrata simulatione frustratur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.6.1.106–8.

[110] "Qui baptizatur a mortuo, quid proficit lauatione eius?" Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.1.328–29. Cyprian did not produce a canon list, so scholarship cannot say with certainty which books he saw as canonical. However, this quotation illustrated well that he saw Sirach as authoritative for Christians in some way, since he prefaced the quotation with "it is written" (*scriptum esse*). Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, 4:49.

[111] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.1.3.

[112] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.3.2. Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 3.78, 86; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6, 9; *Epistula* 43.5; 59.7; 69.1.

[113] Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.1.2; 73.21. "Unless a man has been born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Cf *Ad Quirinum* 1.12; 3.25; *De Dominica oratione* 17; *De mortalitate* 14; *Sententiae Episcoporum LXXXVII* 5.

Gentiles received the Spirit prior to their baptism, but Peter baptized them immediately because the Spirit and baptism properly went together.[114] By pointing to these passages, Cyprian was implying that Stephen should be following Peter in whose chair he sat.[115] Cyprian also questioned how his opponents could say that heretics and schismatics performed valid baptisms when the baptism of John the Baptist was not initiating people into the church, even though he was filled with the Holy Spirit, was the herald for Jesus Christ, and had baptized Christ himself.[116]

Cyprian also referenced 1 John 2:18–19.[117] This passage dealt with the eschatological Antichrist and how similar people had arisen in the apostolic church. Cyprian extended this teaching to his time so that he could call heretics and schismatics antichrists, who had forsaken God and left the church. These heretics and schismatics did not have the Holy Spirit, who remained only with the true church. Therefore, their churches were spiritually dead.[118] Cyprian strengthened his argument by claiming that John had called heretics 'antichrists' and did not grant them valid baptisms even before the more infamous heretics (like Marcion) had appeared. How much more should the church see the heretics of the third century as invalid since they were committing even more egregious blasphemies?[119]

Some of Cyprian's opponents were arguing for schismatic and heretical baptisms by pointing to Paul's words that "Nevertheless, in every way, whether in

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[114] Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.1.2; 73.24.3.

[115] Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:217.

[116] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.24.3–25.1.

[117] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.3.2. "You have heard that the Antichrist is coming. But even today there are many antichrists. From that we can recognize that it is the end of time. they have forsaken us, but they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would have remained with us" (1 John 2:18–19). Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 3.78, 86; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6, 9; *Epistula* 43.5; 59.7; 69.1.3; 74.2.3.

[118] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.3. Cf. *Epistula* 69.10.2.

[119] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.2.4–3.1.

pretense or in truth, let Christ be proclaimed" (1 Tim 1:13).[120] Cyprian bemoaned that his opponents were taking the verse out of its literary context. Giving one of his longest extant exegeses of a passage, Cyprian explained that Paul was not talking about heretics and schismatics but about two different types of Christians within the true church. Some people were treating Paul charitably, while others bore ill-will against him. Paul was willing to bear mistreatment from fellow Christians since they proclaimed the same Christ he did.[121] In contrast, heretics and schismatics were outside the church and were not preaching the same Christ, so this passage did not apply to them. Cyprian thus charged his opponents with proof-texting, and he challenged them to point to a clear passage where Paul welcomed heretics and schismatics.[122] However, Cyprian thought they would not find such a verse because he believed 2 Corinthians 6:14, 2 Timothy 2:17, and 1 John 4:3 should be applied to his context. For Cyprian, the apostles clearly taught that heretics and schismatics were a disease, a darkness, and antichrists, with whom the church should not fellowship, much less accept their baptisms as valid.[123]

The Church and Rebaptism

Cyprian not only provided a biblical case, but he also made a theological argument, where he connected baptism to the church and to the Holy Spirit. Hinchliff noted that Cyprian connected the ministries of the church to the *esse* of the church itself.

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[120] "Uerumtamen omni modo, siue peroccasionem siue per ueritatem Christus adnuntiatur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.14.1.223–25. Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 3.58; *De mortalitatis* 21.

[121] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.14.2. Along with *De Dominica oratione,* see *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 16–20 for another example of Cyprianic exegesis. These passages verify that Cyprian did not proof-text. While he sometimes did not consider the historical context of a passage, he always accounted for the literary context of a text.

[122] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.14.3.

[123] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.15. "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14 ESV). "And their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus" (2 Tim 2:17 ESV). "And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already" (1 John 4:3 ESV). Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 2.8; 3.62, 78; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 10; *De lapsis* 34; *Epistula* 43.5; 59.20.

Therefore, the baptism debate (which Hinchliff argued was the *Sitz im Leben* of *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*) became a theological issue over the *esse* of the church, not merely a liturgical one. Additionally, since Cyprian wed the *esse* of the church to salvation, Cyprian believed this issue impacted a person's state of salvation. Hinchliff argued that Cyprian never discounted Stephen's salvation because the latter had received a true election to an episcopal seat. Thus, while Cyprian and Stephen did not agree on doctrine, they still belonged to the same church, and thus both were saved. Additionally, Hinchliff argued that Cyprian normally equated schism with heresy. Thus, by Cyprian's own definition of heresy, he could not call Stephen a heretic, though he regarded Stephen as preaching theological error.[124] Hinchliff ultimately concluded that Cyprian held much more strongly to ecclesial unity based upon love than based upon doctrinal fidelity. Hinchliff interpreted Cyprian as believing the Holy Spirit would correct mistakes over time if the church stayed united, and Hinchliff saw this view of ecclesial unity as stronger than modern attempts at cooperation based upon doctrinal agreement.[125]

However, Hinchliff ultimately cast Cyprian into the guise of a modern liberal, for whom action was to be elevated over belief. In contrast, early theologians equated incorrect theology with inappropriate action (and *vice versa*).[126] Even within Hinchliff's own example of *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 1–3, this principle is patent. The schismatics were not acting appropriately, so Cyprian assumed that they had poor

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[124] Clarke argued that Cyprian did in fact distinguish heretics and schismatics. He just sometimes called schismatic by the more pejorative term "heretics." G. W. Clarke, trans. and eds, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, vol. 2, *Letters 28–54* (New York: Newman Press, 1984), 222. Instead, Cyprian held a position between Clarke and Hinchliff. In a way, all schismatics were heretics because improper action belied some form of improper belief (*De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 1–3). Most heretics were schismatics, but heretics could also be admitted into the church, and God would judge them for their false pretenses. Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.10.3, 21.3.

[125] Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 101–2, 106–7, 114–16.

[126] Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.1.3.

theology somewhere. He found the problem partly in their failure to obey Christ's command to unity and love.

While Hinchliff overemphasized the baptismal controversy into a debate over the *esse* of the church, Cyprian did think that belief in one church and one baptism was just as important as having a correct understanding of God and Jesus Christ. The Novatianists exemplified this principle because they had proper theology concerning the Trinity and Christ but were outside of the church due to their poor ecclesiology.[127] As Cyprian opined, "The tradition handed down to us is that there is one God and one Christ, one hope and faith, one [church] and one baptism appointed only in that one [church]."[128] For, as Cyprian further stated, "there is only one baptism that has been appointed and that is in the holy [church]."[129] Moreover, for Cyprian, "As it is quite impossible for baptism and [the church] to be detached and separated from each other, the person able to seize hold of baptism first, will also have seized hold of the [church] at the same time."[130] The Novatianists were not too different from Korah, Dathan, and Abiron. God struck them down not because they held a faulty view of God or were sacrificing incorrectly but because they took upon themselves the role of priests (Num 16).[131] While the Novatianists had proper theology concerning God and were doing the baptismal rite correctly, they were dishonoring him even more than these Old Testament figures because they not only had taken upon themselves the right to baptize but they were performing

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[127] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.7.

[128] "Traditum est enim nobis quod sit unus deus et Christus enus et una spes et fides una et una ecclesia et baptisma unum non nisi in una ecclesia constitutum." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.11.1.222–24.

[129] "Cum sit baptisma unum in sancta ecclesia constitutum." Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.1.2.25. Cf. 69.3.1, 5.2; 73.1.2, 11.3.

[130] "Et cum separari a se et diuidi omnino non possint baptisma et ecclesia, qui occupare baptisma prior potuit etecclesiam pariter occupauit." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.25.2.451–53.

[131] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.8.1

the rite outside the covenant community.[132] In Cyprian's mind the Novatianists were clearly in the wrong. Hence, he grieved that Stephen was condemning the bishops of North Africa and Asia Minor for supposedly committing the sin of rebaptism position but was exalting the status of heretical and schismatic congregations.[133]

In fine, Cyprian soldered baptism to the church because salvation came only through the church, and as proof he cited Titus 3:5 and Ephesians 5:25.[134] Jeus Christ had but one Bride, namely the church. Therefore, the church was the mother of Christians, since only within the church could people receive spiritual birth.[135] Cyprian found further support in the imagery of the garden from Genesis 2. The church was the garden in which God grew fruit-bearing trees by means of four rivers, which Cyprian understood to be the four gospels.[136] Within the church, built upon the gospels, God alone had placed baptism. Cyprian then wrote:

> Is it possible for anyone who is not on the inside within the [church] to water another, drawing from these springs of the [church]? Can he give to another the health-giving and saving draughts of Paradise when he stands himself self-condemned in his wickedness, when he has been banished beyond the springs of Paradise and is dry and parched, faint with a never-ending thirst?[137]

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[132] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.8.

[133] Cyprian, *Epistula* 3.25.2. Cf. *De rebaptismate* 1

[134] "Seruauit nos per lauacrum regenerationis." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.6.1.114–15. "Christus dilexit ecclesiam et se ipsum tradidit pro ea u team sanctificaret, purgans eam lauacro aquae." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.6.2.119–20. "Christ loves the [church], and [he] gave [himself] up for her, so that [he] might sanctify her, washing and cleansing her by water" (Eph 5:25). "He has saved us through the washing of rebirth" (Titus 3:5).

[135] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6; *De lapsis* 9; *Epistula* 74.6–7. Cf. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 154, 178.

[136] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.2.1; 73.10.3. Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 5.20. Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 2.4; also, Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination,": 271–72. Cyprian also said that some of the trees in the garden would not bear fruit. These trees God will cut down and cast into fire. Therefore, this passage confirmed that Cyprian did not see the spiritual and visible church as the same thing. While closely connected, becoming a member of the visible church did not automatically mean entrance into the spiritual church because entering the latter also required true faith, manifested by good works. Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.10.3

[137] "Numquid de ecclesiae fontibus rigare potest qui intus in ecclesia non est? Numquid paradisi potus salubres et salutares inpertire cuiquam potest qui peruersus et a semet ipso damnatus et extra paradisi fontes relegatus aruit et aeternae sitis siccitate defecit? Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.10.3.170–74.

The schismatic and heretical churches could not perform valid baptisms because they did not belong to this paradisiacal garden of God.

Cyprian also had to contend with those who questioned how his position on baptism differed from that of the heretics and schismatics. Jubaianus compared Cyprian's view to that of Novatian's since the latter was re-baptizing those who left the true church to enter his congregation. Cyprian retorted:

> Why should we conclude that we are to avoid [baptizing] just because Novatian has the presumption to do it also? What sort of argument is that? Ought we to renounce our episcopal chair just because Novatian tries to usurp the honor of a bishop's chair also? Must we withdraw from [the eucharist] just because Novatian attempts to set up an altar and to offer sacrifices [i.e., administer the eucharist] when he has no right to do so?[138]

Cyprian pointed out that Novatian believed in the connection between the true church and true baptism. By re-baptizing Christians, he was imitating the practices of the church to deceive people into thinking he governed the true church of Rome.[139]

While Jubaianus was indicating similarities between Cyprian and Novatian, Stephen was arguing for his position by pointing to the heretical congregations. Heretics were not re-baptizing those who entered their churches but were accepting the baptism of the true church. In Stephen's mind, if the heretics were accepting the baptisms of the church as valid, then they had enough faith to administer valid baptisms of their own.[140] In response to his claims, Cyprian said Stephen was imitating the actions of antichrists

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[138] "Quale est autem, ut quia hoc Nouatianus facere audit, nos putemus non esse faciendum? Quid ergo? Quia et honorem cathedrae sacerdotalis Nouatianus usurpat, numquid idcirco nos cathedrae renuntiare debemus? Et quia Nouatianus altare conlocare et sacrificia offerre contra fas nititur, ab altari et sacrificiis cessare nons oporten, ne paria et similia cum illo celebrare uideamur? Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.2.3.37–43. Cf. 73.10.

[139] "[Novatian] knows perfectly well that there is only the one baptism. Hence, he is laying claim to this one baptism for himself, so that he can say that the [church] is with him, and he can turn us into heretics." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.2.1. "Novatian is behaving as apes do; they try to mimic human actions, though they are not humans themselves." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73. 1. Cyprian wrote that Novatian ironically accepted his own baptism and did not re-baptize himself, thus revealing his duplicity. *Epistula* 73.2.2.

[140] Magnus also questioned whether Novatian was outside the church, and Cyprian definitively stated Novatian was outside the church and thus could not baptize. Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.1. Cf. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 125.

and allowing those in darkness to guide his thinking.[141] The true church could not

determine its ways based upon what heretical and schismatic churches were doing.

Cyprian thus gave the same response to both Jubaianus and Stephen. Those outside the

church should not dictate the practices of those within the church.[142]

Some of Cyprian's opponents were also taking a belief in one baptism too far.

They held so firmly to the notion that they imagined the church could not baptize those

who had already gone through a baptismal rite in heretical or schismatic churches. In

response, Cyprian again connected baptism and the church. He argued that only one

baptism was valid because only one true church existed: "Of course there is only one

baptism, but it is to be found within the [catholic church], for the [church] itself is one

and there cannot be baptism outside of that [church]."[143] In other words, Cyprian's

opponents were overemphasizing the notion of one baptism to the point that they were

defining the ordinance as merely the right performance of a baptismal rite. Contrary to

this notion of sacramental validity, Cyprian held only one baptism existed because only

the true church was the proper administrator of the sacraments. By claiming the heretics

and schismatics could baptize, Cyprian theologized that his opponents were in fact

holding to two baptisms. In fact, they were holding heretical baptisms in greater esteem

because the church's baptisms could not supplant the former's practice.[144]

These opponents were thus arguing for the validity of heretical and schismatic

baptism from a nascent notion of *ex opere operato*. In other words, if the baptismal rite

was administered correctly, then a valid baptism had occurred, even if the ceremony was

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[141] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.10.2.; 74.4.1.

[142] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.2.1.

[143] "Quod unum scilicet in ecclesia catholica est, quia ecclesia una est et esse baptisma praeter ecclesiam non potest." Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.1.2. Cf. 73.2.2.

[144] Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.1; 73.2.

not performed within the true church.[145] Apparently, this argument stemmed from the idea that the performance of the same rite meant saving faith was present.[146] Cyprian countered by stressing that this notion made the church unnecessary for salvation. On the contrary, anyone who refused to enter the true church necessarily also had false beliefs because improper action belied wrong doctrine.[147] Cyprian's opponents were also defining faith incorrectly. Saving faith meant more than merely performing rites correctly; it required acceptance of all primary doctrines of apostolic Christianity. Ultimately, Jesus Christ himself had warned his disciples (and thus the church through them) that some people would come after him who would confess his name but in truth were deceivers and false teachers (Matt 7:21; 24:25; 25:5).[148]

Saving faith thus involved more than just confessing oneself to be a Christian and performing the ceremonies for the sacraments correctly. As an example, Cyprian appealed to John 14:6 and 17:3 to argue that people also had to accept a proper relationship between the Father and Son. The Jews accepted the Father but denied the Son. Similarly, Marcion and Gnostic groups were rejecting the Father (meaning him as Creator) while receiving the Son.[149] Salvation could not come to a human who refused one person of the Trinity while accepting another. The New Testament authors emphasized the Son because the Jews were rejecting him. Hence, Peter told the crowd to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38–39); whereas Christ had told the church to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19). According to Cyprian, Peter's Jewish context drove him to emphasize belief and baptism in the

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[145] Jubaianus' letter to Cyprian has not survived, but Cyprian hinted that Jubaianus might have taken this position. Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.4.1, 16.1.

[146] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.4.1.

[147] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.5.3.

[148] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.16.2.

[149] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.17.1, 18.2.

name of Jesus Christ, not that a confession of being Christian or that an *ex opere operato* baptism in Christ's name automatically validated baptisms.[150]

In fact, because the heretics were denigrating the Father, Cyprian argued that logically the Son will avenge his Father's honor since both the law and Christ had said that children should honor their parents (Exod 20:12; Matt 15:4).[151] Jesus Christ certainly would not grant pardon to blasphemers. For Cyprian, if heretics like the Patripassians, the Anthropians, the Valentinians, the Apelletians, the Ophites, and the Marcionites, "confess the same Father with us, the same Son, the same Holy Spirit, and the same [church]…then they may also have the one baptism, seeing that they have the one faith as well."[152] As he later wrote:

> And so, if someone could be baptized among heretics, he could doubtless also receive forgiveness of sins; and if he received forgiveness of sins, he was sanctified. If he was sanctified, then he became a temple of God. But of what God, I ask? The Creator? Not possible, seeing that he does not believe in [him]. Christ, then? But he cannot become [his] temple either, for he denies that Christ is God. Or the Holy

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[150] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.17.2–18.1. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord for the forgiveness of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children and to all who come thereafter, whomsoever the Lord has called" (Acts 2:38–39). "All power is given me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:18–19).

[151] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.19.1–2.

[152] "Si eundem patrem, eundem filium, eundem spiritum sanctum, eandem ecclesiam confitentur nobiscum Patripassiani, Anthropiani, Valentiniani, Appellatiani, Ophitae, Marcionitae et ceterae hereticorum pestes et gladii ac uenena subuertendae ueritatis, potest illic et baptisma unum esse, si est et fides una." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.4.2.69–74. The Patripassians held a Modalist theology, seeing God as one person who merely acted in three modes (or like three persons). Hence, they said the Father suffered on the cross. The Anthropians were Adoptionists, viewing Jesus as merely a man. At his baptism, he became the Christ when the Holy Spirit anointed him. The Valentinians were arguably the most popular Gnostic group. They conflated Christian beliefs with Middle Platonic cosmology, thus believing the creator god (*Demiurge*) was a lesser divine being. Another lesser divine being (the Word or *Logos*) adopted the human Jesus at his baptism. The Apelletians were followers of Apelles, a disciple of Marcion who rejected his dualism but still held his views on the canon and who popularized the notion of Jesus Christ as having celestial flesh. The Ophites were a more extreme Gnostic group. Like other Gnostics, they opposed the God of the Old Testament, but they glorified the serpent of Genesis as the liberator and illuminator of men. Finally, Marcion held a form of Gnosticism that emphasized dualism, which infamously led him to reject the Old Testament as from an evil, lesser divine being, as well as all New Testament books except the gospel of Luke and the letters of Paul (all in redacted forms). Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1. Cf. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:224–25. Someone could note that Cyprian did not include Montanism in this list and think that he failed to do so because of his fondness for Tertullian. While possible, Cyprian in this passage was focusing upon groups that had clearly rejected core truths of apostolic Christianity, while Montanism held more variety, as demonstrated by Tertullian. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:224.

Spirit? As these three are one, how can the Holy Spirit look with favor upon him when he is an enemy either of the Son or of the Father...And they actually judge that they ought to admit to communion without baptism men like that when they come to the [church], not considering that thus they come into communion with other men's sins—and eternal sins at that. For they are letting in without baptism men who are not able to cast off their sins of blasphemy, except by baptism.[153]

If heretics and schismatics could perform valid baptisms, then logically they had the same faith that led to the forgiveness of sins and would be a part of the true church that performed valid baptisms. On the contrary, since they did not have the same faith, they held religious services outside the church. They were not saved, which meant they also did not perform valid baptisms.

Cyprian looked specifically at Marcion. After quoting Matthew 28:18–19 as the baptismal formula given by Christ to the church through the apostles, Cyprian asked:

But surely Marcion does not hold this Trinity? Surely, he does not confess the same God the Father and Creator as we do? Does he recognize the same Christ [his] Son, born of the Virgin Mary, the Word which was made flesh, who bore our sins, who by dying overcame death, who initiated the resurrection of the flesh, beginning with [his] own person, and who revealed to [his] disciples that [he] had risen again in the same flesh? But Marcion's faith is far different.[154]

In other words, faith that saved required the confession of the key doctrines of apostolic Christianity.[155] While Marcion's baptismal rite looked like the one performed by the true church, the apparent similarities did not justify the lack of true faith, so Marcionite churches did not lead to salvation and could not perform valid baptisms. Cyprian thus

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[153] "Nam si baptizari quis apud haereticos potuit, utique et remissam peccatorum consequi potuit. Si peccatorum remissam consecutus est, sanctificatus est: si sanctificatus est, templum dei factus est: quaero cuius dei? Si creatoris, non potuit qui in eum non credidit. Si Christi, nec huius fieri potest templum qui negat deum Christum. Si spiritus sancti, cum tres unum sint, quomodo spiritus sanctus placates esse ei potest qui aut filii aut patris inimicus est…Et nunc qui talibus ad ecclesiam uentientibus sine baptismo communicandum existimant, non putant se alienis immo aeternis peccatis communicare, admittentes sine baptismo eos qui non nisi in baptismo possint blasphemiarum suarum peccata deponere." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.12.2.197–204, 19.3.355–59. Cf. 73.18.3.

[154] "Numquid hanc trinitatem Marcion tenet? Numquid eundem adserit quem et nos deum patrem creatorem? Eundem nouit filium Christum de uirgine Maria natum, qui sermo caro factus sit, qui peccata nostra portauerit, qui mortem moriendo uicerit, qui resurrectionem carnis per semet ipsum primus initiauerit et discipulis suis quod in eadem carne resurrexisset ostenderit? Longa alia est apud Marcionem sed et apud ceteros haereticos fides." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.5.2–3.85. "All power is given me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:18–19).

[155] Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:226.

argued for the necessity of faith for salvation and that people needed to define saving faith correctly: "How, then, is it possible that somebody who is baptized amongst them may be supposed to have obtained forgiveness of sins and the grace of God's mercy by means of faith, while he does not hold the true [faith]?"[156] Instead of defining saving faith as performing the same sacramental rites, true belief required adherence to all the primary doctrines of the church.

Therefore, Cyprian emphasized that he never re-baptized anyone. If a person already had received baptism in the true church and subsequently left the church, Cyprian only laid his hands upon the repentant person whenever the congregant returned. Only those who had gone through a baptismal rite in a heretical or schismatic church received the sacrament when they entered the true church.[157] Some of Cyprian' s opponents were making a practical argument against him, saying that his position would keep people from coming into the church because they did not want to be re-baptized.[158] Cyprian flipped this argument upon its head. When these people learned of his position, that they could not receive baptism from heretical and schismatic churches, they were driven (*adiguntur*) to the true church and rushed (*properant*) to it, where they could receive true baptism and salvation.[159] Cyprian's theology was driving people towards salvation; whereas Stephen's was keeping them away from the visible church, as his position meant they were already a part of the spiritual church.[160]

Cyprian's opponents were also arguing from Acts 8 and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the Samaritans. Since Peter and John did not baptize the Samaritans but

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[156] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.5.3.

[157] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.12. Cf. Van de Beek, "Cyprian on Baptism," 148.

[158] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.24.1.

[159] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.24.2.427, 24.3.434.

[160] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.24.2–3.

merely laid hands upon them, so bishops should only lay their hands upon repentant schismatics and heretics, not baptize them.[161] Cyprian responded by saying his opponents were misinterpreting what Peter and John were doing. The Samaritans did not need baptism because they had already received a valid baptism into the true church from Philip, a deacon of the true church: "And this same practice we observe today ourselves: those who are baptized into the [church] are presented to the appointed leaders of the [church], and by our prayers and the imposition of our hands they receive the Holy Spirit and are made perfect with the Lord's seal [again]."[162] In other words, Cyprian was not baptizing every repentant schismatic, only those who had not received a true baptism.[163] He noted:

> We ruled that there is but one baptism and that is established within the [catholic church]; by this baptism we do not rebaptize but rather baptize all those who, coming as they do from spurious and unhallowed waters, need to be washed clean and sanctified in the genuine waters of salvation.[164]

Cyprian did not want to re-baptize anyone; he believed that he was baptizing them for the first time.

Therefore, Allan D. Fitzgerald misconstrued Cyprian's view of baptism. Fitzgerald maintained that Cyprian made baptism the way all heretics and schismatic were integrated back into the church. The baptismal controversy thus was a debate over the proper method of reconciliation. Fitzgerald interpreting Stephen as challenging

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[161] Cf. *De rebaptismate* 3–5.

[162] "Quod nunc quoque apud nos geritur, ut qui in ecclesia baptizantur praepositis ecclesiae offerantur et per nostrum orationem ac manus inpositionem spiritum sanctum consequantur et signaculo dominico consummentur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.9.2.151–55.

[163] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.3.1; 71.1.3; 72.1.1–3; 73.1.1–2; 74.12. The charge that Cyprian and the other North African bishops were re-baptizing came acutely from the anonymous author of the treatise *De rebaptismate*, which was written against the North African position during this controversy.

[164] "Et nunc quoque cum in unum conuenissemus tam prouinciae Africae quam Numidiae episcopi numero septuaginta et unus, hoc idem denuo sententia nostrat firmauimus, statuentes unum baptisma esse quod sit in ecclesia catholica constitutum ac per hoc non rebatpizari sed baptizare a nobis quicumque ab adultera et profana aqua uenientes abluendi sint et sanctificandi salutaris aquae ueritate." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.1.2.12–18. Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.3.1; 71.1.3; 72.1.1–3; 73.1.1–2; 74.12.

Cyprian for creating a new way of reconciling sinners with the church rather than following the tradition of just laying hands upon them.[165] Contrary to this narrative of the baptismal controversy, Cyprian did not make baptism a prerequisite for a person to be reconciled with the church, except in cases when a person had not yet received true baptism. The controversy thus concerned the nature of baptism itself, whether the church alone could perform the sacrament or whether schismatics and heretics could baptize if they administered the ordinance correctly. Stephen held the latter view, so he did not require them to receive baptism if they had already gone through a baptismal ceremony in a schismatic or heretical church. On the contrary, Cyprian held that only the true church could baptize. Thus, he did not re-baptize anyone but rather was baptizing them for the first time.

The Bishop and the Holy Spirit

Only the true church could perform valid baptisms partly because only genuine congregations possessed real bishops. Since the Holy Spirit indwelled believers at baptism, sanctifying them by expiating their sins, only a Spirit-filled bishop could administer the ordinance.[166] From the New Testament, Cyprian pointed to John the Baptist, who was said to be filled with the Spirit in his mother's womb (Luke 1:15).[167] Seeing John as a type for a bishop, Cyprian interpreted this passage as indicating that only true bishops can baptize because only they were properly sanctified and indwelled by the Holy Spirit.[168]

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[165] Allan D. Fitzgerald, "Penance," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 798.

[166] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.2.3. Cf. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 140; Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 37.

[167] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.11.2.

[168] Bévenot claimed that Cyprian saw baptism under the old covenant as valid, though Ferguson clarified that Cyprian saw Christian baptism as superior. However, Cyprian did not see baptism under the old covenant as valid *per se* but as valid only in that it served as a type for baptism under the new covenant. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 123; Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 357.

However, in his argument at this point, Cyprian primarily drew from the Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch. In Leviticus 19:2 God told the Israelites to be holy as he is holy. Cyprian applied this principle to the church so that the Holy Spirit first sanctified the bishop so that he could perform the sacrament of baptism, at which point the Spirit expiated the devotee's sins and the person received initially sanctification.[169] Therefore, only bishops ordained within the true church administered valid baptisms. Cyprian likened schismatic bishops to the Old Testament figures of Korah, Dathan, and Abiron, who tried to usurp Moses and Aaron's right to make sacrifices, as well as the sons of Aaron who died after offering inappropriate sacrifices to God (Lev 10; Num 16).[170] Since Cyprian viewed Moses, Aaron, and the priests under the old covenant as ecclesiological types for the bishops of his day, these stories had significant implications for what was happening in third-century Carthage. These Old Testament narratives warned against schismatic bishops performing sacramental rites and cautioned true bishops not to accept heretical or schismatic baptisms.[171] Likewise, Exodus 19:22; 30:20–21 and Leviticus 21:17 taught that priests under the old covenant had to remain pure and free of sin to make sacrifices for the Israelites.[172] Cyprian saw types for the eucharist and for bishops in these texts, which implied that bishops had to remain unsullied to retain the ability to administer the eucharist.

Therefore, if a man received ordination within a heretical or schismatic church, then that person could be reconciled with the church, but he could not claim to be

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[169] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.2.3. "Be holy, for I, too, am holy, says the Lord" (Lev 19:2).

[170] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.8.

[171] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.8. "And now, my priests, this commandment is for you: if you will not heed it, if you will not place it in your heart to give honor to my name, says the Lord Almighty, then I shall send my curse upon you and your blessings I shall curse" (Mal 2:1–2). Cf. *Epistula* 59.13.

[172] Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.2.2. "Let the priests who approach the Lord God keep themselves holy lest perchance the Lord should forsake them" (Exod 19:22). "They who approach to minister at the altar of the Holy One shall not bring sin upon themselves lest they should die" (Exod 30:20–21). "No man in whom there has been defilement or blemish shall approach to offer gifts to God" (Lev 21:17). Cf. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 125; Cyprian, *Epistula* 65.2.1; 67.1.2.

a true bishop or presbyter of the church.[173] Moreover, if a bishop became a schismatic, he

could be reconciled with the church as a believer, but he had forever lost his ordination:

> When [clergy] return, they are to be received on the following terms: they may join
> our communion, but [only] as laymen; they are to remain satisfied that they are
> admitted to peace at all, seeing that they have proved to be enemies of peace; but on
> no account are they to retain amongst us on their return those same weapons of
> clerical dignity which they used in their rebellion against us [i.e., the claim that they
> can administer the sacraments]. For it is essential that bishops and clergy, waiting as
> they do upon the sacrifices of the altar [i.e., the eucharist], should be men who are
> sound and without blemish.[174]

Schismatic and heretical bishops could never again administer the sacraments, even if

they were previously ordained in the true church.

Cyprian thus denied the notion that ordination was permanent.[175] Since schism

was a far worse sin than lapsing, schismatic and heretical bishops certainly could never

administer the ordinances again.[176] Additionally, when a bishop separated from the

visible church, he likewise left the spiritual church and thus lost the Holy Spirit. Since

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[173] Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.2.1. Felicissimus was one of Cyprian's deacons who led a section of his congregation to split from the Carthaginian church and create a schismatic church that held a laxist policy towards the *lapsi*. Felicissimus ordained Fortunatus as the new (laxist) bishop of Carthage. Fortunatus had been one of Cyprian's presbyters who had left with Felicissimus to form the new congregation. Fortunatus was likely one of the presbyters who resisted Cyprian's election to the episcopal see of Carthage and who had reconciled *lapsi* with the church contrary to his wishes. Cyprian, *Epistula* 15–20; 59; Pontus, *Vita Cypriani* 5.

[174] "Ut etiam si qui presbyteri aut diaconi uel in ecclesia catholica prius ordinati fuerint et postmodum perfidy ac rebelles contra ecclesiam steterint uel apud haereticos a pseudoepiscopis et antichristis contra Christi dispositionem profana ordinatione promote sint et contra altare unum atque diuinum sacrificial foris falsa ac sacrilege offerre conati sint, eos quoque hac condicione suscipi cum reuertuntur ut communicant laici et satis habeant quod admittuntur ad pcem qui hostes pacis extiterint, nec debere eos reuertentes ea apud nos ordinationis et honoris arma retinere quibus contra nos rebellauerint. Oportet enim sacerdotes et ministros qui altari et sacrificiis deseruiunt integros atque immaculatos esse." Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.2.1.36–2.47.

[175] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.9.3; 65.2; 67.3; 72.2. Cf. Augustine, *De baptismo* 1.1; 6.15; *Epistula* 43.5; Phillip Campbell, ed., *The Complete Works of Saint Cyprian of Carthage* (Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing, 2013), xi; Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination," 266–73; Joseph H. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian: Early Defender of the Faith* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book, 1942), 1, 197; Patrick Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian: Clerical and Lay Participation." *Theological Studies* 37, no. 1 (March 1976): 96n7; Lauren Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology: Redefining the Office of the Christian Bishop" (MA thesis, Georgia Southern University, 2013), 45–46, 52; Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 202–3, 209–15; Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 304, 307.

[176] Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.2.2. Cf. Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 22–24, 30; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 19; *De lapsis* 15–16, 28–30, 33; *De opere et eleemosynis* 3; *Epistula* 15–17, 30–31, 65.

heretical and schismatic bishops did not have the Spirit, they could not administer a ritual involving the third person of the Trinity.[177] Cyprian thus denounced the Roman idea that a baptism could be valid (but not efficacious) because of the bishop:

> And it is not possible for some part of their baptism to be void while another part of it is valid. If a man has power to baptize, he also has the power to confer the Holy Spirit; conversely, if he cannot confer the Holy Spirit (being outside the [church] and therefore not with the Holy Spirit), neither can he baptize anyone who seeks baptism. There is but one baptism, and one Holy Spirit, and one [church].[178]

Cyprian was not saying that the bishops bestowed the Holy Spirit as if they exercised sovereignty over him. Rather, Cyprian was arguing that a true bishop, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, was able to perform an efficacious baptismal rite, during which time the Spirit sanctified the new believer. Therefore, people had to come into the church to be saved because only one baptism existed and only bishops within the true church administered that baptism.

Along with the true church alone having genuine clergy, the true church was the sole repository of true baptisms since it alone had the Holy Spirit, whose power validated the sacrament when he gave Christians a new birth, sanctified believers, and expiated sin.[179] Cyprian quoted Christ's words: "Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).[180] Cyprian interpreted this passage ecclesiologically so that at baptism the Spirit applied salvation, thus making baptism (or at least the intent to be baptized) essential for salvation.[181] The same faith that validated the baptismal rite also facilitated the indwelling of the Spirit, which came at the

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[177] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.2.3.

[178] "Neque enim potest pars illic inanis esse et pars praeualere. Si baptizare potuit, potuit et sanctum spiritum dare. Si autem sanctum spiritum dare non potest, quia foris constitutes cum sancto spiritu non est, nec baptizare uenientem potest, quando et baptisma unum sit et spiritus sanctus unus et una ecclesia." Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.3.1.72–77.

[179] Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.1.2.

[180] "Nisi quis natus fuerit ex aqua et spiritu, non potest introire in regnum dei." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.21.3.390–91.

[181] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.21.3.

end of the baptismal rite, when the administrator laid his hands upon the new believer.

Cyprian based this theology upon Genesis 2, where God first formed Adam and then

breathed into him. Seeing the Spirit as the breadth of God and applying an ecclesiological

interpretation to this passage, Cyprian wrote that the Spirit first gave new believers a

spiritual birth during the immersion. This new birth allowed him to indwell them at the

end of the baptismal rite, when the bishop laid his hands upon them.[182] Cyprian wrote:

> And if [a heretic] can receive baptism and to obtain forgiveness of sins according to his perverted faith, then he can obtain the Holy Spirit as well by virtue of that same faith…Either he can obtain both outside [the church] through faith, or being outside [the church], he receives neither of them.[183]

If heretical and schismatic churches were performing valid baptisms, then they had faith

to obtain the Holy Spirit too and did not need to enter the church to receive salvation.

Cyprian consequently pointed to the irrationality of Stephen's position. Since

the second birth and entrance into the spiritual church normally occurred at baptism,

Christians necessarily received the Holy Spirit at baptism: "Water by itself cannot cleanse

sins and sanctify man unless it possesses the Holy Spirit as well."[184] The Spirit applied

salvation to the individual, thus validating the baptism. Without the Spirit's presence,

people were simply getting wet when going through a baptismal rite. Logically, either

Stephen had to accept that heretics and schismatics could have the Spirit, or Stephen

needed to accept Cyprian's position.[185] Stephen had also stated that bishops only needed

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[182] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.7.1. Cf. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 153–56, 178–79.

[183] "Quod si secundum prauam fidem baptizari aliquis foris et remissam peccatorum consequi potui, secundum eandem fidem consequi et spiritum sanctum potuit…Aut utrumque enim fide sua foris consequi potuit aut neutrum eorum qui foris fuerat accepti." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.6.2.108–13. Someone could argue from this quotation that Cyprian believed people received forgiveness by works via going through the baptismal rite. However, he believed that people obtained forgiveness by Christ's sacrifice upon the cross. Since a Christian's life began at baptism, then logically that pardon was applied at baptism, though even catechumen who were intending to receive baptism could die as Christians with their sins forgiven. *Epistula* 73.22.

[184] "Peccata enim purgare et hominem sanctificare aqua sola non potest, nisi habeat et spiritum sanctum." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.5.4.106–8.

[185] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.11.3; 74.5.4.

to reconcile heretics and schismatics with the church by laying hands upon them, at which time the heretic and schismatic received the Spirit. Cyprian saw this statement as logically impossible because the same faith that validated a baptismal rite also allowed for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.[186] Moreover, Cyprian pointed out that, if heretics could baptize validly through baptizing in the name of Jesus Christ, then logically they could also have the indwelling Spirit and become sanctified in the name of Christ.[187] Cyprian referenced Galatians 3:27, where Paul wrote that all who have been baptized have put on Jesus Christ. Thus, Cyprian declared, "A man then baptized among heretics, who is able to put on Christ, can all the more easily receive the Holy Spirit, for Christ was the one who sent the Spirit…As if, indeed, one could put on Christ without the Spirit, or the Spirit could be separated from Christ!"[188] Hence, Stephen's position on heretical baptisms was contrary to even his own Roman tradition that held to the inseparable operations of the Trinity.

In a few passages, Cyprian sewed together the church, the bishops, the Holy Spirit, and salvation even more clearly. Cyprian upheld his episcopacy against the contentions of Puppianus partly by claiming that the Holy Spirit would not have worked through Cyprian to give new believers salvation at their baptism if he was not a true bishop.[189] He maintained:

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[186] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.6.2.

[187] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.10.2; 74.5.1.

[188] "Qui potest apud haereticos baptizatus Christum induere, multo magis potest spiritum sanctum quem Christus misit accipere…Quasi possit aut sine spiritu Christus indui aut a Christo spiritus separari." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.5.3.98–99, 102–3. "All of you who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27). Cf. *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 7; *De lapsis* 30; *De virginum habitu* 13; *Epistula* 62.2; 74.1; 76.2.

[189] Cyprian, *Epistula* 66.5.2. Cf. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 123. Puppianus was a prominent lay leader within the Carthaginian church, who was likely one of those who protested the ordination of Cyprian as bishop. Pontus, *Vita Cypriani*, 5. Puppianus was from a senatorial family, whereas Cyprian probably came from the lesser decurion class. The weight of Puppianus' social rank, combined with his status as a confessor, made him a major threat to Cyprian's authority. G. W. Clarke, trans. and eds, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, vol. 3, *Letters 55–66* (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 323–24.

For if it is the case that the [church] is not with the heretics for the reason that the [church] is one and cannot be divided, and if the Holy Spirit is not with them for the reason that the Spirit is one and cannot be with outsiders and aliens, then it indeed follows that baptism cannot be with heretics either, for baptism is only to be found within that same unity: baptism can be separated neither from the [church] nor from the Holy Spirit.[190]

Since Cyprian effectively wed together the visible and spiritual church, this union was such that heretics and schismatics had neither the Holy Spirit nor baptism because they were outside the church.

Cyprian also found support in John 20:21–23: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you. When [he] had said this, [he] breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they will be forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they will be retained.'"[191] For Cyprian, the remission of sins was logically applied at baptism because the forgiveness came through the Holy Spirit, who indwelled the believer at baptism and empowered the bishop to perform a valid sacrament.[192] Baptism was a unique, unrepeatable rite. However, because of the egregious crime of schism, the Spirit of God departed from schismatics when they left the church.[193] If they later returned to the church, Cyprian did not rebaptize them again but merely laid his hands upon them. He did not state why he laid his hands upon them, but the act probably signified that the Spirit had returned and granted the forgiveness of sins again, since the imposition of hands symbolized the impartation of the Spirit during the baptismal rite.[194]

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[190] "Nam si idcirco apud haereticos ecclesia non est, quia una est et diuidi non potest, et si ideo illic sanctus spiritus non est, quia unus est et esse apud profanes et extrarios non potest, utique et baptisma quod in eadem unitate consistit esse apud haereticos non potest, quia separari neque ab ecclesia neque a sancto spiritu potest." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.4.2.80–85.

[191] "Sicut misit me pater, et ego mitto uos. Hoc cum dixisset, inspirauit et ait illis: accipiter spiritum sanctum. Si cuius remiseritis peccata, remittentur illi: si cuius tenueritis, tenebuntur." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.7.2.119–22. Cf. *Epistula* 69.11.1.

[192] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.11. Cf. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform," 125; Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 358.

[193] Cyprian, *Epistula* 57.4.2.

[194] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.9.2, 12.1 Cf. Karl Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 200–205.

Hence, while Cyprian closely connected the Spirit, baptism, and salvation, he did make them inseparable. In Cyprian's mind, the Holy Spirit retained his sovereignty, for he would depart from baptized people when they left the church and then later return if they repented and returned to the church.

Conclusion

In Cyprian's thought, baptism was linked to the saving work of the Holy Spirit, who was given only to the spiritual church, so that the limits of the spiritual church were demarcated within the confines of the visible church. Cyprian thus denied that schismatics and heretics could perform valid baptisms. After Cyprian, Latin theology moved more towards Stephen's understanding of baptism as valid *ex opere operato*. Cyprian saw this position as arrogant and irreverent, self-contradictory and ill-considered, even arrogant and presumptuous.[195] He likened those who professed it to the Israelites, of whom God said "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far removed from me. But in vain do they worship me, for they teach the commandments and doctrines of men" (Isa 29:13).[196]

For Cyprian, baptism was a vital part of the Christian life. The sacrament served as the seminal moment when the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers, expiated their sin, and applied Christ's work upon the cross. Cyprian did not believe a person ever needed a second baptism if the first one was valid. Even when people lost the indwelling Spirit by becoming schismatics, they only needed the bishop to lay his hands upon them to be reconciled with the church and receive the Spirit of God again. However, if

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[195] "Nam inter cetera uel superba uel ad rem non pertinentia uel sibi ipsi contraria quae inperite atque inprouide scipsit." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.1.2.10–12. "Quae ista obstinatio est quaeue praesumptio humanam traditionem diuinae disposition anteponere nec animaduertere indignari et irasci deum." 74.3.157–59. In contrast, Hinchliff saw this development as a positive one that fits better with modern minds. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 117–18.

[196] "Populus iste labiis honorificant me, cor uero eorum longe separatum est a me. Sine causa autem colunt me mandata et doctrinas hominum docents." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.3.1.61–63. Cf. *Epistula* 67.2; 63.14.

someone had gone through a baptismal rite while in a heretical or schismatic church, then that person needed to be truly baptized. A valid baptism required more than performing a specific ceremony; the person had to receive their baptism from the true church. Otherwise, the person went through a worthless ritual and simply got soaked.

Therefore, while Cyprian sometimes said that people were saved by baptism, he did not mean they were saved by the sacrament *per se*. He connected baptism to salvation in that he believed the Christian life officially began at that moment. During the baptismal ceremony, the Holy Spirit indwelled new believers, expiated their sin, and gave them the grace to live the Christian life. Catechumens could be saved if they died before their baptisms. Likewise, former heretics and schismatics could also be saved if they were deceived by Stephen's position into not receiving baptism. Nevertheless, baptism normally served as the moment when the Holy Spirit applied many aspects of salvation so that the sacrament symbolized the union between the visible and spiritual church.

CHAPTER 7

THE EUCHARISTS, THE CHURCH, AND SALVATION

Introduction

Since Cyprian maintained a strong connection between the spiritual and visible church, he connected salvation to baptism since at that time the Holy Spirit indwelled new believers, giving them a spiritual rebirth. The church alone held the keys to the sacrament of baptism, so the church was the gateway and guardian of the new birth. After experiencing spiritual renewal, Christians worshipped God and matured within the church through partaking the eucharist, which served as a way for Christians to offer a sacrifice to God. This act did not save them, but it could serve as a form of worship since it memorialized Christ's sacrifice that had saved them. In this way, the eucharist also connected the church and salvation. Departing from the church meant losing the sacraments. In other words, leaving the church not only meant losing the saving grace given at baptism but also the ability to grow in Jesus Christ and to worship God with the eucharist.[1]

Memorial Sacrifice

Cyprian probably held to two sacraments (baptism and the eucharist) because he treated these two alone in *Epistula* 63.[2] However, he never explicitly enumerated how many ordinances were given to the church, nor did he give a definition for a sacrament.

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[1] David Paull Knievim, "Christ, the Gospel, and the Church: The Church's Participation in the Salvation of Its Members," (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 15, 17–19; Robert E. Webber, "Evangelism and Christian Formation in the Early Church," *Reformation & Revival Journal* 13, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 84.

[2] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.8–9.

Campbell wrote that Cyprian began to form a sacramental theology with the linking of form and matter, but he never professed a full sacramental theology like what later developed in the medieval period.[3] Cyprian certainly connected the sign to the signified, so that Augustine later could easily take Cyprian's view and develop the definition of a sacrament as a physical sign of an invisible reality.[4]

The eucharist for Cyprian memorialized the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. As exemplified and prescribed by Christ at the Last Supper and typified in the various illusions in the Old Testament, the wine stood for the blood that Christ spilled when crushed on the cross, and the bread represented his broken body.[5] Cyprian wrote, "[Christ] offered [himself] as a sacrifice to the Father and directed that [the eucharist] should be done in remembrance of [him]."[6] In fact, Cyprian called the eucharist the sacrament of the cross.[7] Jesus Christ thus had ordained the eucharist as a means for the church to memorialize his sacrifice upon the cross.

Beyond memorializing Christ's sacrifice, the eucharist also gave Christians a way to make a sacrifice to God.[8] The primary form of worship for both the Greco-Romans and for the Jews was sacrificing. The former offered sacrifices to various gods and goddesses, hoping either to placate their wrath or to seek their favor. Greco-Romans even built shrines into their own homes, where they presented offerings to the *genius* (the

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[3] Phillip Campbell, ed., *The Complete Works of Saint Cyprian of Carthage* (Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing, 2013), 447.

[4] Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 26.50, in *Augustin: On the Holy Spirit, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises* (1887; repr., American ed., trans. Philip Schaff, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995).

[5] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.6–13.

[6] "Nam si Iesus Christus dominus et deus noster ipse est summus ssacerdos dei patrist et sacrificium patri se ipsum primus optulit et hoc fieri in sui commemoratione praecepit…" Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.14.4.275–78.

[7] Cyprian, *De zelo et livore* 17.

[8] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 25–26; *Epistula* 1.1.1; 37.1.2; 59.18.1; 63.9.3, 14.4, 15.2; 65.1.2; 69.8.3.

spirit of the household) and to the *lares* (the spirits of the place). Greco-Roman people

hoped these minor gods would protect them and help them to prosper.[9] Christians did not

offer the eucharist for the same reasons, but the sacrament serve as a way for them to

worship God.[10] Since the eucharist memorialized Christ's sacrificial death, Cyprian

believed partaking of the eucharist was akin to offering a sacrifice to God:

> And because at every sacrifice [i.e., the eucharist] that we offer we mention the passion of our Lord (indeed, the passion of our Lord is the sacrifice we offer), then we should follow exactly what the Lord did. And Scripture confirms that as often as we offer the cup in remembrance of the Lord and His passion, we are doing what all are agreed the Lord did before us.[11]

In other words, the eucharist could serve as a sacrifice for Christians because the

eucharist memorialized Christ's sacrifice upon the cross.

   Some studies have imposed later views of the eucharist onto Cyprian's

thought, including seeing the eucharist as a re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice and as

having a physical presence of Jesus Christ in the elements. Maurice de la Taille and

Pierre Batiffol took the above passage to mean that the eucharist for Cyprian did not just

memorialize Christ's death but re-presented his death to God, thus making the cross and

the eucharist two parts of one salvific event.[12] However, Johanny rightly emphasized that

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[9] For descriptions of Greco-Roman religion compared to Christianity, see Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald, eds., *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Context* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 105–34; James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1999), 59–109; Bruce W. Longenecker, *In Stone and Story: Early Christianity in the Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 37–118.

[10] When questioned why Christians do not make sacrifices like the Greco-Romans and Jews, Minucius Felix drew from Romans 12:1–2 to argue that Christians make offerings to God through living godly lives. Therefore, Cyprian departed from his forebearer when he made the eucharist the primary way Christians sacrifice to God. Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 32.

[11] "Et quia passionis eius mentionem in sacrificiis omnibus facimus, passio est enim domini sacrificium quod offerimus, nihil aliud quam quod ille fecit facere debemus. Scrptura enim dicit ut quotienscumque calicem in commemorationem domini et passionis eius offerimus, id quod constat dominum fecisse faciamus." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.17.1.308–13.

[12] Pierre Batiffol, *Leçons sur la messe* (1927; repr., New York: Wentworth Press, 2019), 176–77. Raymond Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage," in *The Eucharist of the Early Christians*, ed. Willy Rordof, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1978), 165–67; Maurice de la Taille, "Le sens du mot 'Passio' dans la lttre LXIII de saint Cyprien," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 21 (1931): 580–81.

for Cyprian the sacrifice of the eucharist was a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice that led to a life of personal sacrifice, even martyrdom. It did not entail a re-presentation of Christ's atoning work, as held in modern Catholicism.[13] Cyprian did not state that the eucharist and the cross served as one salvific work, nor did he explain the eucharist as a re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice elsewhere in his literature. Thus, the language in this passage should be interpreted as the following: The sacrifice that Christians make is not a generic sacrifice but a memorial of Christ's sacrifice, which is why bishops always mentions the passion of Jesus Christ when celebrating the eucharist.[14]

The presence of Jesus Christ within the elements for Cyprian must also be addressed. Cyprian did not work from the divisions created in the Reformation period concerning the real presence versus spiritual presence versus symbolic presence.[15]Since he did not directly address the issue, no scholarship can speak with complete certainty. Nevertheless, he closely connected the sign with the signified. As a result, sometimes his eucharistic language tended towards a real presence.[16] He called the wine "sanctified by [our] Lord's blood" (*sanctificatus in Domini sanguine*).[17] Similarly, he connected the eucharistic bread to Christ as the Bread of Life.[18] Cyprian held such a strong connection between the sign and the signified that he not only tended to use real-presence language, but he also described the elements as sacred. According to Cyprian, a woman one time

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[13] Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage," 165–67.

[14] Additionally, the interpretation given by Taille and Batiffol did not consider Cyprian's robust hamartiology and his view of Christ's work on the cross, where he definitively redeemed Christians from sin, as described in chapter three of this dissertation.

[15] John D. Laurance, '*Priest' as Type of Christ: The Leader of the Eucharist in Salvation History according to Cyprian of Carthage* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 126.

[16] Cf. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 26.

[17] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 25.495.

[18] "For Christ is the bread of life…and we ask that this bread (Christ) should be given to us daily, that we who are in Christ, and daily receive the Eucharist for the food of salvation…He says that whoever shall eat of [his] bread shall live forever; as it is manifest that those who partake of [his] body and receive the [eucharist] by the right of communion are living…And therefore we ask that our bread—that is, Christ—may be given to us daily." Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 18.

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tried to partake of the bread after sacrificing to idols, but the bread burst into flames when

she touched it.[19] At another time, the bread turned to ashes in a man's hands for the same

reason.[20] Because the elements served as signs of a reality, they deserved respect.

Therefore, the wine did not just symbolize Christ's blood; it was a sign of his blood so

that the eucharist became invalid if it did not contain wine.[21] For this reason, Brent,

Daniélou, Johanny, A. Demoustier, H. Graβ, Johannes Betz, and Alexander Gerken have

maintained that the elements for Cyprian communicated a physical presence.[22]

However, translations of Cyprian's works have sometimes imposed a physical

presence onto the texts. Consequently, these renditions have distorted his thoughts.

Bévenot translated Cyprian in *De lapsis* 26 as saying the following:

> There was a woman too who with impure hands tried to open the locket in which
> she was keeping our Lord's holy body (*Domini sanctum*), but fire flared up from it,
> and she was too terrified to touch it. And a man who, in spite of his sin, also
> presumed secretly to join the rest in receiving of the sacrifice offered by the bishop,
> was unable to eat or even handle our Lord's sacred body (*sanctum Domini*); when
> he opened his hands, he found he was holding nothing but ashes.[23]

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[19] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 26.

[20] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 26.

[21] To portray Cyprian's thoughts accurately, this chapter differentiates between a sign and a symbol. Both point to something else. However, a sign is given by God to connect believers with what it signifies. Since it is given by God and connected to what it signifies, it cannot be forsaken or interchanged with something else. In contrast, a symbol can represent a spiritual reality, but it might not be given by God nor connected to that reality. Thus, Christians can interchange symbols that might stand for the same spiritual reality. For Cyprian, the wine and bread were God-given signs that were connected to Christ's body and blood shed upon the cross, so Christians did not have warrant to use other elements when celebrating the eucharist.

[22] Johannes Betz, *Eucharistie in der Schrift und Patristik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1979), 145; Allen Brent, trans. and ed., *On the Church,* vol. 2, *Select Letters* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006), 171; A Demoustier, "L'Ontologie de L'Eglise selon saint Cyprien," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 52 (1964): 566; J. Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 462–63; Alexander Gerken, *Theologie der Eucharistic* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1973), 85; H. Graβ, *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Tübingen, Germany: J. C. B. Mohr, 1957), 24; Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage," 173–74. Though Laurance denied that he believed Cyprian held a "real presence" view of the eucharist, Laurance believed Cyprian equated the sign and the signified to the point that he held a nascent version of the real-presence view. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 126–132, 142–147, 175–178, 215–217, 220–221.

[23] Maurice Bévenot, *St. Cyprian* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1975), 34. "Et cum quaedam arcam suam, in qua Domini sanctum fuit, minibus indignis temptasset aperire, igne inde surgente eterrita est ne auderet adtingere. Et quia alius et ipse maculatus, sacrificio a sacerdote celebrato, partem

Within context Cyprian was not talking about the bread as holding Christ's physical body but was rather describing some negative consequences of eating the holy bread. *Sanctum Domini* hence referred to the bread itself rather than Christ's body in the elements, so *sanctum Domini* should be translated "the holy bread of the Lord."[24] Thus, translations of Cyprian can impose more of a physical view upon his thought than what appeared in the original Latin.

In addition, since the eucharist primarily served as a memorial sacrifice, for Cyprian Christians only need to use the proper signs and do not need a physical presence. He drew his language for the eucharist from Scripture, which described the eucharist as the body and blood of Jesus Christ (Matt 26:26–29; cf. Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:14–23; 1 Cor 11:23–26). Since Cyprian was following the biblical language, scholarship must look at his overarching theology concerning the eucharist to interpret his descriptions of the elements as the body and blood of Christ. First, when Cyprian connected Christ as the Bread of Life to the eucharistic bread in *De Dominica oratione*, he was not talking about a real presence but was arguing that Christians should want to partake of the eucharist daily because it signified that Christ is the Bread of Life. Just as Christians should pray that the Father gives them the Bread of Life, so should they desire to take the eucharist.[25] Moreover, Cyprian did not think that the eucharist applied Christ's work upon the cross because he thought that the Holy Spirit applied salvation at baptism. Furthermore, while Cyprian believed partaking the eucharist gave Christians strength, he did not equate this subjective effect with a physical presence of Jesus Christ in the elements. Finally, Cyprian wrote, "For should anyone offer up only wine, then the blood of Christ will be

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cum ceteris ausus est latenter accipere, sanctum Domini edere et contrectare non potuit: cinerem ferre se apertis minibus inuenit. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 26.508–14.

[24] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 26.509, 512–513. Cf. Allen Brent, trans. and ed., *On the Church,* vol. 1, *Select Treatises* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), 132n52.

[25] Cyprian, *De Dominica oratione* 18.

there, but without us; whereas if only water, the people will be there, but without Christ."[26] Since the people clearly did not have a real presence in the cup, Cyprian also did not need Christ's physical presence within the elements of the eucharist for it to be effectual. For these reasons, Cyprian probably did not hold a physical view of the eucharist, especially as later espoused in the medieval and modern periods.

Subjective Effects

Since Cyprian connected the sign closely with the signified, the eucharist affected people subjectively. It did more than just serve as a memorial sacrifice; it brought the celebrants closer to God and helped them deal with the problems they faced in life.[27] Hence, when Christians sinned and were removed from fellowship with the church, they should be driven to seek peace with the church quickly so that they might partake of the eucharist again.[28]

The eucharist especially strengthened Christians for dealing with persecution and possibly martyrdom.[29] The church again faced the threat of persecution in the spring of 253 from Gallus (r. 251–253).[30] Therefore, the bishops of North Africa held a council at Carthage to discuss how to prepare the *lapsi* for a renewed period of testing. The attendees decided that, while they should not become laxists, they should nevertheless relax their standards so that more *lapsi* could be reconciled with the church. The Carthaginian council of 251 had stated that the *lapsi* should demonstrate their repentance for a long time, with automatic reconciliation only granted when someone was on his/her

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[26] "Nam si uinum tantum quis oferat, sanguis Christi incipit esse sine nobis. Si uero aqua sit sola,plebs incipit esse sine Christo." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.13.3.238–40.

[27] Michael A. G. Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers: Who They Were and How They Shaped the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 96.

[28] Cyprian, *De dominica oratione* 18.

[29] Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers*, 97; Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage," 174–78.

[30] The threat of persecution under Gallus never materialized.

deathbed.[31] In contrast, the council of 253 remarked that bishops should grant reconciliation to all *lapsi* who had remained with the church.[32] Those who had returned to paganism or who had become heretics or schismatics did not qualify, nor should bishops grant an honorary reconciliation to those who had already died.[33] This renewed access to the eucharist would strengthen the *lapsi* with the hope of salvation and protect them from apostatizing a second time.[34] Cyprian stated:

> We must fortify and protect them with the body and blood of Christ [i.e., the eucharist]. Since the [eucharist] has been appointed for this purpose, to be a safeguard to those who receive it, those whom we would have safe against the [enemy] we must now arm with the protection of the Lord's banquet [i.e., the eucharist]. How, I ask, are we to teach and incite them to shed their own blood by confessing the name of Christ, if we deny to them on the eve of going into battle the blood of Christ [i.e., the eucharist]?[35]

As a memorial of Christ's sacrifice, the eucharist helped give Christians the resolve to confess him when persecuted and possibly to give up their lives for him.

Laurance has argued that Cyprian saw persecution as "the same sacrifice as that of the [eucharist]," so Christians did not necessarily need to take the sacrament during persecution.[36] However, while both martyrdom and the eucharist illustrated Christ's suffering for the church, the latter reminded Christians of what Jesus Christ had done for them on the cross. This reminder fortified them to endure persecution and

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[31] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.17.3.

[32] Cyprian, *Epistula* 57.1–2.

[33] Cyprian, *Epistula* 57.3.1–2.

[34] Cyprian, *Epistula* 57.

[35] "Ut quos excitamus et hortamur ad proelium non inermes et nudos relinquamus, sed protection sanguinis et corporis Christi muniamus, et cum ad hoc fiat eucharistia ut possit accipientibus esse tutela, quos tutos esse contra aduersarium uolumus, munimento dominicae saturitatis armemus. Nam quomodo doemus aut prouocamus eos in confessione nominis sanguinem suum fundere, si eis militaturis Christi sanguinem denegamus?" Cyprian, *Epistula* 57.2.2.45–52.

[36] Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ,* 185–88. Logically, Laurance's interpretation meant that the *lapsi* did not need to return to the church to be strengthened for confession and martyrdom because the persecution itself would strengthen them. If Laurance's interpretation is correct, then Cyprian would have been undermining his attempts to bring the *lapsi* back into the church.

possibly martyrdom.[37] After the council of 253, Cyprian reiterated this sentiment. The *lapsi* will not have the strength and courage for martyrdom without the ordinance: "His heart fails if it is not fired and fortified by receiving the [eucharist]."[38] Thus, the Lord's Supper subjectively strengthened believers to face persecution and other great trials of the Christian life.

Along with helping Christians endure persecution, Cyprian believed the eucharist also aided in shaping them into the image of Jesus Christ. The intoxicating wine of Genesis 9 and Psalm 23:5 for Cyprian foreshadowed the need to use wine when administering the sacrament.[39] However, he noted that the ordinance did not intoxicate people in the same way as excessive drinking:

> It is obvious that the Lord's cup intoxicates in such a way that drinking it makes men sober. It restores their minds to spiritual wisdom. By it everyone recovers his senses, turning away from a taste of these earthly things towards an appreciation of the things of God. And just as by drinking that ordinary wine we put our minds at ease, we become relaxed in spirit, and we lay aside all our troubles and cares, so, too, after drinking the blood of the Lord and [his] saving draught, we lay aside all memory of the old man, we forget his former worldly ways, and our hearts, which before were troubled and distressed under the tormenting and crushing weight of sins, are put at ease, and become joyful through God's merciful bounty. In brief, to drink this cup in the [church] of the Lord can indeed bring us joy.[40]

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[37] Cyprian, *Epistula* 58.1, 9.

[38] "Et mens deficit quam non recepta eucharistia erigit et accendit." Cyprian, *Epistula* 57.4.2.87–88.

[39] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.3, 11. "Your cup which intoxicates is truly excellent" (Ps 23:5). Campbell rightly noted that Cyprian's Latin translation of the Psalms differed quite a bit from common English translations, which usually state something like "my cup overflows." However, Campbell wrongly attributed this Latin reading to the Vulgate. Cyprian lived well before the Vulgate translation and instead worked from an older Latin translation. Campbell, *The Complete Works*, 448. For a summary concerning what the manuscripts reveal concerning Cyprian's Latin translation of the Bible, see H. A. G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to Its Early History, Text, and Manuscripts* (2016; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 9–14.

[40] "Quod scilicet calix dominicus sic bibentes inebriet ut sobrios faciat, ut mentes ad spiritalem sapientiam redigat, ut a sapore isto saeculari ad intellectum dei unusquisque resipiscat, et quemadmodum uino isto communi mens soluitur et anima relaxatur et tristitia omnis exponitur, ita et poto sanguine domini et poculo salutary exponatur memoria ueteris hominis et fiat obliuio conuersationis pristinae saecularis et maestum pectus ac triste quod prius peccatis angentibus premebatur diuinae indulgentiae laetitia resoluatur; quod tunc demum potest laeitificare in ecclesia domini bibentem." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.11.3.200–210.

Cyprian thus saw the eucharist as paradoxically producing a sober intoxication, an idea later appropriated by Augustine.[41] The eucharist did not dull the brain; it opened the mind to spiritual wisdom. The Lord's Supper also gave Christians a taste of heaven so that they forsook earthly matters and wealth. The ordinance encouraged them to lay aside their old ways and to participate more fully in their new Christian life. Since the eucharist was a memorial sacrifice that pointed to the cross, the ordinance helped remove subjective feelings of guilt and shame associated with sin as Christians remembered God's mercy in giving his Son. [42] The Lord's Supper thus had a relaxing affect akin to the moderate drinking of ordinary wine.[43] In these ways, the eucharist brought joy and peace to Christians, thus encouraging them as they faced both the ordinary troubles of life and the extraordinary circumstances of persecution.[44]

John David Penniman capitalized upon the passage quoted above to argue that the primary purpose of the eucharist for Cyprian was to heal believers spiritually. Since the Greco-Romans believed that wine had medicinal benefits for the body, then Cyprian maintained that the eucharistic wine had medicinal benefits on the soul.[45] While Cyprian sometimes used medicinal language to describe sin and salvation, he emphasized the objective reasons for taking the eucharist. Namely, it memorialized Christ's death and provided a way for Christians to sacrifice to God. When Cyprian did talk about the subjective effects, he more often said that the sacrament strengthened Christians,

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[41] Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* 5.13 in Augustine, *Confessions* (2002; 3rd repr., trans. Garry Wills, New York: Penguin Books, 2006). Also, see Raniero Cantalamessa, *Sober Intoxication of the Spirit: Filled with the Fullness of God*, trans. Marsha Daigle-Williams (Cincinnati: Servant, 2005).

[42] For further explanation on how the eucharistic wine for Cyprian produced a sober intoxication, see Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers*, 96–97.

[43] Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers*, 96.

[44] Cyprian, *Epistula* 58.1–2.

[45] John David Penniman, "The Health-Giving Cup: Cyprian's *Ep.* 63 and the Medicinal Power of Eucharistic Wine," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 189–201. Cf. 1 Timothy 5:22.

especially to face persecution, and that the ordinance helped lead them towards greater sanctification. He did not stress a healing effect for the eucharist. Thus, Penniman overemphasized Cyprian's medicinal language, and Penniman based his interpretation too much upon Cyprian's Greco-Roman context.

Along with helping believers towards sanctification and preparing them for the troubles of life, Cyprian also spoke of the eucharist as a unifying element for the church.[46] Just as bread was made from many grains and wine was pressed from many grapes, so the church was filled with many people united in Jesus Christ. Thus, bread and wine symbolized the unity of the people of God within the church.[47] Therefore, members of a church had to come to the eucharist in union with one another to celebrate it appropriately. If a Christian held any animosity against another Christian, he/she first had to attempt reconciliation.[48] For this reason, schismatic churches could not perform valid eucharistic services. Cyprian called their attempts to administer the sacrament "counterfeit altars, illegal priesthoods, sacrilegious sacrifices, and spurious titles."[49] Schismatic congregations did not exist as true churches, and they also had generated disunity within the church, both which countered the unifying aspect of the eucharist.[50] Hence, they were performing false eucharistic sacrifices.[51] Additionally, when people transgressed and were removed from fellowship with the church, they were also barred from taking the Lord's Supper. This prohibition not only protected them from the negative consequences of taking the sacrament in an unworthy manner, but it also

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[46] J. Patout Burns, "Cyprian of Carthage," *The Expository Times* 120, no. 10 (June 2009): 474; Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers*, 97; Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage," 173–74.

[47] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.5.2; 63.13.4; 69.5.2.

[48] Cyprian, *De dominica oratione* 4; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 13.

[49] "Falsa altaria et inlicita sacerdotia et sacrificial sacrilege et nomina adulterata." Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.1.4.31–33.

[50] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 23; *Epistula* 64.1.4.

[51] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 17.

symbolized that those under discipline were not in perfect fellowship with the church because of their sin.[52]

Not only could the eucharist generate subjective ease and strength, but sometimes negative consequences occurred when a person partook of it in an unworthy manner. Cyprian wrote *De lapsis* to defend his *via media* position against the laxist party in Carthage led by his former deacon Felicissimus. In the work, Cyprian argued that bishops should not immediately reconcile a *lapsus* with the church but wait until the person demonstrated true repentance. In *De lapsis* 25–26, Cyprian described the negative consequences that came upon those who sacrificed to idols and did not show remorse. In one case, a young child vomited up the eucharistic wine because her nurse had led the babe to partake of some pagan sacrifices. Though the girl was too young to know that she had sinned, the eucharist made her noticeably ill and nauseous.[53] In another case, a young woman tried to take the sacrament without revealing that she had secretly apostatized by making a sacrifice to the Greco-Roman gods prior to the meeting. However, when she consumed the elements, she suddenly began choking and struggling to breathe.[54] Thus, partaking the eucharist in an unworthy manner could lead to negative consequence: "What is received brings no blessing to the unworthy since the Holy One [i.e., the Holy Spirit] has fled and the saving grace is turned to ashes."[55] In other words, if *lapsi* would not repent, then they lose saving grace and the Holy Spirit, without which the eucharist at best had no positive benefits and at worse generated harmful consequences.

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[52] Cyprian, *De dominica oratione* 18.

[53] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 25.

[54] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 26.

[55] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 26.

Valid Administration

Cyprian placed great importance upon using wine and bread because they alone could signify Christ's broken body and spilled blood on the cross.[56] As demonstrated by the letter of Firmilianus to Cyprian (*Epistula* 75), the bishop of Carthage became an influential figure in the wider church following the Decian persecution. He had acted skillfully during the *lapsi* controversy and had demonstrated great compassion towards the sick during the plague of 253, which had devastated Carthage.[57] He also held the preeminent *cathedra* of Latin North Africa as the bishop of Carthage, which gave him special prominence in that area of the Roman Empire. Thus, around 255, Cyprian had the credibility to write *Epistula* 63, a circular letter to Caecilius of Biltha and other bishops in Latin North Africa concerning the eucharist and its proper administration.[58]

Allen Brent, A. Hamman, and Daniel J. Sheerin called *Epistula* 63 the first treatise written on the eucharist.[59] Cyprian certainly detailed much of his eucharistic theology in this treatise. However, to interpret the work correctly, it should be understood as a situational letter that primarily addressed the specific issues of the proper elements of

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[56] Campbell, *The Complete Works*, 448.

[57] Cyprian, *Epistula* 75.

[58] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.17.2. The letter gives little information to help with dating. However, the emphasis upon the possibility of persecution implies a date after the Decian persecution. The lack of reference to Gallus' threat of a new persecution prevents the date from being place too close after the Decian persecution. Thus, a date c. 255 is most probable. Additionally, Cyprian did not say why he wrote to Caecilius. The letter did not address his administration of the eucharist, so he was probably celebrating it properly. Moreover, the letter clearly was intended to circulate around North Africa and beyond. Since *Epistula* 67 featured him as one of the major bishops of the Carthaginian council of 256, possibly even the second most prominent bishop after Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage probably wrote the letter to Caecilius to give the letter extra credibility as it circulated. Cf. Brent, *On the Church*, 2:171; Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 3:287–91; Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 291, 366; Daniel J. Sheerin, *The Eucharist* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1986), 256. Campbell argued that Cyprian wrote the letter to the elderly presbyter Caecilius, who had converted Cyprian. However, the recipient was probably the bishop Caecilius of Biltha for the reasons listed above. Campbell, *The Complete Works*, 447; cf. Pontus, *Vita Cypriani* 4.

[59] Brent, *On the Church*, 2:171; A Hamman, "Eucharist. I. In the Fathers," in *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, ed. Angelo Di Berardino, trans. Adrian Walford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1:293; Sheerin, *The Eucharist*, 256. Cf. Pierre Batiffol, *Études d'Histoire et de Théologie Positive*, vol. 2, *L'Eucharistie: La presence réelle et la transubstantiation* (1923; repr., Forgotten Books, London: 2019), 237–38; Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 2, *The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus* (1950; repr., Yonkers, NY: Thomas More Press, 1986), 381.

the eucharist and its valid administration.[60] In Cyprian's view, some bishops were not celebrating the oridance correctly. They were supposed to mix water and wine in the cup, but instead they were imbibing water alone. The practice of using only water or wine did not start in the mid-third century.[61] Irenaeus had argued for the mixing of water and wine against the Ebionites.[62] Clement of Alexandria had contended for the same thing against the Encratites.[63] Thus, other church leaders had faced people who were using only water or wine. Contrary to these heretical groups, however, Cyprian wrote that he believed his fellow bishops were merely ignorant of the biblical teaching.[64] G. W. Clarke and Johanny took Cyprian's statements as merely diplomatic.[65] However, Cyprian gave no reason to doubt that he really believed these bishops were acting out of ignorance. He also did not write the letter in an acerbic tone, as he sometimes did against obstinate opponents. While he warned that those who refused to listen would face divine condemnation, the tone of the letter hints that he assumed the bishops would acquiesce to the divine precepts for the eucharist. Since he held a high view of tradition, and since improper action oftentimes belied wrong belief, Cyprian argued that bishops had to mix wine and water when administrating the eucharist.

While drawing from tradition, Cyprian contended for his position by pointing to Scripture. For Cyprian, the Old Testament contained ecclesiological and Christological

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[60] Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 1.

[61] Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage," 160.

[62] The Ebionites were an early Judaizing heresy of the church. According to Irenaeus, they only use water in the eucharist cup. He claimed this practice came from their attempts to cling to the world rather than their acceptance of eternal life through trusting in a fully divine Jesus Christ. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 5.1.3.

[63] The Encratites were a Gnostic group that held to strict asceticism. According to Clement, their name meant temperance and came from their refusal to drink anything but water. Clement of Alexandria, *Παιδαγωγός* 2.2.32, in Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor* (repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001).

[64] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.1.1, 17.2.

[65] Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 3:290; Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage," 160.

typology that indicated the eucharist had to include wine. He started with Genesis.

Noah's intoxication after surviving the Flood prefigured Christ's actions at the Last

Supper. While Noah's intoxication should not be emulated, he was still a type for Jesus

Christ in that both Noah and Christ drank wine, not water (Gen 9; Matt 26; Mark 14;

Luke 22).[66] Similarly, Cyprian followed Hebrews 5 in seeing Melchizedek in Genesis 14

and Psalm 110 as a type for Christ. [67] Just as Melchizedek offered wine and bread to

Abraham, so Christ served those elements at the Last Supper. Thus, wine and bread were

necessary for a valid eucharist. Finally, Cyprian believed Judah served as a type for Jesus

Christ as well. Jacob had predicted that Judah would wash his clothes with wine,

indicating the prosperity connected to his kingly role (Gen 49).[68] Cyprian applied an

ecclesiological and Christological interpretation so that the passage predicted Christ's

death and that wine would symbolize that death.[69]

Similarly, Cyprian drew from the wisdom literature of the Old Testament.

Psalm 23:5 in Cyprian's Bible said, "Your cup which intoxicates is truly excellent."[70]

This imagery illustrated the blessings that God had given the psalmist. However, Cyprian

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[66] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.3. Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 1.8; *De lapsis* 19; also cf. Michael Andrew Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in Third-Century Exegesis* (Tübingen, Germany: JC. B. Mohr, 1971), 563–64.

[67] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.4.1. "And Melchizedek, the king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, for he was a priest of the highest God and he blessed Abraham" (Gen 14:18–19). "Before the daystar, I begot you. You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." "Before the daystar I begot you. You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4). Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 1.8; Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible,* 564–65. Jesus Christ fulfilled the promises given to Abraham of bringing forth children of God from all the nations (Luke 19:9; Gal 3:6). Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.4.2–3. "Salvation has come to this house today, for this man, too, is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9). "Abraham believed in God and this belief was credited to him as justice. And so, you can recognize that it is the men of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, announced beforehand to Abraham that in him all the nations would be blessed. So it is that men of faith are blessed along with the faithful Abraham." (Gal 3:6–9).

[68] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.6.2. "He shall wash his raiment in wine and his robe in the blood of the grape" (Gen 49:11).

[69] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.6.1–2. Cf. Novatian, *De Trinitate* 21, in Novatian, *The Trinity* (1974; 2nd repr., trans. Russell J. DeSimone, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

[70] "Calix tuus inebrians perquam optimus" (Ps 23:5). Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.11.2.194–95.

called the Holy Spirit the ultimate author of this passage, which then gave Cyprian

warrant to see ecclesiological typology in this cup. The eucharistic chalice for Cyprian

was excellent because of the strength and courage it gave Christians for persecution.[71]

Moreover, he argued that the sacramental cup should not hold water alone because water

cannot intoxicate and thus fulfill this Old Testament typology.[72]

Cyprian also saw ecclesiological typology for the eucharist in Proverbs 9,

which called readers to seek godly wisdom rather than folly.[73] Since for Cyprian the

passage came from the Holy Spirit (through Solomon), Proverbs 9 also prophesied about

Jesus Christ and the church: "Likewise, too, through the person of Solomon, the Holy

Spirit forecasts a type of the sacrifice of our Lord which [was] to come, referring to a

victim offered in sacrifices, to bread and wine, and even to an altar and the apostles."[74]

Since Solomon had written that Wisdom (a type for Jesus Christ) had mixed in her own

wine, then the Holy Spirit was telling the church that the eucharistic cup had to be a

mixture of wine and water.[75]

Cyprian also pulled from the wisdom literature in order to warn any bishop

who would not heed Cyprian's teachings concerning the eucharist. He urged them to pay

attention to Psalms 49:16–18: "Why do you proclaim my laws and profess my covenant

with your lips? For you hate my teachings and my words you have cast behind you. On

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[71] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.11.

[72] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.11.2.

[73] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.5.1–2. "Wisdom has built her own home, supporting it with seven pillars, She has slaughtered her own sacrificial victims, she has mixed in her bowl her own wine, and she has prepared her own table. And she has sent forth her own servants, with loud proclamation inviting men to partake of her wine bowl. Whoever is simple-minded, she says, let him come to visit me. And to those who lack understanding she has said: Come and eat of my bread and drink the wine which I have mixed for you" (Prov 9:1–5). Cf. *Ad Fortunatum* 11; *Ad Quirinum* 1.20; 2.2, 11.

[74] "Sed et per Salomonem spiritus sanctus typum dominici sacrificii ante praemonstrat, immolatae hostiae et panis et uini sed et altaris et apostolorum faciens mentionem." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.5.1.72–74.

[75] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.5.2.

seeing a thief, you hastened to join him and your lot you have shared with adulterers."[76] While this Psalm denounced the Israelites for not keeping the laws under the old covenant, Cyprian applied it to his peers who were not following Christ's commands.[77] They needed to heed Cyprian's teachings, or they would face divine punishment for disobeying Jesus Christ.

Cyprian also saw typology in the writings of the prophets. Because he believed the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets to the church, the prophetic writings contained Christological and ecclesiological typology, as well as direct warnings for the third century.[78] For Cyprian, God gave specific instructions concerning the eucharist to Isaiah. The prophet likened the Israelites to God's vineyard, which he would destroy (Isa 5). Cyprian interpreted the passage as saying the Israelites lacked wine when they became religiously impure. Similarly, those who did not use wine for the eucharist were spiritually destitute.[79] Isaiah also wrote, "Why is your clothing ruddy, and your apparel as from the treading of the full and well-trodden wine vat?" (Isa 63:2).[80] For Cyprian, the passage predicted Christ's death because he likewise had to be beaten and crushed before his blood could inaugurate the new covenant. Water alone could not symbolize this death according to this passage, because how could water make clothing ruddy, or why would it need to be well-trodden?[81] Similarly, Cyprian took passages in Jeremiah that spoke about

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[76] "Ad quid exponis iustificationes meas et adsumis testamentum meum per os tuum? Tu autem odisti disciplinam et abiecisti sermons meos retro. Si uidebas furem, concurrebas ei et inter moechos particulam tuam ponebas." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.18.1.323–29. Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 3.66, 68; *De bono patientiae* 1; *De habitu virginum* 1; *Epistula* 67.9

[77] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.18.2. Cf. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 3:301. In quoting this passage, Cyprian also equated neglecting Christ's commands concerning the eucharist to such egregious sins as adultery and thief, demonstrating the great importance Cyprian gave to using the right elements.

[78] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.7.1.

[79] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.12.1. "For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel" (Isaiah 5:7).

[80] "Quare rubicunda sun uestimentua tua, et indumenta tua uelut a calcatione torcularis pleni et percalcati." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.7.1.95–97.

[81] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.7.1–2.

false prophets and Israel's spiritual idolatry, and the bishop of Carthage directly applied these passages to bishops who might still refuse to use a mixed cup. [82] Because the Holy Spirit authored the prophetic literature, the same curses that were placed upon the Israelites would also be placed upon those who refused to heed Cyprian's letter and continue to offer only water for the eucharist.

The New Testament for Cyprian only confirmed the need to use wine and bread. Jesus Christ had said "I am the true wine."[83] While this axiom meant salvation came from union with him, Cyprian connected it to the eucharist to argue that only wine could properly symbolize union with Christ. Revelation 17 also served as a biblical text for Cyprian's position concerning the need for water and wine in the eucharistic cup for it to denote union with Christ. The harlot of Babylon sat upon water, which represented the pagan nations.[84] Cyprian drew from this passage that water in Scripture thus represented people. In contrast, when the Bible spoke of wine, it signified Christ's blood.[85] Therefore, Cyprian theologized that the combination of water and wine best illustrates the union between Christ and the church.[86] Cyprian similarly argued that Christ's use of bread at the Last Supper, as well as his teaching that he was the Bread of Heaven (John 6), demonstrated to Christians that the eucharist required bread for it to symbolize union with Christ.[87] The flour symbolized his body, and the water represented the church. When

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[82] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.18.2. "And she has committed adultery with wood and stone, and yet for all this she has not returned to me" (Jer 3:9–10). "What is chaff to the wheat? Therefore, behold I am hostile with the prophets, says the Lord, for they each steal my words from his neighbor and my people they seduce with their lies and their errors" (Jer 23:28–32).

[83] "Ego sum uitis uera." (John 15:1). Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.2.1.25–26.

[84] "The waters you saw, upon which that harlot sits, are the peoples and populations, the nations of the heathens and tongues" (Rev 17:15).

[85] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.8.1.

[86] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.13.

[87] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.13.3–4.

mixed, they formed one loaf.[88] Thus, both bread and wine were necessary for the

eucharist to strengthen ecclesial unity.

Ultimately, Cyprian argued that those who were not using wine were

following human tradition rather than Christ's commands. Jesus Christ had prescribed the

proper elements for the eucharist at the Last Supper, when he used wine and bread (Matt

26:27–29; 1 Cor 11:23–26).[89] Since bishops were imitating Christ when administering the

ordinance, they had to follow his example.[90] Additionally, Cyprian interpreted the

wedding at Cana (John 2) ecclesiologically so that Christ through turning the water into

wine was teaching the church that they could not use water alone for the eucharist.[91]

Christ had warned his disciples that they had to obey him. Cyprian believed this warning

applied to the church as well, since they inherited the apostolic faith.[92] Likewise, Paul

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[88] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.13.3–4.

[89] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.9.2, 10.1–2, 14.1–3, 19.1. "Drink all of you of this. For this is the blood of the covenant, which shall be shed for many, for the forgiveness of sins. I say to you, I shall not drink further of this fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink with you new wine in the kingdom of my Father" (Matt 26:27–29). "The Lord Jesus, on the night [he] was betrayed, took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said: 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In like manner [he] took the cup also, after [he] had supped, and said: 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until [he] comes [again]" (1 Cor 11:23–26).

[90] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.14. Cf. Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers*, 98. While Brent, Campbell, and Johanny rightly believed the bishop for Cyprian was an imitator of Jesus Christ when administering the eucharist, they argued poorly from *Epistula* 63.10. In that text, Cyprian was talking about the correct elements of the eucharist. Bishops must follow the example of Christ at the Last Supper in using bread and wine. Brent, *On the Church*, 2:171; Campbell, *The Complete Works*, 448–49; Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage," 165–66. Similarly, Laurance wondered why Cyprian did not develop his thoughts concerning the bishop's imitation of Christ in *Epistula* 63.10. However, Cyprian was not talking about the bishop as a type for Jesus Christ in this passage but rather was justifying the need to use bread and wine as Christ did, which was Cyprian's main point of the letter. While Laurance's argument was valid overall, he weakened his case by establishing his thesis upon this incorrect interpretation of *Epistula* 63.10. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 3.

[91] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.12.1–2.

[92] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.14.1–2, 18.3. "In vain do they worship me, for they teach the doctrines and precepts of men" (Isa 29:13). "If any man breaks even the very least of these precepts and teaches men to do the same, he will be accounted the very least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:19) "This is my beloved Son, on whom my favor rests. Heed you him" (Matt 17:5). "All power is given me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and teach all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt 28:18–20). "You cast aside the precepts of God in order to establish a tradition of your own" (Mark 7:9). "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). "If you do what I prescribe to you, no longer do I call you servants but friends" (John 15:14–15). Cf.

had warned the Galatians not to abandon the gospel message that he had imparted to them (Gal 1:6–9).[93] Since the eucharist for Cyprian memorialized Christ's death, it was tied to the proclamation of the gospel. Thus, Cyprian directed Christ's and Paul's admonitions to the bishops of North Africa, warning them not to depart from the prescribed way of administering the Lord's Supper.[94] Cyprian wrote, "It becomes, therefore, evident that the blood of Christ is not offered if there is no wine in the cup, and that the Lord's sacrifice is not duly consecrated and celebrated unless the offering and sacrifice we make corresponds with [his] passion."[95]

Cyprian's opponents were arguing from ecclesiological typology as well. They pointed to Matthew 5:6 and John 4:13.[96] In these passages, Jesus Christ commanded those listening (and thus the church as well) to drink water. Cyprian's opponents believed they had found biblical warrant for using only water when administering the eucharistic cup because they were following his own hermeneutic of applying Christ's commands directly to the church. Cyprian responded first that Matthew 5:6 should be interpreted spiritually rather than ecclesiologically. Christ meant those who desire him also receive him eagerly.[97] For Cyprian, Jesus Christ could not have referred

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Ad Quirinum 1.10; 2.26; 3.96; *De Dominica oratione* 2; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 2, 19; *De zelo et livore* 12; *Epistula* 6.1; 27.3; 28.2; 43.6; 67.2; 73.5; 74.2–3; 76.6.

[93] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.10.3. "I am as astonished that you turn so quickly away from [him] who called you to grace, to follow another gospel. Not that there is another gospel; only that there are some people who disturb your minds, trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angle from heaven should preach a gospel different from that which we have proclaimed to you, he is to be held accursed. And as we have said before, so I do say again now: If anyone proclaims to you a gospel different from that which you have received, let him be held accursed" (Gal 1:6–9). Cf. *Epistula* 27.3.

[94] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.10.3.

[95] "Vnde apparet sanguinem Christi non offerri, si desit uinum calici, nec sacrificium dominicum legitima sanctificatione celebrari, nisi oblatio et sacrificium nostrum responderit passioni." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.9.3.154–57.

[96] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.8.4. "Blessed are those who thirst and hunger for justice" (Matt 5:6). "All who drink of this water will thirst again, but he who drinks of the water which I shall give him will not thirst for all eternity" (John 4:13). Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 3.1.

[97] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.8.4.

to the eucharist in John 4:13 because Christ said the person who drinks this water would never thirst again. Since baptism was only done once, Christ thus was referring to baptism rather than the eucharist.[98] Hence, Cyprian's opponents could not point to either passage to justify using only water when administering the eucharist.

Cyprian also addressed a concern among some Christians regarding taking the eucharist with wine in the morning; they feared people might spot them as Christians by smelling the wine on their breadth.[99] Instead of taking a mixed cup in the morning, they proposed receiving a cup of water in the morning and partaking a mixed cup in the evenings during the common meal held by the church.[100] Cyprian first quoted Jesus Christ: "If any man is ashamed of me, the Son of man will be ashamed of him" (Mark 8:38; cf. Luke 9:26).[101] Cyprian applied this teaching to his persecuted contemporaries. They should not be ashamed of the blood of Christ by denying the wine of the eucharist.[102] Cyprian also gave two further reasons why bishops should administer the eucharist during the morning service and not at the common meal. Theologically, the eucharist and the evening meals were not equivalent.[103] Since Christ was raised from the dead at daybreak, the church should offer the eucharist as a sacrifice in the morning.[104]

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[98] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.8.4. Cf. Johanny, "Cyprian of Carthage,"160–61.

[99] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.15.2.

[100] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.16. This passage might indicate that some Christians in the third century were confusing the eucharist with the evening meals held on Sundays. Either way, Cyprian rejected the notion of equating the eucharist with these congregational meals. Cf. Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 67, in *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Pliny, *Epistula* 10.96; also cf. Brent, *On the Church* 2:172; Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 3:298–300.

[101] "Qui confuses me fuerit, confundetur eum filius hominis." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.15.3.289–90. "If I were wanting to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal 1:10). Cf. *De habitu virginum* 5; *De lapsis* 28; *Epistula* 4.5; 59.8.

[102] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.15.3.

[103] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.16.2.

[104] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.16.2. Cf. Tertullian, *De corona* 3.3, in *Latin Christianity: Its Founder Tertullian* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995). Cyprian acknowledged that Jesus Christ died in the evening, as typified by the sacrifices under the old covenant. However, Cyprian argued that Christians should still administer the eucharist in the

Practically, only some members of the church were returning for the evening meal, so administering the wine at that time would exclude a portion of the congregation.[105]

Finally, Cyprian argued that bishops should administer the eucharist to all church members, including baptized children. As described earlier, he saw a young child (too young to speak) vomit up the eucharistic wine because she previously had been given food sacrificed to idols. This passage demonstrated that in his Carthage baptized children partook of the eucharistic cup as soon as they could stomach it.[106] The young age for participants fit well with his view of the eucharist as a sacrifice, since even young children needed grace and should sacrifice to God. Additionally, Cyprian's understanding of who should take the eucharist matched his view of baptism. Christians should partake of the eucharist after their baptism, and he believed that parents should baptize their children as soon as possible.[107] Hence, even the youngest baptized members of the church received the eucharist in third-century Carthage.

In the end, Cyprian placed great importance upon using the proper elements for the eucharist. Without the proper ingredients, the bishops were not administering a valid eucharistic sacrifice. In fact, he elevated using the right elements for the Lord's Supper to the same level as proclaiming the true gospel:

> [We must make] no transgression in matters of such gravity and importance which so closely concern the very mystery of the Lord's passion and our redemption [i.e., the gospel]. Just as equally, we must make no fundamental change to what has been divinely instituted [concerning the eucharistic elements].[108]

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morning so that they could celebrate their Lord who rose again in the morning. Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.16.2. "And all the people, the assembly of the children of Israel, shall put him to death towards the evening" (Exod 12:6). "Let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice" (Ps 140:2). Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 2.15, 20; 3.11.

[105] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.16.1.

[106] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 25. Cf. Brent, *On the Church*, 1:130n50.

[107] Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.4–5.

[108] "Quod si nec minima de mandatis dominicis licet soluere, quanto magis tam magna, tam gradia, tam ad ipsum dominicae passionis et nostrae redemptionis sacramentum pertinentia fas non est

Because the eucharist memorialized Christ's sacrifice for the church, using the wrong ingredients meant denying the gospel. Celebrants had to use the elements exemplified and prescribed by Christ (i.e., wine and bread) for a valid administration to occur.[109]

Conclusion

The eucharist for Cyprian was essential for the Christian life, and its right administration was necessary for the proclamation of the gospel concerning Christ's sacrifice upon the cross. The eucharist did not save people. Instead, it strengthened Christians and gave them a way to worship God. As a memorial of Christ's sacrifice, Christians in the eucharist had their own sacrifice that they could make to God. For the sacrament to serve as a proper memorial sacrifice, bishops had to follow Christ's example in using wine and bread as the elements. These ingredients did not serve as mere symbols of Christ's body and blood but were signs connected to the reality they signified. Without the correct signs, a valid eucharist was not performed, and Christians would not receive strength from taking it. Hence, the eucharist did not grant salvation, but it pointed Christians to the one who had saved them, thus strengthening them to withstand persecution and to endure martyrdom.

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infringer aut in aliud quam quod diuinitus institutum sit humana traditione mutare?" Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.14.3.271–75.

[109] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.18.4.

PART 4

THE CHURCH AND SALVATION

CHAPTER 8

THE BISHOP, THE CHURCH, AND SALVATION

Introduction

Cyprian's belief in the union of the visible and spiritual church shaped his theology concerning the sacraments. Additionally, this core idea of the church impacted his view of the bishops, and it led him to restrict salvation to the realm of the church. Cyprian's ecclesiology has been a constant source of interest to both Catholic and Protestant scholars. On the one hand, his emphasis on church unity has resonated with much of modern Catholicism. On the other hand, he argued against the notion that ordination was permanent and against a nascent understanding of *ex opere operato*.[1] Cyprian believed bishops governed their churches, but he also held that congregations had the authority to choose and depose their own bishops. How did a strong connection between the visible and spiritual church impact Cyprian's understanding of how a bishop aided the members of his church to reach salvation? Cyprian did not see the visible and spiritual church as the exact same thing, so he did not believe salvation rested solely upon the clergy. However, since the visible and spiritual church were connected, the bishop governed his church as its spiritual head, and he was necessary for the proper administration of its sacraments.

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[1] For the modern Catholic understanding of ordination as an indelible mark and of the validity of the sacraments as *ex opere operato*, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2.1.1.2.4.; 2.2.3.6.3.

The Bishop and the Church

Govern the Visible Church

Cyprian believed in the episcopal administration of local congregations, including the bishop having the authority to set policies, exercise church discipline, and perform reconciliation.[2] Cyprian wrote, "each individual shepherd (*pastoribus*) has been assigned a portion of the flock to rule and govern (*quam regat unusquisque et gubernet*), knowing that one day he will be called upon to render an account to the Lord for his actions."[3] In other words, God gives each church one bishop, and that man governs his church under the authority and power of God. Cyprian equated the role of the bishop under the new covenant to that of the priests under the old covenant.[4] Just as the latter governed the religion of Israel in the Old Testament, the bishop led his church.[5] With divine power, the bishop protected the church's purity, guarded the true teachings of Jesus Christ, stood firm when facing dangers, served as an example of godliness, and acted as a preliminary judge prior to the final judgement:

> And it is our further duty to follow the Lord's warning counsel to us and to correct any error into which some in the past appear to have fallen, so that when [he] shall come in all [his] heavenly glory and majesty [he] may find us upholding what [he]

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[2] Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.3.2; 73.7.2. Cf. Frank Edward Brightman, "Terms of Communion and the Ministry of the Sacraments in Early Times," in *Essay on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, ed. H. B. Swete (London: MacMillan and Company, 1918), 38; J. Putout Burns, Jr., and Robin Margaret Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), 156–58, 375; Lauren Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology: Redefining the Office of the Christian Bishop" (MA thesis, Georgia Southern University, 2013), 43. Hinchliff claimed that Cyprian believed he had received divine direction through dreams, and Hinchliff said Cyprian might have maintained that all bishops had this ability. However, while Cyprian did believe people could receive visions from God, Cyprian did not say every bishop received visions, nor did he ever base his arguments upon a dream or vision that he had personally experienced. Peter Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage: The Unity of the Christian Church* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1974), 104.

[3] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.14.2. "Et singulis pastoribus portio gregis sit adscripta quam regat unusquisque et gubernet rationem sui actus domini redditurus." Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.14.2.402–3. Cf. James 3:1.

[4] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.8.1.

[5] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.4.

has counselled, observing what [he] has taught and doing what [he himself] has done.[6]

Eventually the bishop would render an account at the final judgment, so he needed to govern his church with care.[7]

In a sense, the college of bishops also governed the whole church. Episcopalianism allowed the local congregations throughout the Roman Empire to demonstrate a visible unity to an unbelieving world.[8] The bishops often corresponded with one another, routinely met in regional councils, and sometimes exchanged financial resources.[9] Through correspondence, councils, and cooperation, a "college" of bishops was formed.[10]

Cyprian could not have envisioned an ecumenical council because such a meeting remained logistically improbable before the Edict of Milan (313), but he held strongly to the need for regional councils to make major decisions.[11] Even though conciliar debates sometimes became heated, he believed the bishops would eventually

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[6] "Et quod prius apud quosdam uidetur erratum domino monente corrigere, ut cum in claritate sua et maiestate caelesti uenire coeperit, inueniat nos tenere quod monuit, obseruare quod docuit, facere quod fecit." Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.19.361–64. Cf. Cyprian, *De lapsi* 17–20*; Epistula* 18.1–3; 59.16.2; 63.19.

[7] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17–20; *Epistula* 18.1–3; *Epistula* 57.3.1–2; 59.16.2.

[8] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.24.2. Cf. J. Putout Burns, Jr., *Cyprian the Bishop* (London: Routledge, 2002), 153–54; Daniel Eguiluz, "Breaking with Superficial Treatments of Cyprian for the Sake of Evangelical Unity" (unpublished paper, 72nd annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society [virtual], November 17, 2020); Paul J. Fitzgerald, "A Model for Dialogue: Cyprian of Carthage on Ecclesial Discernment," *Theological Studies* 59, no. 2 (June 1998): 249; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 154. Hinchliff argued that Cyprian's concern with episcopal unity came just as much from practical need as from theological reflection. While true that episcopacy was beneficial, Hinchliff undervalued how much of Cyprian's ecclesiology stemmed from biblical and theological concerns. He spent much more time making biblical and theological arguments than practical ones. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 105.

[9] Cyprian, *Epistula* 66.8.3. Cf. Gary D. Badcock, *The House Where God Lives: Renewing the Doctrine of the Church for Today* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 43; Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 157, 163. Cyprian sometimes called the church the "catholic church" (*ecclesia catholica*). By using this term, he did not mean modern Catholicism but rather the whole church, in contrast to a local congregation. Cf. G. W. Clarke, trans. and ed., *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* vol. 1, *Letters 1–27* (New York: Newman Press, 1984), 351; Paulo Siniscalco and Paul Mattei, *Cyprien de Carthage: L'Unité de L'Église* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2006), 80.

[10] For a work concerning Cyprian's understanding of episcopal collegiality, see Benjamin Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage and the College of Bishops* (Minneapolis: Fortress Academic, 2018).

[11] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 155.

come to an agreement because the same Spirit was working in all of them. Therefore, if a bishop dissented from the council's decision and became a schismatic, he revealed himself to be a false bishop.[12] Through holding councils and writing letters to one another, the college was able to exercise authority over its membership. If the bishops deemed a candidate unqualified for the bishopric, they could reject his ordination and refuse to interact with him as a fellow bishop.[13] Thus, when Felicissimus and the laxist party consecrated Fortunatus as the laxist bishop of Carthage, the Carthaginian council in 252 rejected Fortunatus' ordination.[14] Afterwards, Cyprian sent Cornelius a letter with a list of true bishops recognized by the meeting. Any professing bishop not on that list was either a heretic, a schismatic, a *sacrificati,* or a *libellatici*. If any of these people had previously participated in the college of bishops, the council had revoked their ordination and membership, considering them "unregenerate and unsanctified" (*peruersum scilicet et profanum*).[15] In sum, Cyprian held a form of episcopalianism in that he believed the bishop governed his church, and the communion of the bishops allowed them to govern one universal church together.

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[12] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.5.2–3; 68.5.2; 71.3.1–2. Cf. Henk Bakker, "Toward a Catholic Understanding of Baptist Congregationalism: Conciliar Power and Authority," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 5 (2011): 166; Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 154; Eguiluz, "Breaking with Superficial Treatments"; John D. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 216–17.

[13] Cyprian, *Epistula* 45.3.1. Cf. Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage*, 89–126.

[14] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.1.1, 5.1–3, 9.1–2. Cf. Philip R. Amidon, "The Procedure of St. Cyprian's Synods," in *Church, Ministry, and Organization in the Early Church Era*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 224–36; Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 164; Geoffrey D. Dunn, "Cyprian and His *collegia*: Patronage and the Episcopal Synod of 252," *The Journal of Religious History* 27, no. 1 (February 2003): 2; G. S. M. Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1969), 34–36.

[15] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.9.3.

Symbolize the Spiritual Church

Cyprian also believed the bishops inherited the apostles' role of symbolizing the church's spiritual unity.[16] However, what was the foundation of that unity? Laurance contended that a bishop maintained his church's union with other congregations through his fellowship with the bishop of Roman.[17] However, for Cyprian the role of symbolizing the church's unity passed from Peter to all the apostles, and then from the apostles to all the bishops. The Roman bishop alone did not inherit this role.[18] According to Burns, Cyprian held that Jesus Christ built his church upon the bishops. Hence, Christ could transfer sanctifying grace through the sacraments since they were administered by the bishops. Therefore, to be disconnected from one's bishop meant losing the ability to receive the sacraments that led to salvation.[19] Burns rightly noted that departure from the bishop meant losing the grace found in the ordinances. However, for Cyprian the foundational link between the church and salvation resided in the wedding of the spiritual and visible church. The episcopal ability to administer the sacraments flowed from this connection, as demonstrated by Cyprian's arguments against the validity of sacraments performed in heretical and schismatic churches.

Campbell denied that Cyprian held to an "ethereal invisible church" altogether, arguing that he only believed in a "visible, structural unity."[20] However,

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[16] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4–5; *Epistula* 45.3.2; 66.4.2. Cf. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 205–9; Arnold Smeets, "Traces of Care and Involvement: A Semiotic Reading of Cyprian's *De unitate*," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, ed. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010), 112.

[17] Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ,* 208.

[18] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4–5; *Epistula* 59.7.3; 70.3.1; 71.3.1. Cf. Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage*, 9–18.

[19] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 113, 129, 161. Günter Klein alsoheld this view. Günter Klein, "Die hermeneutische Struktur des Kirchengedankens bei Cyprien," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 68 (1957): 57. Cf. Brian J. Arnold, *Cyprian of Carthage: His Life & Impact* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2017), 98.

[20] Phillip Campbell, ed., *The Complete Works of Saint Cyprian of Carthage* (Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing, 2013), 34n16.

Cyprian saw the true church as those indwelled by the Holy Spirit, and he did not see this spiritual church and the visible church as the same thing. Entrance into the latter did not always mean participation in the former. If people put forward a false repentance in order to be reconciled with the church, or if people maintained heretical beliefs, they were still outside the spiritual church and would face divine judgment.[21] Similar to Campbell, Arnold has maintained that Cyprian joined together the church's structure and its nature. Thus, for Cyprian schism did not just break the church's structural unity but tore its very nature apart.[22] However, it bears noting that Cyprian did not reduce ecclesial unity to a mere visible hierarchy. During the baptismal controversy, he stressed the spiritual connection between churches. While schism seemed to rind the *esse* of the church apart, in reality both the visible and spiritual church remained in one piece because they could never be truly divided. The schismatics who appeared to have divided the church had in fact left the spiritual church in their schism and established false churches devoid of the saving power of the Holy Spirit.[23] Schismatic congregations could not administer the sacraments because they had parted from the spiritual church and lost the Holy Spirit when they broke fellowship with the other congregations.[24]

Hinchliff took a different interpretive path. He admitted that "the conventional exposition of Cyprian's theory of unity" has been that the bishops served as the "glue of the church."[25] However, Hinchliff disagreed with this notion; instead, Christian love was the unifying factor.[26] He based his argument upon *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 1–3.

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[21] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17–20; *Epistula* 57.3.1–2.

[22] Arnold, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 95.

[23] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 7–8.

[24] E.g., Cyprian, *Epistula* 73–75.

[25] Hinchliff, *Cyprian,* 113.

[26] Hinchliff, *Cyprian,* 113.

Nevertheless, close reading of those chapters reveals that Cyprian was demonstrating the patristic idea that improper actions mirror false belief. Schism had occurred partly because people were disobeying Christ's commands to love. Therefore, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6–22 did not focus upon the need to love. Rather, Cyprian countered the schismatics by arguing in these chapters that Scripture describes the church as unable to be rent in two. While certainly true for the spiritual church, he thought these passages also spoke to the visible church. For him, these texts indicated that the Holy Spirit ministered only within the one, visible church. This notion led Cyprian to argue in *De ecclesiae catholic unitate* that a schismatic had necessarily left the Spirit and salvation behind. By connecting the Spirit to the visibly united church, then for Cyprian only the sacraments administered within this church were valid and efficacious. The Spirit imparted grace through those sacraments. Schismatics did not have the Spirit, so they could not perform valid baptisms. Therefore, in Cyprian's eyes, even the power of the bishops to administer the sacraments came from the strong connection between the spiritual and visible church, not merely from a bond of love between Christians. A bishop symbolized the unity of his congregations in Cyprian's view, and together the episcopal union represented the spiritual bond of Christians within one universal church.[27] As the Spirit-empowered heads of their churches, the Holy Spirit worked through the bishops to administer grace, whether through the sacraments or through biblical teaching.

Since a bishop governed his church and signified that his local congregation was a part of the universal church, a church could only have one bishop, and the people of that congregation had to maintain fellowship with him to remain within the spiritual church and keep their salvation:

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[27] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.14.1. Cf. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 162; John D. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ,* 206–209; Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 304, 307. Smeets, "Traces of Care and Involvement," 100; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 37.

> "The [church] consists of the people who remain united with their bishop…The bishop is in the [church], and the [church] is in the bishop, and whoever is not with the bishop is not in the [church]…the [church] forms one single whole [from both bishop and people] … [and the whole church is] bonded tightly together by the glue of the bishops sticking firmly to each other."[28]

During the Novatianist schism, the church in Rome seemed to exist in spiritual disunity since it had two bishops. Cyprian believed this idea contradicted the biblical teachings concerning the essential unity of the church. Since the Roman church could only have one bishop, Novatian was a false bishop in Cyprian's eyes.[29] When Cornelius was elected to the Roman see, his ordination had followed proper procedure, making him the true bishop of that church. Therefore, as Cyprian saw it, when Novatian made himself the anti-bishop of Rome, he was intruding upon Cornelius' jurisdiction.[30] Thus, a bishop symbolized the spiritual unity of his own church. Likewise, the correspondence of the bishops not only glued all the churches together into one visible church but also allowed the bishops to symbolize the one spiritual church that had spread across the Roman world by the third century.

Equal Authority

What kind of relationship did the bishops have with one another in Cyprian's thought? As an initial answer to this question, he saw all the bishops as holding the same office with equivalent authority because the role of Peter passed to the episcopal college,

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[28] "Et illi sunt ecclesia, plebs sacerdoti adunata et pastori suo grex adhaerens. Vnde scire debes episcopum in ecclesia esse et ecclsiam in episcopo et si qui cum episcopo non sit in ecclesia non esse…quando ecclesia quae catholica una est scissa non sit neque diuisa, sed sit utique conexa et cohaerentium sibi inuicem sacerdotum glutino copulate." Cyprian, *Epistula* 66.8.3.153–60. Koch pointed to certain linguistic similarities between *De unitate* and Novatian's *De trinitate* to show that Cyprian's thoughts concerning ecclesial fellowship might have been influenced by Novatian's discussions concerning the divine unity. Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen*, 93–97.

[29] Cyprian, *Epistula* 46.1.2; 59.5.2. Cf. Burns, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 375; Dunn, "Cyprian and His *collegia*," 3; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 37.

[30] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.5–6, 14–15. Cf. John Alfred Faulkner, *Cyprian: The Churchman* (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1906), 111, 165; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 43, 52; Dunn, "Cyprian and His *collegia*," 3.

not just to a single bishop.[31] Both editions of *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4–5 should be interpreted to mean that the bishops served as a cohesive unit that continued Peter's responsibility. In other words, the bishops had no formal hierarchy within their ranks, no "bishop of bishops" or "super-bishops."[32] Members shared a common office and mutual responsibilities, so no single bishop could sit as a judge over another one.[33] Truly, certain bishops had more influence in the church than others because they governed a congregation in a major city.[34] Cyprian's sway extended outside the town of Carthage, as his network of letters illustrates. Furthermore, no city had a more illustrious past than Rome, both for the Empire and for Christianity. Hence, the bishop of Rome had a lot of influence in the early church, as demonstrated by Cyprian's great concern for the Novatian schism that occurred in the Roman church.

However, some scholars have argued that Cyprian gave certain episcopal sees authority over others. Karla Pollmann and Geoffrey D. Dunn distinguished between power and authority.[35] The bishop had power (*potestas*) over his own congregation, just as a magistrate had power over his city.[36] However, the bishop's authority (*auctoritas*) depended upon his seat (*cathedra*).[37] While a bishop did not have power over his fellow

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[31]Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4–5; *Epistula* 70.3.1; 70.3.1; 71.3.1; 73.7.2. Cf. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 156; Gordon D. Harris, "Cyprian and His Role as the Faithful Bishop in Response to the Lapsed, the Martyrs, and the Confessors, Following the Decian Persecution," *Eleutheria* 1, no. 2 (June 2011): 91; Karla Pollmann, "Christianity and Authority in Late Antiquity: The Transformation of the Concept of *Auctoritas*," in *Being Christian in Late Antiquity: A Festschrift for Gillian Clark*, 156–74, ed. Carol Harrison, Caroline Humfress, and Isabella Sandwell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 163; Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage*, 9–18; Sage, *Cyprian*, 333; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 33.

[32] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 156-57; Faulkner, *Cyprian*, 165; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 33.

[33] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 156; Dunn, "Cyprian and His *collegia*," 7.

[34] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 165; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 37.

[35] Pollmann, "Christianity," 163.

[36] Pollmann, "Christianity," 164

[37] Pollmann, "Christianity," 163.

bishops, he could have authority over them. Therefore, for Dunn, the bishop of Carthage

and the bishop of Rome exemplified the ability to have authority, but not the power to

enforce that authority.[38] While potent arguments, Pollmann and Dunn equivocated.

Having real authority necessitates having the power to enforce that authority; otherwise, a

person does not have authority but merely influence.

Cyprianic scholarship concerning the relationship between the bishops has

often focused upon Cyprian's view of the Roman bishop.[39] Bévenot rightly pointed out

that the discussion could be summarized thus: what did Cyprian mean by the seat of

Peter, the Roman bishop or the college of bishops?[40] Therefore, the debate has

historically centered around the two editions of Cyprian's *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*

4–5, with one version potentially elevating the Roman bishop to a position over the other

bishops.[41] Pollmann claimed the controversy with Stephen concerning the baptism of

heretics led Cyprian to change his view on the Roman bishop, even at the risk of ruining

his arguments for church unity that he had developed in his dealings with Cornelius

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[38] Dunn, "Cyprian and His *collegia*," 3–8.

[39] Cyprian's supposedly anti-papal comments have led some studies to ignore him altogether. In his article on the primacy of the papacy in the second century, James F. McCue only mentioned Cyprian twice, first to say that he opposed the papacy (which assumes that a papacy even existed in the third century) and second to claim that his view "proved unstable" (a debatable claim). McCue never covered Cyprian's arguments, though several pages were spent on other patristic figures. James F. McCue, "The Roman Primacy in the Second Century and the Problem of the Development of Dogma." in *Church, Ministry, and Organization in the Early Church Era*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 192–95. Cyprian did not communicate much with Fabian (bishop 236–250), Lucius I (bishop 253-254), or Sixtus II (bishop 257–258). Like Cyprian, all three of these Roman bishops eventually became martyrs. The reality that five Roman bishops governed the Roman church during Cyprian's relatively short time as bishop of Carthage (bishop 248–258) illustrates the fierce persecution of Christians in Rome, contrary to the arguments of Candida Moss that the church exaggerated how bad they were being attacked. Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2014).

[40] The Latin phrase is *cathedra Petri.* A bishop's *cathedra* symbolized his authority. Maurice Bénevot, "*Primatus Petro datur*: Cyprian on the Papacy," in *Church, Ministry, and Organization in the Early Church Era*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 344; Burns, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 375.

[41] For a summary of this debate, see Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 107-10. In contrast, Campbell claimed *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* clearly presents the modern Catholic position concerning the papacy. A dubious statement considering Cyprian's thoughts on this subject has generated many studies and fierce debates. Campbell, *The Complete Works*, ix.

against Novatian.[42] However, Brent accurately summarized the problem for Cyprian as Stephen claiming the power of "emperor." As "emperor" he could override his "proconsuls" (i.e., the other bishops). Cyprian thus responded to Stephen by saying that Stephen did not serve as emperor but rather as one of the proconsuls.[43] Cyprian did not radically alter his position but rather articulated it with more precision. At the beginning of the Novatian schism, he highlighted the prominence of the Roman bishop Cornelius over the Roman anti-bishop Novatian. However, when Stephen later tried to foist Roman tradition upon churches in North Africa and Asia Minor, Cyprian devalued the prominence of the Roman bishop and emphasized the equality and autonomy of all the bishops.[44] Cyprian believed Stephen was stepping outside his sphere of governance when he tried to exercise authority in the regions of the other bishops.

Therefore, Cyprian believed all the bishops wielded equal authority, though they did not all possess the same influence. A bishop's sway stemmed from a variety of factors, including his own good service during controversies and difficulties. Cyprian's leadership during the *lapsi* controversy and his ministry to the sick during the plague of 253 gave him much credibility among bishops in Latin North Africa. A bishop's impact also came from the prominence of his church. Cyprian held the preeminent *cathedra* in Latin North Africa, making it easier for him to speak to the bishops of Rome for all the churches in his area.[45] Over time, bishops could even gain the ability to teach and exhort their fellow bishops. Cyprian's position as the bishop of Carthage and his work with the

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[42] Pollmann, "Christianity," 164. Cf. Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 59

[43] Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 324.

[44] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73–75. *Epistula* 75 was written to Cyprian from Firmilianus, one of the bishops in Asian Minor whom Stephen disfellowshipped for holding a position on baptism akin to Cyprian's. The letter exemplifies Cyprian's influence not only in North Africa but upon the whole church in his day. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 165; Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 86.

[45] Problems in important churches disturbed the other congregations. Hence, the churches in North Africa were concerned about the Novatian schism in Rome.

sick and with the *lapsi* allowed him to write the circular letter *Epistula* 63, which exhorted North African clergy to administer the eucharist with a mixed cup.[46] He did not threaten the other bishops based upon his own authority but warned them that those who refused to heed his teaching would face divine judgment for forsaking Christ's commands.[47] Cyprian could not force the other bishops to obey him. However, he saw teaching them proper administration as his responsibility since he had garnered much credibility for his leadership and ministry while serving as the bishop of Carthage.

Autonomous Authority

Benjamin Safranski rightly noted that Cyprian also believed each bishop possessed a level of autonomy.[48] For Cyprian, keeping the harmony of the college of bishops did not require uniformity in the minutiae of beliefs and practices.[49] For example, he wrote to Antonianus that bishops could decide for themselves whether they would hold a stricter or a laxer view concerning the reconciliation of the *lapsi*. However, no bishop had the right to break the union of the bishops over this issue, as Novatian had done.[50] Later, the bishops of North Africa believed that their fellow bishop Therapius had acted inappropriately when he reconciled one of his presbyters without requiring a demonstration of repentance. They reprimanded him, but they did not reverse his decision because each bishop governed matters within his own church.[51] Like a magistrate, a

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[46] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.

[47] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.1, 17–19.

[48] Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage,* 37–40

[49] Siniscalco and Mattei wrote that "Le principe de communion, qui n'élimine d'ailleurs pas le principe d'autonomie, semble avoir ici la première place." Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage*, 88. Cf. Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage*, 1–36.

[50] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.21.1–2. Later, Cyprian similarly chastised Stephen for breaking fellowship with some bishops of Asia Minor. Cyprian disagreed with Stephen's view of baptism, but their disagreement did not justify a break in episcopal union. *Sententiae Episcoporum LXXXVII* praef. 18–29.

[51] Cyprian, *Epistula* 64.1.2. Cf. Bévenot, Maurice. "A Bishop is Responsible to God Alone (St. Cyprian)," *Recherches de science religieuse* 39 (195–1952): 397–415; Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 156. Campbell wrote that "Cyprian clearly believes that bishops have a certain autonomy." Campbell admitted

bishop had his own geographical sphere of authority, and exercising power in another bishop's sphere violated proper order.[52] God would hold each bishop responsible for his own decisions, partly because bishops governed their churches autonomously.[53]

While Cyprian wrote letters to the bishops of Rome, he did not write to receive permission to act. Rather, he saw this correspondence as necessary because the union generated by the letters wed the various congregations into one church. Cyprian especially needed to maintain a connection with the Roman bishop, since he held an important and influential *cathedra*. Additionally, most of the problems Cyprian was encountering in his Carthaginian church were also being faced in the Roman church of Cyprian's day, like schisms and problems with the *lapsi.* Hence, he wrote to the Roman bishop not because Cyprian felt like he needed to send a report to his superior but because they were part of one spiritual church that needed to work together to solve common problems.[54]

Cyprian's belief in the autonomy of each bishop appeared most clearly in his dealings with Stephen, whom Cyprian accused of encroaching upon the sphere of other bishops. Early in the controversy, Cyprian wrote to Magnus, "We lay down no regulation for others: each church leader is free to determine his own opinion for himself, knowing that he is one day to render to the Lord an account of his own conduct."[55] Cyprian based

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that the doctrine of papal primacy might not have been fully developed by Cyprian's days, yet Campbell also tried to defend Cyprian by saying his recent conversion, coupled with his rapid rise to the episcopacy, led to aberrant teaching. Campbell seemed to assume a minimal development in theology from the early church down to modern Catholicism. Campbell, *The Complete Works,* xiii.

[52] Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 324; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 53; Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage,* 37–55.

[53] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17–20. Cf. Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 47; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 33.

[54] Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage,* 40–43; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 34.

[55] "Nemini praescribentes quo minus statuat quod putat unusquisque praepositus actus sui rationem domino rediturus." Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.17.375–77. The location of Magnus' church remains unknown, but Clarke argued well that Cyprian hinted that it was far from Carthage. G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* vol. 4, (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 177–78.

this statement upon Romans 14:12–13, where Paul said, "Each one of us will give an account for himself. Let us, therefore, not judge one another."[56] Cyprian applied this passage to bishops specifically, so that it warned bishops to take care that they govern their own spheres well because they would have to render a personal account to God in the eschaton. Similarly, in one of his earliest letters to Stephen, Cyprian wrote, "We are not forcing anyone in this matter; we are laying down no law. For every appointed leader [i.e., bishop] has in his government of the [church] the freedom to exercise his own will and judgment, while having one day to render an account of his conduct to the Lord."[57] Later in the baptismal controversy, despite Cyprian's strong feelings concerning the invalidity of heretical and schismatic baptisms, he wrote to Jubaianus:

> We have written this brief reply to you, dearly beloved brother, to the best of our poor ability, without, however, laying down prescriptions to anyone or condemning anyone beforehand; we do not wish to prevent any bishop from doing what he thinks right, for he is free to exercise his own discretion.[58]

Each bishop was in a sense autonomous and would thus render a personal account in the eschaton for how he governed his church.[59]

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[56] "Unusquisque nostrum pro se rationem dabit, non ergo nos inuicem iudicemus." Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.17.378–79.

[57] "Qua in re nec nos uim cuiquam facimus aut legem damus, quando habeat in ecclesiae administratione uoluntatis suae arbitrium liberum unusquisque praepositus, rationem actus suidomino redditurus." Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.3.2.75–78.

[58] "Haec tibi breuibus pro nostra mediocritate rescripsimus, frater carissime, nemini praescribentes aut praeiudicantes quominus unusquisque episcoporum quod putat faciat, habens arbitrii sui liberam potestatam." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.26.1.460–63. The location of Jubaianus' bishopric has remained completely unknown to scholarship. He might have hailed from the far west of Africa or from Spain, but any guess is pure speculation. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:221.

[59] Geoffrey D. Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination in the African Response to the 'Rebaptism' Crisis: Cyprian of Carthage's Synod of Spring 256. *Theological Studies* 62, no. 2 (May 2006): 264. Cyprian also portrayed this view of episcopal autonomy in *Epistula* 55.7.3 and 55.21.1–2, written during the early stages of the Novatian schism. Cf. G. W. Clarke, trans. and ed., *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* vol. 3, *Letters 55–66* (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 165, 197; Eguiluz, "Breaking with Superficial Treatments"; Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage,* 69. Cyprian expressed similar sentiments at the Carthaginian council in the fall of 256, recorded in *Sententiae Episcoporum LXXXVII* 87.

Cyprian thus rebuked Stephen when he reestablished some lapsed Spanish bishops, despite protests from their congregations.[60] Moreover, Cyprian's belief in the autonomy of the bishops led him to direct a council at Carthage in the autumn of 256 to denounce Stephen for breaking fellowship with some bishops of Asia Minor for not following the Roman tradition concerning the baptism of heretics and schismatics.[61] However, Cyprian never disfellowshipped Stephen, and Walker argued cogently that even this lack of direct reprisal against Stephen revealed how strongly Cyprian believed one bishop should not break fellowship with another. Only a council of bishops could exclude a wayward bishop from their fraternity.[62] Hence, Cyprian saw each bishop as autonomous over his own church.[63]

Limited Authority

Though a bishop governed his church, he did not have absolute authority over it. First of all, he sat as a preliminary judge until the eternal Judge returned in the eschaton.[64] The bishop might administer discipline and reconcile repentant Christians with the church, but God alone held the final decision on whether the person had truly repented. Thus, a bishop could not forgive sins but merely reconcile a person with the

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[60] Cyprian, *Epistula* 68. Cf. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 153; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 53; Sage, *Cyprian*, 33.

[61] Cyprian, *Epistula* 75; *Sententiae Episcoporum LXXXVII* 87. Cf. Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 4, 62, 318; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 53.

[62] Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 34.

[63] Hinchliff said that Cyprian sometimes wrote as if he did not really understand how one bishop's authority related to another's. However, Cyprian clearly argued for episcopal autonomy, especially during his conflict with Stephen. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 105. Dunn questioned how Cyprian could have believed that the bishops could retain independent practices while also remaining in harmony. However, as the modern Southern Baptist Convention demonstrates, collegiality does not require everyone to share the exact same liturgy or beliefs. If churches hold certain core doctrines in common, then they can work together while retaining their autonomy over specific practices and tertiary beliefs. Dunn, "Cyprian and His *collegia*," 3.

[64] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17–20; *Epistula* 57.3.1–2; 59.2.2, 5.1, 14.2–16.3.

church.[65] Additionally, governing the church did not mean the bishop could proclaim new doctrine. For Cyprian, a bishop worked within the tradition that he had received from those who came before him, and Fichter rightly noted that this tradition resided primarily within Scripture, from which Cyprian drew his theology and practice.[66]

In addition, Fitzgerald argued cogently that Cyprian sought "ecclesial discernment," meaning the bishop should not act without first seeking the advice of his presbyters as well as other bishops. Cyprian did not hold to a variant of congregationalism, but Hinchliff wrongly stated that Cyprian held the highest possible view of episcopalianism.[67] Cyprian sought to do nothing without the consent of his congregation and presbyters.[68] Writing from exile, Cyprian wrote *Epistula* 38–40. In *Epistula* 38, he explicitly said that he customarily did not make any major decisions without consulting his local church first. However, since he could not do so from exile, he decided to choose a reader himself. Through the rest of the letter, he then tried to persuade the church of Aurelius' worthiness to fulfill that role. Similarly, *Epistulae* 39–40 attest to Cyprian's appointment of presbyters while he was in exile, and they read like reference letters from the modern day. Cyprian was seemingly trying to convince his church that he had chosen wisely.[69]

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[65] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 26–27.

[66] Joseph H. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian: Early Defender of the Faith* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book, 1942), 175. Therefore, Hinchliff correctly asserted that for Cyprian bishops also had to retain their piety to keep their governing authority. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 85.

[67] Patrick Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian: Clerical and Lay Participation," in *Church, Ministry, and Organization in the Early Church Era*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 95; Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 103; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 35.

[68] Fitzgerald, "A Model for Dialogue," 240.

[69] Cyprian, *Epistula* 38–40.

Such congregational involvement especially revealed itself in the election and deposition of bishops.[70] Cyprian claimed that the ordination of a bishop should be "under all eyes" (*sub omnium oculis*).[71] He also used such phrases as "the public judgment and testimony" (*publicum judicium ac testimonium*), "the suffrage and judgment of all" (*omnium suffragio et iudicio*), "the suffrage of the universal brotherhood" (*uniuersae fraternitatis suffragio*), and "the suffrage of the entire congregation"(*populi universi suffragio*).[72] Cyprian did not see Novatian as the bishop of Rome partly because he did not involve the Roman laity in his ordination.[73] The whole congregation had to give their approval of the candidate because the judgement of the community helped reveal the will of God.[74]

While Cyprian's notion of including the laity in episcopal elections is the clearest example of how he limited the authority of the bishops, the details concerning elections in the Carthaginian church of the third century are obscured due to lack of evidence. At the very least, most studies have agreed that the congregation made their thoughts known through a vocal assent, even if they did not use a balloted vote.[75] Arnold

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[70] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.5–6. Pontus' description of Cyprian's election to the see of Carthage demonstrates the power of the people when they spoke with one voice. While some of the deacons and presbyters protested Cyprian's rise, the congregation's choice prevailed. Pontus, *Vita Cypriani* 5–6. Cf. Bakker, "Toward a Catholic Understanding," 167; Burns, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 376; Safranski, *St. Cyprian of Carthage,* 2–5.

[71] Cyprian, *Epistula* 67.4.1.73.

[72] Cyprian, *Epistula* 67.4.1.74, 4.2.83, 5.2.107; 59.6.1.159. Cf. Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 95–104; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 35. Since the English word *suffrage* can cover both meanings, this dissertation has used that word in its translation.

[73] Cyprian, *Epistula* 45.1. Cf. Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 98.

[74] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.8; 68.2.

[75] Alexander W. H. Evers argued that the people could have served merely as witnesses to an ordination in Cyprian's Carthage. Alexander W. H. Evers, *Church, Cities, and People: A Study of the* Plebs *in the Church and Cities of Roman Africa in Late Antiquity* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010), 101, 106, 110; Alexander W. H. Evers, "*Post populi suffragium*: Cyprian of Carthage and the Vote of the People in Episcopal Elections," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, ed. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010), 166-69, 177. Likewise, Faulkner said the bishop's election came from the choice of the other bishops but by the voice of the people. Faulkner, *Cyprian*, 44. Smeets concurred that for Cyprian the unanimous acclamation of the people was a sign from God that the church had chosen well. Smeets, "Traces of Care and Involvement,"174–75. Fitzgerald falsely claimed that nobody has maintained the notion that the laity literally voted. First, some

Smeets saw a connection in Cyprian's thought between the ordination of a North African bishop and the election of a Roman politician. Though the decision of the college of bishops was decisive, the new clergyman still needed the assent of the people. This vocal acceptance mirrored how Roman politician needed public acclamation to advance their agendas.[76] The bishops would only choose from "candidates" whom the people had "nominated," though a formal nomination process did not exist, and in theory the college could pick anyone to become the new bishop.[77]

Similarly, Henk Bakker has claimed that the clergy primarily testified to a candidate's character, and the laity expressed their approval during the ordination ceremony by acting as one voice.[78] However, he emphasized that "Cyprian is at pains to show a special concern for the involvement of lay people in episcopal elections…Cyprian repeatedly and persistently emphasizes the centrality of the presence of the 'ordinary' people at ecclesial ordination."[79] Cyprian and the church at Carthage elected bishops in the presence of the laity (*plebe praesente*), and they executed this practice "as if rooted in divine authority."[80]

Roman political meetings involved people writing their votes upon fragments. The Carthaginian church could have used such a method to render a balloted vote. Second, Fitzgerald said later that Ferguson believed the laity literally voted, and thus Fitzgerald admitted at least one scholar has contended for the idea that the laity voted. Fitzgerald, "A Model for Dialogue," 244–46; Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 100–103. Dunn also said that the laity did more than merely nominate a candidate and then watch the ordination ceremony. He believed *suffragium* meant the community literally voted on the candidate. Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Cyprian and the Bishops of Rome: Questions of Papal Primacy in the Early Church* (Strathfield, Australia: St. Paul's Publication, 2007), 11–14.

[76] Smeets agreed that the ecclesial community for Cyprian needed to approve the bishop's ordination because he would become the leader of his church. Smeets, "Traces of Care and Involvement," 168-170, 179. Cf. Dunn, *Cyprian*, 11–12, 14; Evers, *Church, Cities, and People*, 114; Evers, "*Post populi suffragium*"; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 37.

[77] Smeets, "Traces of Care and Involvement," 172–174.

[78] Bakker, "Toward a Catholic Understanding," 167.

[79] Bakker, "Toward a Catholic Understanding,"169.

[80] Bakker, "Toward a Catholic Understanding," 170.

Likewise, Patrick Granfield believed that the laity and clergy nominated a candidate together.[81] This person then went through a time of testing from the local laity and clergy as well as the nearby bishops. After some time, the clergy and laity accepted the candidate. Granfield pointed out that Cyprian used the word *suffragium* four times outside of any reference to the election of bishops, and each time the word meant assent more than vote. Therefore, the *suffragium* was a vocal sanction.[82] The other bishops in the area either endorsed or rejected the election by inviting or barring the individual from coming into their college.[83]

Burns has also argued for a multi-staged ordination process, which included nominations from the congregation and testimonies from the clergy before a general vote during the ordination service. He wrote that that "the clergy offered witness to the sustainability of the candidate; the people accepted or rejected the proposal; and the neighboring bishops gave consent."[84] Burns then added that the laity must have had a larger role than merely witnessing to the ordination. Letters were sent to neighboring bishops to verify the election of a new bishop, and these epistles were said to come from the whole church (rather than just the local clergy or neighboring bishops). This verification became especially important when rival bishops were claiming to represent the true church.[85] While the congregation probably did not vote by ballot, their vocal assent was still necessarily for someone to become the true leader of a church.

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[81] Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 104.

[82] Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 103.

[83] Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 102–3. Nearby bishops were involved in the ordination ceremony as well. Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 101–2. Despite Cyprian's advocacy for lay participation in the election of bishops, the western church eventually affirmed at Lateran IV (1215) that only the college of bishops could choose new bishops. Granfield claimed this development occurred because the congregation lacked proper education, because people were abusing the process, and because secular authority became more involved in episcopal elections. Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 106.

[84] Burns, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 375–76.

[85] Burns, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 376.

Therefore, while the details of episcopal elections in third-century Carthage remain obscure, Cyprian's writings clearly reveal that the bishops had limited authority, especially in that the episcopal college did not establish new bishops in churches but rather either accepted or rejected people who had been chosen as bishops by their churches. In Cyprian's day, the other bishops made their decision based upon how the new bishop was chosen. If he was elected by the laity and clergy of a true church, he was accepted into the college of bishops. If the man was not endorsed by a congregation or if he sat over a schismatic or heretical church, entrance into the episcopal communion was barred. Thus, neighboring bishops were not substantially involved in the election of new bishops within other churches.

Scholarship has tended to focus upon ordination, but Cyprian also talked about the deposition of disqualified bishops. He believed a bishop should serve until death, unless his congregation rejected him or the bishops withdrew their fellowship.[86] In fact, if a bishop had committed an egregious sin, he had to be deposed. Otherwise, the filth of his sin would come upon his congregation and any other bishop that fellowshipped with him.[87] Cyprian thus rejected Maurianus of Arles as a bishop because the episcopal collage had expelled him from their order for following after Novatian.[88] For the same reason, Cyprian congratulated some Spanish congregations for deposing their bishops who had sacrificed to idols during persecution.[89]

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[86] Burns, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 377; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 36. Fitzgerald maintained that Cyprian's view concerning the election of bishops shaped his understanding of the deposition of bishops. While likely, Cyprian never explicitly connected the two in his writings. Fitzgerald, "A Model for Dialogue," 249.

[87] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 6–7; *Epistula* 1, 67; Evers, *Church, Cities, and People*, 107.

[88] Cyprian, *Epistula* 68.

[89] Cyprian, *Epistula* 67–68. Cf. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 154; Evers, *Church, Cities, and People*, 107, 130; Fitzgerald, "A Model for Dialogue," 249; Smeets, "Traces of Care and Involvement," 176; George Huntston Williams, "The Role of the Layman in the Ancient Church," in *Church, Ministry, and Organization in the Early Church Era*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 289.

Cyprian had several reasons to believe that the laity should be significantly engaged in the election and deposition of their bishops. First, he thought he was following apostolic tradition by advocating for the inclusion of the congregation in the election of bishops. Cyprian's letters reveal that at least the Spanish, Roman, and most African churches required lay participation.[90] Cyprian might have known of Alexandria as a notable exception, because he said that churches followed popular election "through almost all the provinces" (*fere per prouincias uniuersas*).[91] Second, Cyprian also viewed the bishop both as a man of his community and as a member of the episcopal college. Hence, his ordination logically had to include input from both.[92] Third, election by the community had the practical benefit of helping to keep unqualified men from becoming ordained.[93] Finally, Cyprian's argument for the substantial involvement of the laity meant more than giving the people what they wanted. He saw the congregation's vote as essential for discerning the divine will for that church.[94] Therefore, while Cyprian certainly held to episcopalianism, he maintained a modified version that gave significant authority to the presbyters and the congregation.

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[90] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59; 67–68. Cf. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 153–54; Fitzgerald, "A Model for Dialogue," 249; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 53; Sage, *Cyprian*, 33; Williams, "The Role of the Layman," 289.

[91] Cyprian, *Epistula* 67.5.1.101.

[92] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.8; 59.5; 67.2–5. Cf. Alexander W. H. Evers, *Church, Cities, and People,* 110; Fitzgerald, "A Model for Dialogue," 241.

[93] Cyprian, *Epistula* 67.2–5. Cf. Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 97; Williams, "The Role of the Layman," 289; Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 209–15.

[94] Evers, *Church, Cities, and People*, 77; Fitzgerald, "A Model for Dialogue," 241; Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 97; Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage*, 73–74. Cyprian's limitations upon the authority of the bishop, as well as his desire to involve the laity, mitigates against any idea that he used his authority to re-write the history of the church or to suppress voices from women or others within his congregation, contrary to Karen L. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle* (Salem, OR: Polebridge Press, 2003) and Moss, *The Myth of Persecution*. Cf. Ariel Sabar, *Veritas: A Harvard Professor, a Con Man, and the Gospel of Jesus' Wife* (New York: Doubleday, 2020).

The Bishop and Salvation

Administer the Sacraments

As the governor of his church, the bishop was responsible for administering the sacraments.[95] Since the initial application of salvation and the strength for perseverance came through the ordinances, Cyprian thought the bishop helped connect his church to salvation. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit gave the bishop the ability to administer the sacraments and do other ministerial duties, like praying efficaciously.

Cyprian thus emphasized that only a true bishop could administer a valid baptism, at which point a person entered the church and officially received salvation. Those who underwent the ceremony in schismatic or heretical churches did not have their sins forgiven.[96] For baptism to grant initial sanctification, it had to be administered by a sanctified bishop within the true church: "Now if it is to be possible for water to clean away by its baptismal washing the sins of man who is being baptized, then it is essential that that water should first be cleansed and sanctified by a bishop."[97] Brightman argued from this passage that the bishop hallowed the baptismal waters so that the they could channel saving grace.[98] However, Cyprian connected the episcopal right to administer baptism to the power of the Holy Spirit that worked through the bishop to apply salvation. Cyprian did not emphasize the bishop's own ability to prepare the waters to channel grace. He drew his argument in this regard from Leviticus 19:2, Numbers 19:22,

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[95] *De unitate* 4–5 could be interpreted as apostolic succession. To be sure, Cyprian believed that the bishops inherited the role of leading the church from the apostles. However, he never articulated a modern understanding of apostolic success. For Cyprian, a bishop's ability to baptize or celebrate the eucharist came from his position as a valid clergyman within a genuine church. Cyprian did not articulate the modern notion that his ordination elevated his nature and gave him an indelible mark because it came from a succession of episcopal ordinations from the apostles down to his day. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2.2.3.6.3.1555–1558.

[96] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.7.2.

[97] "Oportet uero mundari et sanctificari aquam prius a sacerdote, ut possit baptismo suo peccata hominis qui baptizatur abluere." Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.1.3.29–31.

[98] Brightman, "Terms of Communion," 383–84.

and Ezekiel 36:25–27. The former passages dealt with purification rituals under the old covenant, and the latter spoke about spiritual renewal. Cyprian gave them ecclesiological interpretations so that they taught that God cleansed a bishop and gave him the Spirit so that the clergyman could perform his duties: "How, we ask, can a man possibly cleanse and sanctify water when he is himself unclean and when the Holy Spirit is not within him…How can a man who has himself lost the Holy Spirit perform actions of the Spirit?"[99] Thus, for baptism to expiate sin, it had to be administered by a man within the true church who had been cleansed from his own sins and indwelled by the Holy Spirit.[100]

Cyprian also believed the bishop should administer the eucharist.[101] Penniman argued that for Cyprian the bishop was primarily a doctor (*medicus*), who treated his "patients" with the sacraments. This description flowed from Penniman's understanding of the eucharist as spiritually medicinal for Cyprian.[102] While he sometimes used curative language, Cyprian emphasized the objective nature of the eucharist as a memorial to Christ's sacrifice and as a way for Christians to sacrifice to God. Thus, Cyprian talked about the bishop more as a priest than as a doctor. Faulkner popularized the notion that Cyprian viewed the Old Testament priesthood as having transferred to the New Testament clergy, both bishops and presbyters.[103] However, Burns and Walker rightly clarified that

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[99] "Quomodo autem mundare et sanctificare aquam potest qui ipse inmundus est et apud quem sanctus spiritus non est... Quis autem potest dare quod ipse non habeat, aut quomodo potest spiritalia gerere qui ipse amiserit spiritum sanctum?" Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.1.3.35–37, 2.1.3.62–64. Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.1.3, 2.3. "Be holy, for I, too, am holy, says the Lord" (Lev 19:2). "And everything which the unclean touches shall be unclean" (Num 19:22). "And I shall sprinkle over you clean water, and from all your uncleanness and from all your idolatry you will be cleansed. And I shall cleanse you, and give to you a new heart, and a new spirit I shall give within you" (Ezek 36:25–27). Cf. *Epistula* 69.12.

[100] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.10.1.; 70.1.3, 2.1–3.

[101] Brightman, "Terms of Communion," 384.

[102] John David Penniman, "The Health-Giving Cup: Cyprian's *Ep.* 63 and the Medicinal Power of Eucharistic Wine," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 210–1.

[103] Faulkner, *Cyprian*, 43.

Cyprian used the term *priest* (*sacerdos*) only when referencing a bishop.[104] In other words, Cyprian never used the term when talking about a presbyter. The bishop served as the priest of his church, who led his congregation in administering the eucharistic sacrifice: "When a bishop is to be appointed; we must select as our priests (*sacerdotum*) only those who are sound and without blemish, men who can therefore be heard in the prayers they make for the well-being of the Lord's own people."[105] By calling the bishop a priest, Cyprian was highlighting the episcopal responsibility to plead before God on the church's behalf.[106] This intercessory role included handing out the elements of the eucharist.[107] Jesus Christ as the church's Great High Priest offered himself upon the cross as a sacrifice to the Father (Heb 4:14–16). Whenever a bishop venerated Christ's passion in performing the eucharistic rite, the bishop acted as the "priest" for his church and thus imitated Jesus Christ.[108] Since the eucharist memorialized his death, the celebration of the sacrament became a way for the bishop to lead his church into greater sanctification by offering a sacrifice to God.[109]

However, a bishop could lose his ability to administer the sacraments if he committed an egregious sin, such as apostasy, schism, or heresy.[110] Deposed bishops could never again sit in the episcopal chair, though they could return to the church after

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[104] Burns, Christianity, 375; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 37, 195–96. Cf. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 25–26; *Epistula* 63.18.3; 65.2; 74.8.1; also cf. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, xx.

[105] "Quae ante oculos habentes et sollicite ac religiose considerantes in ordinationibus sacerdotum non nisi inmacultos et integros antistites eligere debemus, qui sncte et digne sacrificial deo offerentes audiri in precibus possint quas faciunt pro plebis dominicae incolumitate." Cyprian, *Epistula* 67.2.2.44–48.

[106] Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 201–3.

[107] Cyprian, *Epistula* 65.2.1. Cf. Burns, Christianity, 375; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 41; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 36.

[108] Dunn, "Validity of Baptism," 271; Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 196–98.

[109] Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.14.4.

[110] Cyprian, *Epistula* 67–68. Cf. Burns, *Christianity*, 377; Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage,* 112; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 37.

due penance.[111] If a schismatic or heretical bishop brought his congregation with him when he returned to the church, he was reconciled immediately with the family of faith, but he still lost his ordination and ability to perform the sacraments.[112] Campbell pointed out that Cyprian never explicitly said deposed bishops lost their ordination specifically.[113] However, Campbell argued from silence because Cyprian also did not say that lapsed bishops retained their ordination. Moreover, he did not distinguish between his ordination and his ministry.[114] When a bishop became an apostate, heretic, or schismatic, he could repent and return as a layperson, but he was disqualified from performing the duties of a bishop again.

Therefore, a bishop's role in salvation revolved largely around administrating the sacraments. While an important job, the bishop did not bestow salvation, nor was he the only link between the church and salvation. Rahner argued that the validity of both baptism and reconciliation came from their administration by a bishop.[115] However, for

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[111] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.11–12. Cf. Badcock, *The House Where God Lives*, 43; Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 88.

[112] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.11–12. Cf. Burns, *Christianity*, 377.

[113] Campbell, *The Complete Works,* 464 note 436. Fichter began his biography on Cyprian with "The Roman Catholic Bishop of Carthage sat in his writing room," thus indicating that his biography would assume a strong continuity between Cyprian and modern Catholicism. This preconceived notion presented problems at times. Fichter stated that Cyprian must have held to the indelible mark at ordination, so Fichter did not understand why Cyprian wrote in *Epistula* 68 that a lapsed bishop could never again administer the sacraments efficaciously. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian*, 1, 197. Cf. Campbell, *The Complete Works,* xi; Dunn, "Validity of Baptism," 266–73; Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 96 note 7; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 45-46, 52; Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 202–3, 209–215; Sage, *Cyprian*, 304, 307.

[114] Cyprian did not follow Augustine's notion of a mixed church, nor his distinction between the sacraments and their effects. Abraham van de Beek, "Cyprian on Baptism," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, ed. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010): 155–64. Hinchliff wrote that Cyprian strictly connected the ecclesial ministries to the *esse* of the church. Therefore, the rebaptism heresy was a debate over the *esse* of the church, not a liturgical issue. Hinchliff overstated his case because Cyprian never broke fellowship with Stephen over the disagreement. However, Hinfliff did rightly note that Cyprian did not theologize from all the same categories as Augustine. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 101–2. Lauren Hudson took a different line of thought from most studies, believing Cyprian was a cessationist. She argued poorly, considering Cyprian ascribed visions to laypeople. Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 51; cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 16, 30. Harris conflated bishops and presbyters under the term *priest*, when Cyprian reserved that term for bishops alone. Harris, "Cyprian and His Role," 91; cf. Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 301; Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 103.

[115] Karl Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 206.

Cyprian, the validity of the rite did not stem primarily from the rite's correct celebration or even from the bishop's purity, but from its administration within the true church.[116] As will be discussed below, Cyprian also gave bishops the right to appoint presbyters to administer baptisms or communions, so he did not believe that a bishop personally had to dispense these sacraments for them to have efficacy. A congregation could also depose its bishop, thus indicating that salvation did not rest upon the bishops serving as a bridge between the church and salvation.[117] Moreover, a schismatic congregation was not automatically reconciled with the church when its bishop returned to the episcopal union. Each person was individually responsible for truly repenting and seeking reconciliation.[118] Additionally, a reconciled bishop would still face divine judgment for leading those who had passed away to forsake the church. People could not receive salvation *postmortem* just because their bishop later was restored to the ecclesial community. Their redemption did not rest solely upon their bishop's standing within the church but upon their own decision to depart the body of Christ.[119] While Cyprian saw baptism and reconciliation as vital parts of a Christian life, he ultimately grounded salvation upon personal faith in Christ's work upon the cross.[120]

In sum, the bishops administered the sacraments, but people were personally responsible for believing in Jesus Christ, repenting of their sins, and entering the church. While the bishops helped tie the church and salvation together, the clergy were not the

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[116] Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.2.2–3. Burns stated that in Cyprian's mind his responsibility to deliver the weekly homily made him the proper administrator of the sacraments. Burns also maintained that Cyprian believed a bishop needed legitimate succession from the apostles to administer the sacraments. However, Cyprian never made either claim himself. Burns, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 375; *Cyprian the Bishop*, 129. Cf. Faulkner, *Cyprian*, 43; Fitzgerald, "A Model for Dialogue," 250; Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 37.

[117] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.9.3; 65.2; 67.3. Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 96n7; Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 45-46, 52.

[118] Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.2.3.

[119] Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.2.3.

[120] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.22.2.

sole connection. Salvation came to Christians by the Holy Spirit through the church, though the duty of guarding and performing the ecclesial ministries fell to the Spirit-filled episcopal leaders of the ecclesial communities.

Guard the Unity

Since the spiritual and visible church were virtually wed together, Cyprian believed that the bishop had the duty to maintain the unity, purity, and boundaries of his church. He could not lose the visible unity of his church because of schism.[121] When Christians were breaking from the church over the issue of the *lapsi,* Cyprian said, "Above all other goals, my brother, we strive, and ought to strive, to achieve this, to maintain to the limits of our ability that unity which was laid down by the Lord and handed on through the apostles to their successors [i.e., the bishops]."[122] After writing strongly to Jubaianus against heretical and schismatic baptisms, Cyprian said:

> And it is in this [church] that we preside. In defense of her honor and unity we fight, her grace as well as her glory we defend with faithful devotion. We are the ones who, by divine privilege, water the thirsty people of God, we are the ones who guard the boundaries of her life-giving springs.[123]

In other words, Cyprian saw guarding the visible boundary and unity of the church as a major duty of bishops, especially when schismatics were threatening the church.[124]

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[121] Cyprian, *Epistula* 59.15.2. Cf. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 157; Harris, "Cyprian and His Role," 87; Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 112; Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage*, 69.

[122] Cyprian, *Epistula* 45.3.2.

[123] "In hac praesidemus, pro honore eius atque unitate pugnamus, huius et gratiam parieter et gloriam fideli deuotione defendimus. Nos diuino permissu rigamus sitientem dei populum, nos custodimus terminus uitalium fontium." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.11.2.181–84. Cf. *Epistula* 73.26.2.

[124] Fichter more strongly wrote that for Cyprian the episcopal seat served as the foundation for the local church, just as the apostles served as the foundations for the catholic church. Therefore, Fichter argued that Cyprian wanted the bishop to focus first upon maintaining his local church's unity, even though he also had a responsibility to help keep the communion of the catholic church. While Cyprian certainly saw guarding the union of his local church as a major part of his episcopal duties, he held both responsibilities in high esteem. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian*, 111.

The bishop's role in guarding the unity included teaching correct doctrine, as illustrated by the quotation above.[125] In the context of whether churches should acquiesce to heretics and schismatics, Cyprian responded, "It is the duty of an illustrious general to guard the standards entrusted to his safekeeping."[126] As said before, Cyprian thought that incorrect belief led to wrong action and *vice versa.*[127] Hence, when schism occurred, he assumed that the schismatics were working from a false theology that had separated them not only from the church but also from the gospel.[128] Therefore, he saw the teaching ministry of the church as a major concern of the bishop: "We must, therefore, in every way defend the oneness of the [catholic church]; we must at no point yield ground to the enemies of faith and truth."[129] Cyprian thus connected guarding the unity with protecting the truth found within the one visible church. Even in exile, he continued to oversee the appointment of people to such minor positions as readers, because bad leadership within the church would lead the congregation into unsound doctrine and practices.[130]

Finally, since the bishop should symbolize his church's unity and guard the truth, a congregation had to reject its bishop if he departed from sound doctrine or practices. The church was founded upon and unified around the teachings of Scripture

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[125] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 1–3; *Epistula* 59.7.3; 70.3.3; 74.8–9. Cyprian also wrote to Pompeius that the bishop's role as teacher required him to be teachable. Cyprian was probably thinking of Stephen, who in Cyprian's mind was obstinately holding to tradition even though he had shown Stephen the truth from Scripture. Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.10.1. Pompeius was clearly a bishop who was interested in the proceedings of the councils at Carthage. Clarke argued well that the Pompeius of Cyprian's *Epistula* 74 was Pompeius of Sabrata. While a bishop of Latin North Africa, no extant evidence exists for him attending any of the Carthaginian councils, and *Sententiae Episcoporum LXXXVII* 84 states that the bishop Natalis of Oea served as his proxy at the council in the fall of 256. Pompeius' trip to Carthage would have entailed a 600-kilometer overland journey. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian*, 4:236.

[126] "Gloriosi ducis est commissa sibi signa seruare." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.10.1.159–60. Cf. *Epistula* 74.9.1.

[127] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 1–3.

[128] Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.1.3.

[129] "Per omnia debemus ecclesiae catholicae unitatem tenere nec in aliquo fidei et ueritatis hostibus cedere." Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.2.3.49–50. Cf. Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 203–5.

[130] Cyprian, *Epistula* 38–40.

and the commands of Jesus Christ.[131] Since the church was established upon true doctrine and not upon a bishop, a congregation should depose its episcopal leader and elect a new one if he became disqualified and could no longer perform his episcopal duties.

Delegate Some Ministries

Cyprian believed God would hold the bishop responsible for keeping the unity, preaching the Word, and administering the sacraments. Nevertheless, he could temporarily allocate some of his work to his presbyters and deacons, especially in his absence. [132] These lesser clergy could even lead the church in celebrating the eucharist.[133] North African bishops ordained their own presbyters and deacons, so logically the bishops could delegate their ministries to their ministerial helpers.[134] Brent argued well that Cyprian saw church order as a type of patron-client relationship. Since the bishop acted like a patron, he could delegate some of his authority and responsibilities to his presbyters, who functioned like his clients.[135] Evers pointed out that Cyprian also viewed church polity like an imperium, with the bishop as the governor. The bishop thus could allocate some of his authority to his presbyters, who worked under his authority.[136] Regardless of why Cyprian believed he could delegate some ministries, the reality that he

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[131] Cyprian, *Epistula* 67–68.

[132] Bakker, "Toward a Catholic Understanding," 167; Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 265; Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian,"105; Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage*, 114; Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage*, 71. Cf. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 25–26, *Epistula* 1.1.1; 15.1.2.

[133] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 25; *Epistula* 1.1.1. In the former works, the mention of a woman opening a locket with some eucharistic bread in it might be referencing a practice of presbyters or deacons taking some of the elements to church members who could not attend the service. Maurice Bévenot, *St. Cyprian* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1975), 92; Laurance, *'Priest' as Type of Christ*, 198–200. Cf. Tertullian, *Ad uxorem* 2.5, in *Latin Christianity: Its Founder Tertullian* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995); Tertullian, *De oratione*. 19, in *Fathers of the Third Century* (1885; repr., American ed., trans. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995).

[134] Brightman, "Terms of Communion," 385.

[135] Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 4, 17.

[136] Evers, *Church, Cities, and People*, 127.

did so indicates that he did not make the bishop the sole connection between the church and salvation.

Though Cyprian believed he could delegate most of his ministries to his presbyters, including the administration of the sacraments, he reserved one ministry to the bishop alone: the reconciliation of repentant sinners with the church.[137] Jesus Christ had given Peter the ministry of binding and loosing (John 20:21–23). This ministry passed to the bishops, so only a true bishop could grant peace with the church.[138] Additionally, because of the close relationship between church and salvation, Cyprian believed God would hold the bishop personally responsible for reconciling a person with the congregation without requiring true repentance.[139] The bishop also had the duty to keep his community from offending God by allowing sinners to take communion too soon without proper repentance.[140]

Brent maintained that Cyprian did not allow his presbyters to offer reconciliation to the *lapsi* during the Decian persecution because he thought their sin required more penance.[141] While true in some situations, Cyprian and Cornelius held a strict position during the persecution mostly because they were waiting for the oppression to end so that they could call a regional council that would allow the bishops to decide

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[137] Cyprian, *Epistula* 15–20. Cf. Geoffrey D. Dunn, "The White Crown of Works: Cyprian's Early Pastoral Ministry of Almsgiving in Carthage," *Church History*, no. 4 (December 2004): 735; Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian," 105. George Huntston Williams claimed that the confessors and presbyters were directly challenging Cyprian's authority by reconciling the *lapsi* in his absence. While some people might have had this underlining motivation, other factors also contributed to their actions, like the notion that the merits of the martyrs could be transferred to other people through the *libelli pacis.* Williams, "The Role of the Layman," 293–94.

[138] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.7. Cf. G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* vol. 4, (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 227; Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4; *Epistula* 69.11. Cf. Maurice Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform in the Rebaptism Controversy," *Heythrop Journal* 19 (1978): 124–25.

[139] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17–20.

[140] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 17–20. Cf. Harris, "Cyprian and His Role," 94.

[141] Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 265.

corporately what to do with the *lapsi*.[142] Cyprian was living in exile, and he told his

presbyters to wait for his return so that they could look at each case together. Until then,

they could not grant reconciliation without his permission, even if a *lapsus* had received a

libellus pacis from a confessor. [143] Cyprian wanted to decide each case on its own merit,

instead of giving his presbyters a general policy that would have allowed some *lapsi* back

into the church without a proper demonstration of true repentance.[144] In fact, those

confessors who had granted reconciliation with their *libelli pacis* had intruded into the

episcopal sphere of authority.[145] Cyprian thus took the role of reconciliation seriously; he

believed only the bishop could grant it.

 Because Cyprian reserved the duty of reconciliation to the bishop alone, he

saw any reconciliation as valid if it was done by a true bishop. Cyprian and his fellow

episcopal leaders came to this decision during a Carthaginian council in the spring of

252.[146] Fidus (a bishop probably of Asia Minor) wrote to the North African bishops about

another ecclesial overseer (named Therapius), who had reconciled one of his presbyters

without requiring a demonstration of repentance. The African council replied with

Epistula 64, where Cyprian wrote that they decided after a lengthy debate that any

reconciliation was valid if a true bishop performed it. They reprimanded Therapius, but

they did not reverse his decision. Hence, while most of the ministries of the church could

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[142] Cyprian, *Epistula* 55.1–7. Cf. *Epistula* 30.

[143] The *libelli pacis* were letters written by confessors that said the church should allow certain people back into communion. *Epistula* 23 is an example of one of these letters, which asked for general reconciliation without giving any names. In *Epistula* 15.4, Cyprian said that, instead of writing a note for a whole household or region, a confessor had to write down individual names, and he had to meet with the *lapsus* personally before writing the message. Cf. Hudson, "Cyprianic Ecclesiology," 43, 50

[144] Cyprian *Epistula* 15–20.

[145] Cyprian, *Epistula* 27.2–3. Badcock maintained that Cyprian emphasized the institutional church over the charismatic one in his defense of the episcopal prerogative to reconcile. However, Cyprian did not put the two at odds but rather argued that the institutional church marked the boundaries of the charismatic one. Badcock, *The Church Where God Lives*, 43.

[146] Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, 3:302–3.

be delegated to presbyters and lesser clergy, the link between the church and salvation required the bishop to maintain sole rights to the ministry of reconciliation.

Conclusion

While Cyprian did not place salvation solely in the hands of the bishops, they still played a major part in connecting the church to salvation. Cyprian believed the bishop governed his congregation and illustrated his church's unity. Additionally, the unity of all the overseers allowed for one visible church to exist across the Roman Empire, just as one spiritual church exists. Separation from this visible church meant stepping outside the spiritual church and thus losing salvation. Alongside symbolizing the spiritual unity and guarding the visible unity, the bishop also administered the sacraments and oversaw the teaching ministry of his church. These ministries not only initiated Christians into eternal life but also sanctified them and preserved their salvation. However, Cyprian in the end did not ground the relationship between the church and salvation solely upon the episcopacy. He believed that salvation was applied to believers by the Holy Spirit, who spiritually bound Christians together into one spiritual church, illustrated by the communion of the bishops that formed one visible church.

CHAPTER 9

EXTENT OF SALVATION

Introduction

Cyprian's core assumption in the union of the spiritual and visible church not only shaped his beliefs concerning bishops, but it also undergirded his exclusivistic theology. Vatican II (1962–1965) became a turning point in the history of Roman Catholicism when it enacted far-reaching changes. In principle, Catholics accepted Protestants as Christian brothers, and they began performing services in the vernacular for the first time. The council also made some controversial decisions. They dogmatized a form of inclusivism, stating that "anonymous Christians" were unknowingly receiving their salvation through the work of the church. This pronouncement angered traditionalists within the Catholic Church. They argued that inclusivism went against the prior teachings of the church, especially Cyprian's phrase *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* ("Outside the church there is no salvation.").[1] Ignatius had stressed the need for unity with the bishop to receive eternal life.[2] Therefore, Cyprian did not create the notion of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, but he proclaimed it emphatically, coining the phrase in his letter to Jubaianus.[3]

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[1] John Hick, "The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity," in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, ed. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (1987; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005), 20. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen pointed out that liberal Protestants generally do not concern themselves too much with tradition, so this reinterpretation of Cyprian has largely come from Roman Catholics. Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *An Introduction to the Theology of Religion: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 80.

[2] Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 86–87; Ralph Martin, *Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization* (Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans, 2012), 31.

[3] Cyprian, *Epistula* 73. Fulgentius of Ruspe (468–533) is also considered a major artisan of the phrase *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Francis A. Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992); Martin, *Will Many Be Saved?* 31. The location

Prior to the 1960s, scholarship almost unanimously interpreted Cyprian as an exclusivist. John von Rohr wrote:

> The Cyprianic theme of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* has not lacked occasion for re-utterance throughout the centuries… The church as custodian of the sacraments and chief locus of the work of the Holy Spirit, the church as supreme, universal institutional authority under the rulership of the vicar of Christ, the church as proclaimer of the Word and its promises and thus the home of saving faith—these are among the designations historically utilized to support the exclusivistic affirmations.[4]

Indeed, exclusivism was the favored position for most of the history of the church. Following Cyprian, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) argued for exclusivism. Aquinas wrote that salvation only could come through the church because people needed the sacraments for salvation.[5] He sympathized with those who never heard the gospel, but he argued that they remained culpable because of general revelation.[6] Innocent III (pope 1198–1216) affirmed exclusivism too in his battles with the Waldensians, and Boniface VIII (pope 1294–1303) later declared the church's exclusivism with the papal bull *Unam sanctum* (1302).[7] Cyprian's phrase was also mentioned at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), before it found its way into dogma at the Council of Florence (1442).[8] During the early

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of Jubaianus' bishopric has remained completely unknown to scholarship. He might have hailed from the far west of Africa or from Spain, but any guess is pure speculation. G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* vol. 4, (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 221.

[4] John R. von Rohr, "*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*: An early Congregational version." *Church History* 36, no. 2 (June 1967): 107. Amos Yong defended inclusivism, but he also admitted that the church traditionally held to exclusivism, epitomized by Cyprian's axioms. Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 22–23.

[5] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 4.58; Augustine, *Sermo ad Caesarieasis ecclesiae pleben* 6. Cf. Martin, *Will Many Be Saved?* 34–38.

[6] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 4.58.

[7] Marcel Poorthuis, "Cyprian and the Tolerance of Our Mother the Church: A Heritage between Identity and Exclusion," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language and Thought*, ed. Henk. Bakker, Paul van. Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven, Belgium; Peeters, 2010), 253.

[8] Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 253; Martin, *Will Many Be Saved?* 35, 40.

modern period, Protestants continued to affirm exclusivism, though they rejected other theological positions held by Tridentine Catholicism.[9]

However, beginning in the 1960s, some scholarship began trying to "retrieve" inclusivism from the early church by pointing to such early figures as Justin Martyr. At first, Cyprian received little attention. Hendrik Kraemer gave a supposedly comprehensive argument for his inclusivist position: biblical, historical, theological, and practical. Nevertheless, in covering historical development, he jumped from Tertullian to Augustine without mentioning Cyprian once.[10] Similarly, Chrys Saldanha wrote on the "patristic view" of non-Christians. In arguing his case, he ignored Cyprian too.[11]

Such attempts to reinterpret the theology of the early church, especially that concerning Justin Martyr, faced fierce resistance. Adam Sparks called Justin Martyr the most used and most abused church father to whom people appeal for inclusivism. Sparks argued Justin Martyr had a much more nuanced view than often portrayed, a position that followed classic philosophical categories often missed in modern times.[12] Likewise, Sigountos ended his refutation of inclusivism in the early church with the following footnote: "If unitive pluralists wish to argue that the patristic tradition was wrong to reject [other] religions, that is their right. But let us at least start our discussions from a

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[9] Cf. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 3.1.4; *The Second London Confession* 20, 26.

[10] Hendrik Kraemer, *Religion and the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 155–58.

[11] Chrys Saldanha, *Divine Pedagogy: A Patristic View of Non-Christian Religions* (Rome: LAS, 1984).

[12] Adam Sparks, "Was Justin Martyr a Proto-Inclusivist?" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 43, no.4 (Fall 2008): 495–510.

historically sound analysis."[13] Hence, arguments for inclusivism in the early church were declining by the 1990s.[14]

Despite this trend, some scholarship has continued to argue for inclusivism as the theology of the church prior to the legalization of Christianity with the Edict of Milan (313). Part of this more recent "theological retrieval" of inclusivism in the early church has involved a re-interpretation of Cyprian's famous axioms. At the very least, advocates for this recovery argued for agnosticism concerning his beliefs on the extent of salvation, and some even tried to claim him as an early inclusivist. The new interpretation maintained that the Constantinian Church took Cyprian's phrases out of context so that they could be applied to all people outside the church rather than just to schismatics. Since he was writing to schismatics only, scholarship cannot say for certain what he believed concerning the extent of salvation.[15] However, this new interpretation is an argument from silence. Furthermore, this new understanding has misunderstood how Cyprian's axioms enhanced his case against schism. He used the notion of exclusivism as a weapon to counter the arguments of the schismatics. Since there is no salvation outside the church, the schismatics were not saved and were in a similar position as the pagans. After a summary and an evaluation of the scholarship, this chapter will reveal Cyprian's underlining exclusivism found across his entire corpus.

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[13] James G. Sigountos, "Did Early Christians Believe Pagan Religions Could Save?" in *Through No Fault of Their Own? The Fate of Those Who Have Never Heard*, ed. William V. Crockett and James G. Sigountos (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 229–41.

[14] David Pitman referenced Knitter. However, the lack of argumentation against Sigountos and others revealed that Pitman merely appropriated Knitter's argument. David Pitman, *Twentieth Century Christian Responses to Religious Pluralism: Difference is Everything* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 13. For a recent case for connecting the Holy Spirit to the church, in line with Cyprian's axioms, see Michael Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, and Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 289–321. Cf. Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (1997; repr., Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 66.

[15] This dissertation defines "extent of salvation" as the answer to the question who will be saved. Exclusivists claim that a person can only receive salvation by hearing and accepting the good news concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ. Inclusivists believe that people are saved by the person and work of Jesus Christ, but they do not necessarily have to believe the gospel to receive that salvation.

A New Interpretation of Cyprian

One of the earliest reinterpretations of Cyprian came from Paul F. Knitter, who maintained that the church fathers prior to Constantine held to pluralism.[16] They believed in the possibility of salvation for all peoples based upon general revelation. According to Knitter, Augustine shifted the church towards exclusivism primarily because of "historical and social factors," namely the legalization of Christianity and the barbarian invasions. The church thus transitioned such early statements like *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* into exclusivism out of an "ideological desire to maintain superiority, or to dominate and control, or to devalue other traditions culturally or religiously."[17] Ultimately, Knitter's argument contained a leap in logic. Even if the early fathers believed general revelation was found in other religions, they did not necessarily hold to the notion that other religions led to salvation. Knitter also failed to regard the biblical and theological justifications for exclusivism made by early church figures like Cyprian. Knitter even admitted that important figures like Cyprian voiced exclusivism, but Knitter disregarded their opinions in his analysis of the early church.

While Gavin D'Costa did not follow Knitter in arguing for pluralism in the early church, D'Costa still believed that reading Cyprian's phrase *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* in its proper context should lead to an inclusivistic interpretation.[18] The debates over what to do with the *lapsi* after the Decian persecution led to a schism both in Rome and in Carthage. Cyprian developed his axioms to contend with these schismatics, not to

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[16] Pluralists maintain that any religion can lead people to a saving knowledge of God.

[17] Paul F. Knitter, "The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity," in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, ed. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (1987; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005), 20. Mahmut Aydin wrote that Knitter "acknowledged the availability of an authentic revelation and salvation for all people without distinction." Mahmut Aydin, *Modern Western Christian Theological Understandings of Muslims since the Second Vatican Council* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002), 12.

[18] Gavin D'Costa, "'Extra ecclesiam nulla salus' Revisited," in *Religious Pluralism and Unbelief: Studies Critical and Comparative*, ed. Ian Hamnett (London: Routledge, 1990), 130–32. Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes toward the World Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 121–22; Cf. Richard Henry Drummond, *Toward a New Age in Christian Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985).

combat pagans.[19] In other words Cyprian said that salvation came only to those who remained united with the church, which allowed them to receive the sacraments from a bishop.[20] D'Costa claimed Stephen denounced even this level of exclusivism during his debates with Cyprian concerning the rebaptism of heretics and schismatics.[21] In sum, D'Costa argued that Cyprian's phrase meant only schismatics had lost salvation.[22]

The most influential re-interpretation of Cyprian came from Francis A. Sullivan in his work *Salvation Outside the Church?* (1992). Much scholarship after this publication has merely re-articulated its arguments.[23] Sullivan took a similar approach as D'Costa. Sullivan admitted the difficulty in finding other phrases that could articulate exclusivism any stronger than Cyprian's axioms, and Sullivan granted that they would exclude much more than just schismatics when taken at face-value.[24] Nevertheless, he still believed the passages did not apply to pagans because Cyprian was only addressing schismatics.[25] Although most Greco-Romans followed pagan or mystery religions in his day, Cyprian did not talk about them in *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6 or *Epistula*

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[19] D'Costa, "'Extra ecclesiam nulla salus' Revisited," 133.

[20] D'Costa, "'Extra ecclesiam nulla salus' Revisited," 134.

[21] D'Costa, "'Extra ecclesiam nulla salus' Revisited," 135.

[22] Though he recognized the theological need to keep Jesus Christ central, D'Costa never referenced Scripture in his article, and he seemed more concerned with keeping the Catholic Church in line with its tradition. D'Costa, "'Extra ecclesiam nulla salus' Revisited," 141.

[23] Richard Drummond spent only one paragraph talking about the church fathers. He merely stated that the "mainstream of the church" rejected Cyprian's equation of salvation with institutional adherence, not citing a single source to justify this claim. By "mainstream of the church," Drummond meant the church at Rome. However, Cyprian spoke for the African churches. Sage pointed out that North African churches so venerated Cyprian that by the fourth and fifth centuries "the Donatist bishops relied on [Cyprian's] writings as if they were equivalent to Scripture." Drummond, *Toward a New Age*, 45; cf. Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 361. To be fair, Sullivan never called Cyprian an inclusivist, but Sullivan's work paved the way for others to say so explicitly. Michael M. Canaris, *Francis A. Sullivan, S.J. and Ecclesiological Hermeneutics: An Exercise in Faithful Creativity* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 118.

[24] Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* 22.

[25] Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* 22.

73.21.[26] Expanding his arguments to include non-Christians would require taking his passages out of their original context.[27] Cyprian clearly believed people who separated themselves from the church had excluded themselves from salvation.[28] However, he probably thought pagans were not outside of salvation because he did not address them in his letters concerning the schisms in Rome and Carthage.[29] Realizing he was making an argument from silence, Sullivan argued more positively for inclusivism by pointing to Cyprian's *Ad Demetrianum*. Sullivan situated the treatise as an exhortation to Demetrianus while on his deathbed. Cyprian thus allowed for death-bed conversions. If Demetrainus did not need to become part of the church to be saved, then unbelievers could be saved apart from coming into the church.[30]

While D'Costa and Sullivan correctly asserted that historic texts should be interpreted within their context, they failed to see how Cyprian used exclusivism to argue against schismatics as will be shown below. Moreover, Cyprian did not write about pagans in *Epistula* 73 or *De unitate* because he was addressing the schisms of his day. An excursus into the fate of pagans would have been beyond the scope of these writings.[31]

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[26] Francis A. Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 20. For the rest of this chapter, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* has been shortened to *De unitate*.

[27] Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* 20, 23.

[28] Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* 22. Cf. Aydin, *Modern Western Christian Theological Understandings*, 12.

[29] Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* 22-23.

[30] Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* 23. Sullivan pointed to Cyprian as an example of someone who was wrong theologically yet was still considered saved and part of the church. Sullivan wrote that Christians today should similarly welcome people into the church who have false religious beliefs. Thus, he rejected the notion of theological triage, the practice of distinguishing between salvific truths and theological opinions.

[31] Arguments from silence make weak arguments. Just because Cyprian did not directly address pagans in these passages does not mean he probably held to inclusivism. Many different reasons could have caused his silence at these points. As one example, the lack of need in the early church for pastors to exhort their congregations to proclaim the gospel could have led him to neglect to mention pagans in his writings concerning schismatics and heretics. However, most likely Cyprian did not reference pagans in *De unitate* 6 and *Epistula* 73.21 because such a topic falls outside the scope of those sections, which are focused upon dealing with the presence of schismatic churches.

D'Costa also failed to explain how pagans received salvation if they too were not receiving the sacraments, and he misinterpreted the baptismal controversy as a debate over the extent of salvation. Stephen and his supporters did not contend that heretics and schismatics had efficacious baptisms and were thus saved but that those groups performed valid (but inefficacious) baptisms.[32] Similarly, Sullivan did not consider Cyprian's view of the relationship between the church and salvation. When catechumens died, Cyprian maintained that they still received eternal life. Since catechumens were intending to undergo the sacrament, they received complete salvation from the Holy Spirit at their death, based upon their faith.[33] For Cyprian, a faith that saves is one that also seeks to enter the church. The Holy Spirit did not grant salvation to pagans because they did not believe the gospel and were not trying to enter the church.

Despite the weaknesses inherent in Sullivan's position, Russel Murray, Michael Barnes, Jacque Dupuis, and Marcel Poorthuis similarly argued that Cyprian was probably not an exclusivist because he only talked about those who had broken church unity in *De unitate* and *Epistula* 73.[34] Barnes maintained that for Cyprian the church was a community of love so that schism was the worst possible evil. Therefore, the schismatics were not saved because they had broken the ecclesial union, not because all people outside the church had no salvation.[35] Dupuis similarly claimed that the schismatics sinned when they separated from the church. However, according to Dupuis, Cyprian held that the schismatics lost their salvation when they desecrated the baptismal

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[32] *De rebaptismate* 10–15. Cf. Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination," 264–65, 272; Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 354; J. Ysebaert, "L'Imposition des Mains, Rite de Reconciliation," *La Maison-Dieu* 90 (1967): 101–2.

[33] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.12; 73.22.1.

[34] Russel Murray, "Assessing the Primacy: A Contemporary Contribution from the Writings of St. Cyprian of Carthage," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 47, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 41–63.

[35] Michael Barnes, *Theology and the Dialogues of Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 41.

sacrament by claiming that they could administer it. Later Christians took Cyprian's statements made during the baptismal controversy out of context to argue for exclusivism.[36] They started applying the axiom to non-Christians after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. At that point everybody had heard the gospel and were thus liable to accept it.[37] While true that exclusivism would have made more sense after the Edict of Milan, Dupuis failed to justify why Cyprian believed separating from the church was worse than never becoming a part of it in the first place. Additionally, Cyprian never wrote that schismatics lost salvation by claiming the ability to baptize. The baptismal controversy revolved around the question whether those who had lost salvation could still perform valid baptisms. Likewise, Barnes assumed that *De unitate* 1–3 was the overarching theme of that work, but those chapters only introduce Cyprian's main point that the spiritual church and visible church were virtually wed together, as argued in *De unitate* 6–22. Since the spiritual church could not be split, schismatics thus had lost their salvation.

Poorthuis attempted to expand upon Sullivan's position by arguing that the church should continue to build relationships with other religions because this endeavor would follow the spirit of Cyprian. [38] Poorthuis investigated Cyprian's analogy of the church as Mother, and Poorthuis claimed that Cyprian used this metaphor to describe the reliance of Christians upon the church for their spiritual birth and sustenance. Cyprian did not employ the metaphor to exclude pagans from salvation. [39] Essentially, Poorthuis interpreted Cyprian as teaching that merely the fullness of the Christian life required the

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[36] Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 88, 94.

[37] Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism,* 89. Cf. Karkkainen, *An Introduction to the Theology of Religion;* Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 203.

[38] Poorthuis, "Cyprian and the Tolerance of Our Mother the Church," 259.

[39] Poorthuis, "Cyprian and the Tolerance of Our Mother the Church,"260–64.

church, not necessarily salvation itself.[40] According to Poorthuis, schismatics had no hope for salvation because they denied God as Father and Creator, not because they were not members of the church.[41] In fact, Poorthuis believed that Cyprian probably would have argued for inclusivism if his context had led him to discuss that topic.[42]

Contra Poorthuis's understanding of Cyprian, most schismatics in Carthage and in Rome held orthodox beliefs on the Trinity and Christ. Therefore, Cyprian did not exclude them from salvation because of their Trinitarian views but because they had separated from the church.[43] Since only those within the spiritual church were saved, and since the visible church marked the boundaries of the spiritual church, the schismatics had lost their salvation. Moreover, the Greco-Roman pagans of Cyprian's day denied that God is the Father of Jesus Christ, so they too were guilty of the blasphemy that Poorthuis applied only to the schismatics.[44]

Finally, Ralph Martin and Sandra Mazzolini made a similar case for Cyprian along the lines of Sullivan. Though Martin admitted that Sullivan had not received unanimous praise for his interpretation of Cyprian, Martin believed "[Sullivan's] effort to apply sound principles of interpretation is impressive."[45] Martin asserted that Cyprian's words applied solely to schismatics because those words were written solely to those

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[40] Poorthuis, "Cyprian and the Tolerance of Our Mother the Church," 264–68.

[41] Poorthuis, "Cyprian and the Tolerance of Our Mother the Church," 255.

[42] Poorthuis, "Cyprian and the Tolerance of Our Mother the Church," 265–68.

[43] George W. Harper similarly misunderstood the orthodoxy of the schismatics, which led him to argue incorrectly that modern denominationalism stems from Cyprian, who Harper believed defined ecclesial unity as doctrinal singularity. George W. Harper, "Breaking with Cyprian's Paradigm: Evangelicals, Ecclesiological Apathy, and Changing Conceptions of Church Unity." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 32, no. 4 (October 2008): 311–12. Daniel Eguiluz has soundly proven that Harper misread Cyprian. Daniel Eguiluz, "Breaking with Superficial Treatments of Cyprian for the Sake of Evangelical Unity" (unpublished paper, 72nd annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society [virtual], November 17, 2020).

[44] Poorthuis seemed to read into Cyprian from the perspective of a modern inclusivist rather than interpreting Cyprian as a third-century Latin North African.

[45] Martin, *Will Many Be Saved?* 32.

groups. Theologians after Cyprian expanded his axioms to include all those outside the church.[46] Mazzolini likewise maintained that Cyprian's *Epistula* 73 belonged to a group of letters that discussed the relationship between the church and the sacraments, so he did not use the axioms when discussing pagans.[47] Since he was talking about schismatics when he wrote these works, then modern Christians should not expand the phrases to include non-Christians as well. Martin and Mazzolini's articles have fallen prey to the same fundamental weakness as Sullivan's argumentation, in that all three contend primarily from silence. Mazzolini also misunderstood *Epistulae* 69–75 as presenting a comprehensive treatment concerning the sacraments, when in fact these works dealt specifically with the baptismal rites within heretical and schismatic churches. Thus, the treatment of pagans would have been out of place in those letters.

Extent of Salvation for Cyprian

This new interpretation of Cyprian has failed to realize that he connected the church and salvation by saying only those who had received a valid baptism into the true church had the indwelling Holy Spirit and were thus saved. Anyone outside the visible church necessarily did not possess the Spirit and did not have salvation.[48] Cyprian's view of the church and salvation necessarily required him to hold to exclusivism. Along with this failure to understand the strong connection between the church and salvation in his thought, the new interpretation has considered only a few texts that have included phrases that have historically been used to argue for exclusivism. However, Cyprian's whole corpus must be considered to understand his beliefs concerning the extent of salvation.

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[46] Martin, *Will Many Be Saved?* 32–40.

[47] Sandra Mazzolini, "*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*? What Has the Catholic Church Learned about Interfaith Dialogue Since Vatican II?" in *Pathways for Interreligious Dialogue in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Vladimir Latinovic, Gerard Mannion, and Peter C. Phan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 42.

[48] Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.7.2.

His famous axioms were rhetorical weapons used to counter schismatic arguments because he placed them in the same category as pagans when it came to their salvation.

His Treatises and Letters

The new interpretation of Cyprian has largely ignored his apologetic works. In *Ad Quirinum,* he noted that Jews were excluded from salvation unless they accepted Christ's work upon the cross, entered the church, and obeyed his commands. To justify this belief, Cyprian quoted Isaiah 1:15–20.[49] He also applied an ecclesiological interpretation to Isaiah 3:1–2, 5:26–27, 65:13–15, and Psalms 34:8–10. Since he believed the Holy Spirit wrote the Old Testament for the church, Cyprian saw these passages as immediately applicable for the church of his day, even though they were originally spoken to the Israelites. Thus, these verses taught that the Gentiles would receive divine grace and the eucharistic cup, while the Jews would lose grace and blessing.[50] Similarly, Cyprian applied an ecclesiological interpretation to Christ's teachings in John 6–7 concerning the Bread of Life so that the Jews did not receive true life because they refused to enter the church and partake of the eucharist.[51] Cyprian also quoted Matthew

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[49] "Now I will not release your sins. When you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away my face from you, and if you multiply prayers, I will not hear you: for your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; take away the wickedness from your souls from the sight of my eyes; cease you're your wickedness; learn to do good; seek judgment; keep him who suffers wrong; judge for the orphan, and justify the widow. And come, let us reason together, says the Lord: and although your sins be as scarlet, I will whiten them as now; and although they were as crimson, I will whiten them as well. And if you be willing and listen to me, you shall eat of the good of the land; but if you be unwilling, and will not hear me, the sword shall consume you; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things" (Isa 1:15–20). Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 1.24. Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 3.52, 113.

[50] "O taste and see how sweet the Lord is. Blessed is the man that hopes in Him. Fear the Lord God, all you His saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him. Rich men have wanted and have hungered; but they who seek the Lord shall never want any good thing" (Ps 34:8–10). "Behold, therefore, the Ruler, the Lord of Sabaoth, shall take away from Judah and from Jerusalem the healthy man and the strong man, the strength of bread and the strength of water" (Isa 3:1–2). "Therefore, shall He lift up an ensign to the nations which are afar off, and He will draw them from the end of the earth; and, behold, they shall come swiftly with lightness; they shall not hunger nor thirst" (Isa 5:26–27). "Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, they who serve me shall eat, but you shall be hungry: behold, they who serve me shall drink, but you shall be thirsty: behold, they who serve me shall rejoice, but you shall be confounded; the Lord shall slay you. But to those who serve me a new name shall be named, which shall be blessed in the earth'" (Isa 65:13–15). Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 1.20–23.

[51] "I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall not hunger, and he that trusts in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). "Unless you eat the flesh of the Song of man, and drink His blood, you shall have no life in you" (John 6:53). "If anyone thirst, let him come and drink. He that believes in me, as the

8:11–12, where Jesus Christ taught that the Gentiles (instead of the Jews) would inherit the kingdom of heaven. Cyprian believed the church was the Gentiles that Christ mentioned.[52] Hence, early in his career as bishop, Cyprian excluded Jews from salvation. Even though they held to monotheism, they rejected the Son of God and the church and thus were not saved.

Cyprian revealed his position on pagans more clearly in *Ad Demetrianum.* Fichter rightly stated that a major purpose of the treatise was to show the "vast chasm between paganism and Christianity."[53] Cyprian warned pagans not to let their common humanity deceive them into thinking that they will inherit the same eternal destination.[54] While Christians gave glory to God, pagans worshipped demons. Therefore, the church often had to exorcise "Greco-Roman gods" from people. Sometimes these "gods" even admitted that they had deceived people into worshipping them.[55]

The ending of *Ad Demetrianum* summarized well Cyprian's view of paganism. He drew from Old Testament predictions concerning the Day of the Lord and applied them to the final judgment predicted in the New Testament:

> All foreign aliens shall be set on fire and burned to a cinder. This refers to those who are alienated from the divine race and unholy, not reborn spiritually nor made sons of God. For God tells us in another place that they alone will be able to escape who have been reborn and signed with Christ's seal.[56]

Scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37–38). Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 1.22. Cf. *Ad Dominica oratione* 18; *Epistula* 63.8; 73.11.

[52] "Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall lie down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall go out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 8:11–12). Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 1.23.

[53] Joseph H. Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian: Early Defender of the Faith* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book, 1942)*,* 169–70.

[54] Philip Bradford Palmer, "Cyprian the Apologist" (PhD diss., Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 91.

[55] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 15. Cf. *Quod idola dii non sint* 1–7.

[56] "Succendi et cremari alienigenas praecanit Dominus, id est alienos a diuino genere eet profanes, spiritaliter non renatos nec Dei filios factos. Euadere enim solos posse qui renati et signo Christi signati fuerint alio in loco Deus loquitur." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 22.421–25. "Howl in anguish for the day of the Lord is near, and the crushing judgment from God will come. For behold the day of the Lord comes incurable in its anger and wrath, to make the whole world desolate and to destroy sinners from it"

In other words, all who have not experienced rebirth and not been sealed by the Holy Spirit will experience eternal damnation.[57] Cyprian found a Christological interpretation for the mark in Ezekiel 9:4–6; 12:13 and wrote concerning the passage:

> This mark refers to the suffering and blood of Christ, and that anyone found under this sign is a person that shall be preserved safe and unharmed…Just as then, when Egypt was struck, the Jewish population could not escape unless through the blood and sign of the lamb, so also, when the world begins to be laid waste and shaken, only he who is found under the blood and seal of Christ escapes.[58]

The new birth and spiritual seal normally occurred when the person formally entered the church at baptism, but both events also required true belief in Jesus Christ because it was Christ's seal that saved them from judgment.

Cyprian hence exhorted pagans to accept salvation by believing in Jesus Christ and repenting of their sins. Applying prosopological exegesis to Amos 5:6, Cyprian wrote that God himself exhorted humanity to "Seek God, and your soul shall live."[59] Similarly, Cyprian saw John 17:3 as Christ exhorting people to believe in him.[60] Cyprian beseeched pagans to acknowledge the person and work of Christ to be saved:

(Isa 13:6–9). "'Behold the day of the Lord comes with fire like an oven, and all of foreign birth and all sinners will be as stubble, and the day as it approaches shall burn them,' says the Lord" (Mal 3:19). Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 22. Cf. *Ad Quirinum* 2.28; *De bono patientiae* 22. English translations of *Ad Demetrianum* in this chapter come from Brent, *On the Church,* vol. 1, *Select Treatises* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006).

[57] Palmer, "Cyprian the Apologist," 92.

[58] "Et quod ad passionem et sanguinem Christi pertineat hoc signum et ille saluus adque incolumis reseruetur quisque in hoc signo inuenitur…. Ut illic percussa Aegypto Iudaicus populus euadere non nisi sanguine et signo agni potuit, ita et cum uastari coeperit mundus et percuti quisque in sanguine et signo Christi inuentus fuerit solus euadit." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 22.434–36, 441–45. "Cross through the midst of Jerusalem and you shall take note of the mark on the foreheads of the men who mourn and lament for the iniquities that are done among them. Go and slay and do not spare on your eyes. Have no pity for the old or young and kill young women and matrons and small children so that they are completely blotted out. Everyone, however, that has the written mark of the seal on him you shall not touch…The blood will be as a sign for you above the houses in which you shall be, and I will see the blood, and I will protect you, and there will not be upon you the plague of vengeance when I strike the land of Egypt" (Ezek 9:4–6; 12:13). Cf *Ad Quirinum* 2.22.

[59] "Quaerite Deum, et uiuet animal uestra." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 23.455–56.

[60] "This then is life eternal, that they may acknowledge you the only and true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 23. Cf. *Ad Fortunatum* 2; *Ad Quirinum* 2.1; *Epistula* 73.17.

Believe in him who will give to those who believe in him the reward of life eternal! Believe in him who inflicts eternal punishments on the unbelievers in the fires of Gehenna! What then will be the glory of faithfulness, what the punishment for faithlessness, when the day of [judgment] comes! What will be then the joy of the believers, what the sorrow of the faithless, that they were unwilling here beforehand to believe, and are not able now to return that they might become believers. Gehenna, eternally ablaze and its punishment devouring with its undying flames, will burn those condemned to it, and there will not be the means by which the torments will be able to have at any time rest or end. Souls will be assigned along with their bodies to excruciating pains, without limit and to their hurt…There will be then suffering from punishment without the fruit of repentance, an expression of grief that achieves nothing, and an entreaty without efficacy. Those unwilling to believe in life eternal will believe too late in eternal punishment.[61]

Cyprian thus not only held to exclusivism, but he also denied annihilationism or any sort of conditionally punishment for non-Christians. Isaiah 66:24 said, "Their worm will not die, and their fire will not be put out, and they will be in the view of all flesh."[62] Cyprian applied this warning against the enemies of God and Israel to the third-century world to beseech pagans to repent.[63] Salvation required belief in this life, and unbelief led to eternal, conscious punishment. While Pliny the Younger had described Christianity as a wanton and immoderate delusion, Cyprian instead exhorted Demetrianus to turn from the depraved Greco-Roman superstitions and place his faith in Jesus Christ

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[61] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 23–24. "Credite illi qui omnino non fallit. Credite illi qui haec omnia futura praedixit. Credite illi qui credentibus praemium uitae aeternae dabit. Credite illi qui incredulis aeterna supplicia gehennae ardoribus inrogabit. Quae tunc erit fidei Gloria quae poena perfidiae, cum iudicii dies uenerit, que Laetitia credentium, quae maestitia perfidorum noluisse istic prius credere et ut credant iam redire non posse. Cremabit addictos ardens semper Gehenna et uiuacibus flammis uorax poena, nec erit unde habere tormenta uel requiem possint aliquando uel finem. Seruantur cum corporibus suis animae infinitis cruciatibus ad dolorem…Erit tunc sine fructu paenitentiae dolor poenae, inanis ploratio et inefficax deprecation. In aeternam poenam sero credunt qui in uitam aeternam credere noluerunt." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 23.446–24.469, 24.488–91. For a similar passage see *A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian* 17–18. This work was written by one of Cyprian's fellow bishops in Latin North Africa *c.* 255.

[62] "Vermis eorum non morietur et ignis eorum non extinguetur, et erunt ad uisionem uniuersae carnis." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 24.473–74. Similarly, Wisdom of Solomon 5:1–9 said: "Then the righteous shall stand with great constancy against those who have afflicted them and who have taken away their labors. When they see, they shall be upset with a trembling fear and will be amazed at the suddenness of their unhoped for salvation, saying amongst themselves, having repented and bewailing their anguish of spirit: 'These are those whom we once held in derision, as we made caricatures of them. We had no feeling for their life, and we even considered their end as madness and without honor. How are they to be reckoned amongst the sons of God and their destiny amongst their holy ones? Therefore, we erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness did not shine upon us, and the sun has not risen upon us. We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction. We wandered in solitary paths difficult to walk, knowing not the way of the Lord. What does pride profit us or what does rejoicing in riches confer upon us? All those things have gone away as though a shadow." Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 24. Cf. *Ad Fortunatum* 12; *Ad Quirinum* 3.15–16; *De habitu virginum* 10; *Epistula* 6.2.

[63] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 24.

as Savior and Lord.[64] Demetrianus needed to trust in the blood of Christ upon the cross to receive redemption and reconciliation with God and to inherit eternal life.[65] After death a person would have no further chances to accept the gospel.[66] This thought drove Cyprian to urge people to accept Jesus Christ and enter the church so that they might be saved.[67]

Cyprian not only made his exclusivism clear in *Ad Quirinum* and *Ad Demetrianum* but also in his letters. Stephen claimed that schismatics received a measure of grace, so they could administer valid baptisms.[68] In response, Cyprian wrote "For when we say: 'Do you believe in everlasting life and the forgiveness of sins through the holy [church],' we mean that forgiveness of sins is granted only within the [church]."[69] He similarly wrote to Magnus, "Those who would live and escape the destruction of the world must be gathered into one house and one house only (that is, into the [church])."[70] In other words, because of Cyprian's close connection between the church and salvation, he believed a person had to enter the church to receive salvation. Salvation could not just come through the church but came only to those within the church.

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[64] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 25; Pliny, *Epistula* 10.96.8.

[65] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 23, 25–26.

[66] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 25–26. The difference in tone between *Ad Donatum* and *Ad Demetrianum* stems from the relationship the recipients had to Cyprian. Demetrianus was a foe of the Carthaginian church and had been one of the instigators for the Decian persecution. However, Donatus was a friend of Cyprian's. Despite the differences in tone, the messages of both treatises remain the same. Salvation comes only from accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

[67] Cf. *Ad Donatum*; 5–16.

[68] "Stephen has now hardened to such a degree that he insists that sons are to be born to God even from the baptism of Marcion, and from that of Valentinus as well as of Apelles and all the other blasphemers against God the Father." Regardless of whether Stephen made this claim, Cyprian believed either Stephen had done so or that his arguments logically led to this end. Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.7.3.42–44.

[69] "Nam cum dicimus: 'credis in uitam aeternam et missionem peccatorum per sanctam ecclesiam?' intelligimus remissionem peccatorum non nisi in ecclesia dari." Cyprian, *Epistula* 70.2.1.

[70] "Quo sacramento declarator in unum domum solam id est in ecclesiam uictorus et ab interitu mundi euasuros colligi oportere." Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.4.2.84–86. The location of Magnus' church remains unknown, but Clarke argued well that Cyprian hinted that it was far from Carthage. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian,* 4:177–78.

Cyprian also said it was utterly ridiculous for forgiveness to be found where people were blaspheming God. Cyprian maintained, "We should be convinced that forgiveness of sins can be granted only in the [church] and that the enemies of Christ cannot lay any sort of claim to share in [his] grace."[71] Cyprian directed *Epistula* 74 at schismatics. However, considering how he thought that pagans worshipped demons, he certainly would have categorized pagans as blasphemers.[72] Seeing this dual attack upon both schismatics and pagans, Burns summarized Cyprian in *Epistula* 74.6–8 as asking "how could the offspring of an adulteress [i.e., schismatics/heretics] or prostitute [i.e., non-Christians] be acknowledged by the Father?"[73] Indeed, Cyprian wrote in this passage that "[the church] alone is capable of spiritually bearing and giving birth to sons to God. This being so, where and of what mother and to whom is he born who is not a son of the [church]? If a man is to have God for Father, he must first have the [church] for mother."[74] Cyprian thus defended his view of baptism by arguing from exclusivism. Spiritual birth only came to those within the church, so anyone outside the congregation (including those formerly within the church) could not have baptism nor salvation.

Cyprian also applied an ecclesiological interpretation to Song of Songs 4:12–15, where the bride is described as an enclosed garden and sealed fountain. Cyprian said, "Now, if this [church] is an enclosed garden and sealed fountain, how is it possible for anyone who is not within the [church] to enter that garden or to drink from its fountain

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[71] "ut sacerdotes dei et cclesiae eius de ipsius dignatione praepositi sciamus remissam peccatorum non nissi in ecclesia dari posse nec posse aduersarios Christi quicquam sibi circa eius gratiam uindicare."Cyprian, *Epistula* 72.3.2.73–76; 74. Cf. Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 295.

[72] *Cyprian*, *Ad Demetrianum* 15; *Quod idola dii non sint* 1–7.

[73] Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 120.

[74] Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.7.2. "Quae parere spiritaliter et generare filios deo possit, ubi et ex qua et cui natus est qui filius ecclesiae non est? Vt habere quis possit deum patrem, habeat ante ecclesiam matrem." Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.7.2.132–34.

[i.e., salvation]?"[75] Similarly, Cyprian interpreted the ark of Noah ecclesiologically, so that people are only saved if they enter the church through baptism.[76] Cyprian thus did not merely contend that schismatics and heretics were beyond salvation. Rather, he argued from exclusivism to prove that schismatics and heretics had lost salvation. Cyprian used exclusivism as a weapon to counter their arguments.

The Reinterpreted Passages

The texts reinterpreted by this new scholarship should be understood based upon Cyprian's theological framework that stems from his whole corpus. *De unitate* has received the most attention from this new interpretation of Cyprian. However, he argued against schism in this work by virtually equating the spiritual and visible church so that departing the visible church also meant departing the spiritual church. While Cyprian did not directly address pagans, inclusivism would not only have weakened his argument; it would have contradicted it.

Much of this new interpretation has relied upon *De unitate* 6, but this section assumes exclusivism. Sullivan admitted that Cyprian called the church a bride, mother, and ark in this passage.[77] However, Sullivan misunderstood how Cyprian was using these analogies to further his case against the schismatics. Cyprian called the church the spouse of Jesus Christ "who rescues us for God, she who seals for the kingdom the sons whom

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[75] "Si autem ecclesia eius hortus conclusus est et fons signatus, quomodo in eundem hortum introire aut bibere de fonte eius potest qui in ecclesia non est?" Cyprian, *Epistula* 74.11.2.230–32. Cyprian connected this claim to baptism as well, which was the point when someone officially joined the church and was saved. *Epistula* 69.2.1. Cf. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 120; Dunn, "Validity of Baptism and Ordination in the African Response to the 'Rebaptism' Crisis: Cyprian of Carthage's Synod of Spring 256. *Theological Studies* 62, no. 2 (May 2006): 271–72.

[76] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6; *Epistula* 69.2.2; 74.11.3. See *A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian* 2–6. The work was written by one of Cyprian's fellow bishops in North Africa around 255. The writer also pointed to Noah's ark to exclude Novatians from salvation, but the author used a more allegorical hermeneutic to interpret the ark as symbolizing the church.

[77] Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* 21.

she has borne."[78] Only those sealed within the church will be saved. As in *Epistula* 74, Cyprian also provided an ecclesiological interpretation for the ark of Noah to argue for the exclusivity of the church for salvation: "You cannot have God for your Father if you have not the [church] for your mother. If there was escape for anyone who was outside the ark of [Noah], there is escape too for one who is found to be outside the [church]."[79] Hence, all those outside the church will not escape divine judgment, just as all those outside the ark did not escape divine wrath. Similarly, Cyprian saw immediate application in Christ's proclamation that those not with him were against him (Matt 12:30). In other words, all people who refused to enter the church and obey Christ were necessarily acting contrary to him, whether pagan, heretical, or schismatic.[80] Cyprian thus strengthened his argument against the schismatics by arguing from exclusivism. Since the church is the spouse of Jesus Christ, since the church is the mother of Christians, and since the church is like the ark, then all outside the church have no salvation, including those who once were within the church.

Alongside *De unitate* 6, the new interpretation has looked at *Epistula* 73. However, Cyprian also argued from exclusivism in this correspondence. In *Epistula* 73.4.2, he revealed why he wrote the letter: "According to this argument, we have to consider the faith of believers outside the church and see whether they might obtain grace in some measure according to that faith of theirs."[81] In other words, his opponents were

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[78] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6. "Haec nos Deo seruat, haec filios regno quos generauit adisgnat." Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6.145–46. Cf. Cyprian, *Epistula* 52.1.3.

[79] "Habere iam non potest Deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem. Si potuit euadere quisque extra arcam Noe fuit, et qui extra ecclesiam foris fuerit euadet. Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6.149–51. Cf. *Epistula* 69.2.2; also see *A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian* 2.

[80] Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6. "He who is not with me is against me, and he who gathers not with me, scatters" (Matt 12:30). Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.86; *Epistula* 69.1; 70.3; 43.5.

[81] "Considerare itaque debemus fidem eorum qui foris credunt, an secundum eandem fidem possint aliquid gratiae consequi." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.4.2.66–68.

saying that a person could have saving faith without going into or remaining within the

one visible church. Cyprian responded:

> If then not even the baptism of blood and of public confession will profit the heretic for salvation—for there is no salvation outside the [church]—how much more must this be so if in some lair, in some den of thieves, a man is bathed in polluted and spurious water, and so far from putting off his old sins, he loads himself with yet more fresh and graver ones.[82]

Cyprian then quoted John 3:5: "Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot

enter the kingdom of God."[83] Since Cyprian believed in the perspicuity of Scripture, he

assumed that others would see a clear connection between the Holy Spirit and baptism in

this passage, so Cyprian merely needed to quote the verse to settle the issue.[84] Since

nobody outside the church is saved, then schismatics could not die as martyrs because

they were outside the church. A person did not have saving faith if he/she was not seeking

after the church. People had to enter the church via baptism and remain within it to be

saved. Salvation was given only to the spiritual church, and the visible church marked the

boundaries of that spiritual church.[85] Hence, in the texts often reinterpreted by this new

scholarship, Cyprian strengthened his arguments against schismatics by arguing from

exclusivism, using this position as a prod to convince former church members to return or

face the same fate as non-believers.

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[82] "Quod si haeretico nec baptisma publicae confessionis et sanguinis proficere ad salute potest, quia salus extra excclesiam non est, quanto magis ei nihil proderit, si in latebra et in latronum spelunca adulterae aquae contagion tinctus non tantum peccata antiqua non exposuerit, sed adhuc potius noua et maiora cumulauererit." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.21.2.378–83.

[83] "Nisi qui natus fuerit ex aqua et spiritu, non potest introire in regnum dei." Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.21.3.390–91. Cf. Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 1.12; 3.25; *De Dominica oratione* 17; *De mortalitate* 14; *Epistula* 72.1; 73.21.

[84] Michael Andrew Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in Third-Century Exegesis* (Tübingen, Germany: JC. B. Mohr, 1971), 624–25.

[85] J. Patout, Burns, Jr. *Cyprian the Bishop* (London: Routledge, 2002), 120. Cyprian also argued that people needed to have a proper view of Jesus Christ to be a part of the spiritual church and thus receive the rewards of martyrdom. Hence, Cyprian did not see the spiritual church and the visible church as the exact same thing because people could enter the visible church and still not be rewarded for martyrdom if they did not hold proper beliefs concerning Christ. Cyprian, *Epistula* 73.20.1.

Conclusion

Therefore, the recent reinterpretation of Cyprian concerning the extent of salvation has offered a weak argument because it has failed to consider his overarching theology, including how he used exclusivism to strengthen his case against schismatics. Brent rightly stated that for Cyprian salvation only came to those who remained within the "cleansed space" (i.e., the church) through a "divinely approved rite" (i.e., baptism).[86] Cyprian primarily argued from Scripture. However, he also held a robust view of sin so that humanity needed a drastic remedy. He believed the solution came through accepting Christ's work upon the cross, which freed the person from sin by eliminating guilt before God. The Holy Spirit applied Christ's work to the believer at baptism. All those with the Spirit constituted the spiritual church, and only those within the spiritual church were saved. However, since the Spirit came upon a person only at a valid baptism, then the visible church marked the boundaries of the spiritual church. For this reason, all people outside the church had no salvation. Jews and pagans had never entered the visible church. They thus did not have the indwelling Spirit, so they remained enemies of God. None of them were saved. Schismatics and heretics lost the saving presence of the Spirit when they left the visible church. Since they likewise did not have the indwelling Holy Spirit applying Christ's work of redemption upon them, they would experience the same eternal punishment as those who had never entered the church.

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[86] Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 60.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

Cyprian believed that the Bible pictured the spiritual and visible church as virtually wed together so that schismatics were not saved, even if they held orthodox beliefs on issues like the Trinity and the person of Jesus Christ. Cyprian delineated the spiritual church as those who had received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at their baptism. Cyprian defined the visible church as the local churches that fellowshipped together through the correspondence of their bishops. Based upon his reading of Scripture, the spiritual and visible church were almost the same. The spiritual church could not be rent because the Holy Spirit could not be divided. The Spirit's work and presence could only be found within the visible church, so the latter could not be torn in two either. Therefore, all those outside of this union of the churches were in truth outside the church, both visibly and spiritually. Since they were outside the church, they did not have the Holy Spirit nor salvation.

Cyprian most clearly revealed this connection between the visible and spiritual church in his work *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate.* He claimed, "outside the church there is no salvation" (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*) because for him the spiritual and visible church were basically the same. While looking at the biblical portrayal of the church in *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6–22, Cyprian concluded that visible unity is part of the *esse* of the church because the spiritual church cannot be divided. Hence, although the Novatianists in Rome in many ways had correct convictions concerning the primary doctrines of Christianity, they had lost their salvation because they had separated themselves from the saving presence of the Holy Spirit within the one, true church. They had departed from the communion of the spiritual church when they broke from the

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fellowship of the local congregations. In sum, the visible church could not split in two because the spiritual church could not be divided, so people left both the spiritual and visible union when they formed a schism.

The Church and Satisfaction

Sometimes scholarship has connected the church and salvation in Cyprian's thought by claiming he held to some form of works-based salvation, but a closer analysis of his views reveals that reconciliation with God came through Christ's work alone. Cyprian held a robust view of sin, including believing people inherited a complete depravity and a sinful will from Adam. This sin not only impacted the individual's life but shaped society and the cosmos. A civilization rose and fell partly based upon the presence of sin. Ultimately, natural disasters for Cyprian attested to the reality that the world was deteriorating due to sin. Therefore, people could not merit salvation by their own deeds but needed God to redeem them. The divine saving work occurred upon the cross, when Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for humanity, thus freeing believers from the power of sin and Satan. The Holy Spirit then applied that salvation to Christians through the ministries of the church. Hence, the church was essential for salvation not because a person earned salvation through partaking the sacraments or doing good acts but because the Holy Spirit applied Christ's work to Christians through the ministries of the church.

Part of the confusion over Cyprian's view of works and salvation has stemmed from misunderstandings concerning *satisfactio* and *paenitentia* in his thought. Sometimes studies have read *satisfactio* in his writings as reconciliation, following modern views of atonement as reconciliation with God. However, in late antiquity, *satisfactio* did not mean reconciliation but stood for an act of apology or a payment given for restitution. Cyprian believed that any offense deserved an act of apology, more so a sin against God. Therefore, when Cyprian wrote that certain works like almsgiving allowed for a person to make satisfaction to God, he was talking about how works served as acts of apology. He

did not mean that the deeds led to reconciliation with God in the same way Christ's work upon the cross appeased God.

Similarly, sometimes scholarship has translated *paenitentia* in Cyprian's works along the lines of the sacrament of penance as it developed in the medieval period. However, in late antiquity the word meant feeling regret. Latin speakers preferred to use the phrase *paenitentiam agere* to mean "to repent," instead of using the verb *paeniteō*, and Cyprian used *paenitentia* and *paenitentiam agere* in a manner akin to his contemporaries. While he believed people should perform acts of apology when they committed sins, the word *paenitentia* primarily meant repentance for Cyprian. Understanding *paenitentia* as repentance helps clarify his teaching concerning reconciliation. Christians did not earn salvation by works because they demonstrated their perseverance in the faith through doing good deeds and showing remorse for sin. However, Cyprian came to see the latter as a better test of faith after the Decian persecution. If the *lapsi* or schismatics refused to repent of their sins, then they unequivocally revealed themselves to be devoid of the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit and thus outside the spiritual church. If they were deemed outside the spiritual church, then Cyprian believed bishops should not allow them to return as members of the visible church. Whenever Christians committed sin (especially egregious ones), bishops revoked their ability to commune with the church until they had demonstrated sufficiently that they had truly lamented of their transgression. Thus, repentance was needed for reconciliation with the church, along with remaining in fellowship with God.

Cyprian, therefore, connected the church and salvation not by holding to a form of works-based salvation. Instead, he believed the Holy Spirit applied salvation to those within the church. When Christians had to be disciplined for sin, they sought reconciliation with the visible church through works, and apologized to God through good deeds. However, they also had to demonstrate true remorse over their sin. Apologetic acts apart from lamentation would not suffice for reconciliation with the

church nor for renewed fellowship with God. This corrective process did not grant salvation. During this disciplinary time, Christians demonstrated their continuing presence in the spiritual church through works and via signs of lament. They only departed from the spiritual church and lost their salvation when they refused to bang upon the doors of the church.

The Sacraments and Salvation

Cyprian did not connect the church and salvation by forming a works-based soteriology, but by connecting the work of the Holy Spirit to the ministries of the church. For this reason, the sacraments for Cyprian became an essential aspect of the Christian life. The Spirit worked through the sacraments both to initiate salvation and to help Christians persevere in their salvation. Formally, salvation began at baptism. Since new believers publicly entered the visible church during the sacrament, they also formally entered the spiritual church at that time. During the baptismal rite, the Holy Spirit came upon the new believer and applied Christ's work upon the cross.

While this understanding allowed baptism to serve as a connecting point between the church and salvation for Cyprian, the visible and spiritual church were not the exact same thing in his thoughts. Cyprian claimed that catechumens received the same martyr's crown as full church members if the catechumens died during persecution. Since they had true faith and were intending to enter the church via baptism, God honored their faith by granting them salvation after a martyr's death. Additionally, Cyprian sometimes talked about the saving work of the Holy Spirit prior to baptism. In *Ad Donatum*, the Spirit opened Cyprian's eyes to the truths of the gospel and softened his heart to make it susceptible to receive the good news. This illuminating work of the Holy Spirit occurred prior to Cyprian's baptism into the church. In like manner, conversion for him occurred when people turned from their previous lives to the Christian life. This event happened prior to baptism when a person decided to become a catechumen. Finally,

Cyprian wrote that God would judge heretics within the church for their disbelief and for tricking the church into accepting them as members. Thus, while Cyprian connected ecclesiology and soteriology in his thought, he did not see them as the same thing.

Baptism certainly served as a ritual to link the visible and spiritual church together, but Cyprian also saw the eucharist as essential for the sanctification and perseverance of Christians. Cyprian believed the eucharist subjectively affected participants. Those who were pure in heart were strengthened to face persecution by taking it. In contrast, those who had not repented of sin before coming to the eucharistic table sometimes fell ill after receiving it. While the Lord's Supper had these subjective effects, for Cyprian its primary purpose was more objective. The sacrament presented the gospel. The wine represented Christ and the water the church so that the mixing of the two elements in the cup symbolized that Christians are saved through union with Jesus Christ. Because the eucharist was a visible sign of the gospel, the ordinance primarily served as a way for the church to commemorate Christ's death upon the cross. Since the Lord's Supper was a memorial to Christ's sacrifice, Cyprian routinely called the eucharist itself a sacrifice. This sacrament for Cyprian replaced the sacrificial system of both the Jews and Greco-Romans. When they converted to Christianity, they continued to worship through sacrifice, but the Christian sacrifice was the celebration of the eucharist, which memorialized the one true sacrifice of Jesus Christ. However, Cyprian did not see the eucharist as essential for salvation along the lines of later sacramental theology, and the idea of a re-presentation of the crucifixion should not be read into Cyprian's works. He believed the eucharist memorialized the gospel, and as such it served as a Christian sacrifice, thus allowing the Holy Spirit to strengthen the members of the church through the elements for the difficulties of living the Christian life.

The Church and Salvation

Cyprian gave the bishop a large role in the church and thus in a person's salvation. Cyprian maintained a version of episcopalianism, where the bishop governed his church. However, each bishop remained largely autonomous over his own affairs, and each congregation chose its own bishop and could depose its bishop if he committed an egregious sin. As the governor of the church, the bishop symbolized the unity of his local congregation, and the fellowship of all the bishops symbolized the union of the whole visible church. Therefore, when a bishop broke from the communion of the other bishops, his whole congregation stepped outside the visible church. In departing the visible church, they all left the spiritual church as well and thus lost their salvation.

The bishop of a church was also responsible for reconciling repentant believers with the church and for administering the sacraments. Cyprian did not believe bishops could remit sins. A bishop served only as preliminary judge, granting reconciliation with the church based upon his best assessment of whether people had truly repented of their sins. Cyprian took this episcopal ministry seriously. If a bishop granted reconciliation to an unrepentant sinner, the bishop would face divine judgment in the eschaton for giving false hope, because God would prevent the sinner from entering eternal life. Only God could forgive sin. Along with the responsibility to grant reconciliation with the church, the bishop administered the sacraments. Cyprian combatted the schismatics partly by arguing that their episcopal leaders were not valid overseers of the church. Only a true bishop was sanctified by God and could thus perform a valid baptism, at which time a new believer received initial sanctification from the Spirit. Additionally, believers could only receive the Holy Spirit if a Spirit-filled bishop laid his hands upon them during the baptismal rite. Schismatic bishops were not Spirit-filled and therefore unsanctified. They thus could not grant baptism nor impart the Spirit of God. Hence, they could not initiate believers into salvation. Because schismatic bishops did not have the Spirit, they also were not proper administrators of the Lord's

Supper. Cyprian saw the eucharistic practices of the schismatics as foreign sacrifices. Consequently, he viewed the bishop as essential for salvation in that the ministries of the church were performed by a Spirit-filled bishop. Through these ministries, the Holy Spirit applied the gifts of salvation.

Finally, since the visible and spiritual church were united, anybody outside the visible church was not saved. Cyprian limited the extent of salvation to the realm of the church. In recent decades, some scholarship has attempted to redefine his position along the lines of an inclusivist. According to this recent argument, Cyprian only wrote to schismatics and heretics. Therefore, scholarship cannot know for certain his view of pagans, but he probably only believed schismatics were outside of salvation. This contemporary position stems from a weak case that relies mostly upon an argument from silence. Lack of articulation does not prove Cyprian held to inclusivism, especially considering he was primarily concerned about protecting his church from schism and not about combatting paganism. Additionally, the new view has argued only from a few texts; it has not considered Cyprian's whole corpus nor his overarching theology. In *Ad Demetrianum* Cyprian called pagans to repent of their sin and seek salvation in Jesus Christ so that they might not face eternal damnation. Even in the key passages for the new interpretation, Cyprian did not just exclude schismatics from salvation; he argued against them by wielding exclusivism as a weapon. Since only those within the church were saved, then all people outside the church were not saved, including schismatics. Schismatics had lost salvation, even if they retained proper beliefs and rites, because they stepped out of the spiritual church when they left the visible church.

Conclusion

In sum, Cyprian viewed the spiritual and visible church as virtually wed together. Schismatic congregations appeared to have split the church in half. However, based upon his reading of Scripture, Cyprian held that neither the visible nor the spiritual

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church could be shorn in two. Therefore, schismatics had not created new churches but instead had departed from the church, the Holy Spirit, and salvation. Although the spiritual and visible church were connected, Cyprian did not amalgamate them into a single entity. When catechumens died during persecution, they were still saved based upon their faith and desire to receive baptism. The Spirit of God indwelled them at their baptism of blood, thus applying salvation and placing them in the spiritual church, even though they had never participated as full members in the visible church. Additionally, when Christians committed egregious sins, they maintained their salvation by truly repenting of their sins and seeking reconciliation with the church. A bishop could revoke membership within the visible church of those under discipline and refuse to grant them communion. However, Christians did not depart from the spiritual church and thus lose their salvation unless they would not repent of their sin or did not seek reconciliation with the true church.

Cyprian's core assumption that the visible and spiritual church were united but not the same entity shaped much of his ecclesiology and soteriology, as well as his pastoral practice. Therefore, other areas of study will be able to explain further the impact of this close union. Since the Holy Spirit played such a vital role in linking the church and salvation in Cyprian's thoughts, further areas of research should investigate his pneumatology. Since the Holy Spirit played such a vital role in linking the church and salvation in Cyprian's thoughts. Further areas of research should investigate his pneumatology. While a monograph on his overarching view of the Holy Spirit would help, scholarship should especially look at the link between pneumatology and soteriology and the connection between ecclesiology and pneumatology in Cyprian's writings. Such examinations should shed further light upon how the doctrine of the Holy Spirit glued together the doctrines of the church and of salvation for Cyprian. Beyond research into his beliefs concerning the third person of the Trinity, Cyprianic scholarship would greatly benefit from a commentary series covering his treatises and letters, akin to

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the *Hermeneia* series, which encompasses patristic works of the first and second centuries. The technical studies found in the *Ancient Christian Writers* series and the *Sources Chrétiennes* series provide much needed information concerning Cyprian's Latin, the manuscripts, and their translation. However, these works do not spend much time studying the meaning of the passages chapter-by-chapter. If commentaries covering his works can be published, the set would be invaluable for any Cyprianic scholar. Finally, most of his treatises have not received an English translation since the nineteenth century. An updated translation of these works would also prove immensely helpful.

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ABSTRACT

EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECCLESIOLOGY AND
SOTERIOLOGY FOR CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

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Cyprian wrote his treatise *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* to discuss the relationship between the church and salvation. To counter the Novatian schism in Rome, Cyprian virtually equated the spiritual and visible church. Schismatics necessarily placed themselves outside the spiritual church and thus outside salvation when they departed the visible congregation. This linking of the visible and the spiritual church shaped Cyprian's understanding of the role of the church in a person's salvation. He did not hold to a works-based salvation, but the sacraments were essential for ecclesial life. At baptism, the Holy Spirit applied Christ's work upon the cross to believers, so the Christian life officially began at baptism. After baptism, the eucharist subjectively strengthened believers to obey the commands of Jesus Christ. It also memorialized Christ's sacrifice, which had bought their salvation. In a sense the bishops were also necessary for salvation. Schismatic bishops could not administer valid sacraments. When they left the visible church, the Holy Spirit removed his presence. As unsanctified people, they could not administer the sanctifying rituals of baptism and the eucharist. How close was the connection between the visible and the spiritual church? While Cyprian virtually wed the two together, he did not see them as the same thing. Catechumens who died during persecution were still saved based upon their faith, as revealed in their desire to receive baptism. Moreover, when Christians committed egregious sins, they maintained their salvation by truly repenting of their sins and seeking reconciliation with the church.

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