

Cyprian's Use of Paul

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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2016

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Abstract

Cyprian is a key figure in the early Latin tradition—his thought shaped Western Christendom—yet his exegesis has been relatively neglected. Here I begin to redress that deficiency by examining all Cyprian’s quotations of and allusions to the canonical Paul. This reveals the impact of the most important New Testament author on the theology and practice of a significant bishop. It also provides insight into how Cyprian’s context and theology influences his exegesis.

Cyprian, like Paul, is a pastoral theologian. His pastoral concerns, as expressed in his writings, consequently provide a helpful lens through which to study these interactions. I therefore consider divine truth and eternal glory; the church’s unity, ministry and sacraments; discipline and repentance; and wealth and welfare. Examining Cyprian’s use of Paul in these areas allows us to move beyond a simple literal/allegorical paradigm to appreciate the wide range of reading strategies used by Cyprian: model, image, maxim, title, contextual exegesis, direct application, prophetic fulfilment and qualification.

This study of Cyprian’s appropriation of Pauline texts therefore illuminates the interplay between text, context and theology in his exegesis. It also deepens our understanding of the early North African hermeneutical tradition and the early reception of Paul.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own original work and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Larry Welborn for embracing this project and generously sharing his wisdom and expertise. I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity of working with him, and I really appreciate his unfailing belief and encouragement. I would also like to thank Paul McKechnie and Alanna Nobbs for their enthusiasm and support, both academic and administrative—they make a great team. Thanks must also go to Don Barker and the members of the New Testament and Early Christianity seminar at Macquarie—it's been great to share the journey with them. I'm also grateful for my colleagues at Morling College, and the Principal and Board for granting me sabbatical and other leave to complete this work.

I would like to thank my parents and first teachers, Marj and Ted McMaster, for their constant love and for always believing I could do whatever I put my mind to. Thanks also to my siblings, in-laws, and nieces and nephews—I'm very fortunate to be part of such a wonderful family.

I would like to thank my children and favourite students, Joel and Lara, who bring so much joy to my life and from whom I am constantly learning. Most of all, I would like to thank my husband, Peter, a true partner in Christ. His steadfast and sacrificial support, example, and encouragement to keep growing have made it all possible.

Soli Deo gloria!

Abbreviations

Formatting and abbreviations of ancient literary sources conform to conventions in *The SBL Handbook of Style* 2nd ed (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014).

ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
<i>AevAnt</i>	<i>Aevum Antiquum</i>
ASE	<i>Annali di storia dell'esegesi</i>
ASR	<i>Annali di Scienze Religiose</i>
ASSR	<i>Archives de sciences sociales des religions</i>
Aug	<i>Augustinianum</i>
<i>AugStud</i>	<i>Augustinian Studies</i>
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina
CH	<i>Church History</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JFSR</i>	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
<i>JRH</i>	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Lat</i>	<i>Latomus</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
<i>LSpir</i>	<i>Letter & Spirit</i>
Musurillo	Musurillo, Herbert, ed. and trans. <i>The Acts of the Christian Martyrs</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1972.

<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
<i>QL</i>	<i>Questions Liturgiques</i>
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> . Edited by Theodor Klauser et al. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950–
<i>RBén</i>	<i>Revue bénédictine</i>
<i>REAug</i>	<i>Revue des études augustinienes et patristiques</i>
<i>RHE</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>RTAM</i>	<i>Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale</i>
<i>SacEr</i>	<i>Sacris Erudiri</i>
<i>Sal</i>	<i>Salesianum</i>
<i>SecCent</i>	<i>Second Century</i>
Stewart-Sykes	Stewart-Sykes, Alistair, ed. and trans. <i>Hippolytus. On the Apostolic Tradition</i> . Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001.
<i>StPatr</i>	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
<i>SVTQ</i>	<i>St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>ZAC</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum</i>
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

1. Introduction

*The blessed Apostle Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, and sent forth for the calling and training of the gentiles, bears witness and instructs us...*¹

Once upon a not-so-distant time, scholars wrote books on biblical interpretation that relegated specifically exegetical works in the West to the late third and early fourth centuries.² Treatises, letters and homilies were overlooked in favour of commentaries which considered the text “for its own sake.” Whilst that perspective remains influential, Margaret Mitchell’s call for a better model of ancient biblical interpretation is being heeded;³ the narrow definition of modern exegetes, bequeathed by the Reformation, is being replaced by how the Fathers actually used Scripture. Reading the Bible, as Frances Young says, “embraced the concerns we tend to separate out into scholarship, theology, praxis and spirituality. The purpose of biblical exegesis, implicit and explicit, was to form the practice and belief of Christian people, individually and collectively.”⁴

Cyprian of Carthage models these exegetical concerns. His episcopate, ending with his martyrdom in 258, coincided with a turbulent decade for the North African church. Persecution, schism and plague raised questions regarding the identity of the community, its place within imperial society, and God’s control of history. As bishop, it was Cyprian’s responsibility to provide answers, thereby uniting his flock and keeping it on the path to salvation.⁵ Understanding these events as instructive, rather than destructive to faith, required the creation of, in Averil Cameron’s words, an “intellectual

¹ “Item beatus apostolus Paulus plenus Spiritu sancto et uocandis formandisque gentibus missus contestetur et instruat dicens.” *Pat. 2* (CCSL 3A:118).

² For example, Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis*, trans. John A. Hughes (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 87.

³ Margaret M. Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 384-85.

⁴ Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 299.

⁵ Cf. *Ep. 41.1.1* (CCSL 3C:196).

and imaginative universe.”⁶ Cyprian created this, as other Christian leaders had done before him, through his use of Scripture.

Despite Cyprian’s importance as the author of the earliest surviving episcopal works written in Latin, there has been only one comprehensive treatment of his exegesis—*Cyprian and the Bible*. In this monograph, Michael Fahey examines each quotation of and allusion to Scripture in Cyprian’s writings, as well as his use of introductory phrases and types.⁷ My aim is to systematically extend Fahey’s work by focusing on Paul’s letters, allowing for a more detailed analysis of Cyprian’s reading strategies.

Why Paul? Despite a new appreciation for the apostle’s legacy in the early church,⁸ Cyprian’s appropriation of that legacy has not been explored. Furthermore, Paul is increasingly recognised to be, like Cyprian, a pastoral theologian addressing specific concerns in the churches with which he is associated.⁹ He is writing to people who are often first-generation Christians, under threat of persecution, coming to terms with a different worldview. These similarities in context mean that Cyprian can provide a valuable perspective on Paul’s thought. Of course, there are differences too, and we learn almost as much about Cyprian’s theology and environment from the verses Cyprian ignores.

Examining Cyprian’s use of Pauline texts will therefore illuminate the interplay between text, context and theology in his exegesis. It will also deepen our understanding of the early North African hermeneutical tradition and the early reception of Paul.

⁶ Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 6.

⁷ Michael Andrew Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in Third-Century Exegesis* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1971).

⁸ William S. Babcock, “Introduction,” in *Paul and the Legacies of Paul*, ed. William S. Babcock (Dallas, TX: SMU Press, 1990), xiii-xvi.

⁹ Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 131. For a study of Paul’s pastoral practice in Thessalonica, see Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1987).

1.1 Scion of Carthage: A life in context

Cyprian's entire life, it would seem, was in the context of Carthage, rebuilt as a Roman colony in the century before Christ¹⁰ after the city had been destroyed and cursed by Scipio in 146 BC.¹¹ As a colony, Carthage "cloned the material and constitutional fabric of Rome itself, along with the religious means of sacralising and therefore legitimating that constitution."¹² By Cyprian's time, all the key architectural elements were in place: the Ara Pacis, the altar of the *gens Augusta*, the temple of Juno Caelestis, the Forum with its Capitoline temple and praetorium, and the other essentials of Roman civilisation—the amphitheatre, circus, theatre and baths.¹³ The gods saw to the peace and prosperity of the city and the empire of which it was a part.¹⁴ Yet a succession of soldier emperors reflected the instability of the time; perhaps the world was in decline (*senectus mundi*)?¹⁵ Could a new golden age be achieved? The millennium of Rome's founding had recently been celebrated with just those hopes.¹⁶

Roman authority was represented by the proconsul, who ruled in conjunction with the local elites: the magistrates, local council (*ordo decurionum*) and provincial assembly

¹⁰ The exact date is not entirely clear from ancient sources, the founding attributed to both Caesar and Augustus. For a summary of the evidence, see J. B. Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 21 n. 10.

¹¹ Rives, *Religion and Authority*, 18. Allen Brent emphasises the necessity of Augustus' creation of a sacred space in the re-establishment of the city. Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 29-40.

¹² Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 44.

¹³ For a description of the material culture of Carthage, including illustrations, see Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*.

¹⁴ For the basis of Roman practice, summarised as "un savoir-faire et non un savoir-penser," see M. Linder and John Scheid, "Quand croire c'est faire: Le problème de la croyance dans la Rome ancienne," *ASSR* 81 (1993): 50, 54. For further discussion, see Clifford Ando, *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 1-18.

¹⁵ "La decrepitude du monde est un lieu commun de la pensée contemporaine." Michel Spanneut, *Le Stoïcisme des Pères de l'Église*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 413. As Elena Zocca demonstrates, the theme can be traced through the African Fathers from Tertullian to Augustine. Elena Zocca, "La 'Senectus Mundi'. Significato, Fonti e Fortuna di un Tema Ciprianeo," *Aug* 35 (1995): 641, 662-75.

¹⁶ The theme of "saeculum novum" also extended to the coinage issued by Philip the Arab. Patricia Southern, *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine*, Rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), 94.

(*concilium provinciae*).¹⁷ These political and religious structures were supported by patronage, the social means of exchange.¹⁸ Patrons provided protection and resources for their clients,¹⁹ designated as “friends”;²⁰ the clients, in return, would vote for their patrons, form part of their retinue and promote their honour.²¹ One indicator of such honour was the level a person reached in the *cursus honorum*, moving through the various grades of office. The extent to which these patterns of Roman life (built on Punic remains) shaped Cyprian’s activities as bishop forms part of this study.²²

The beginnings of Christianity in North Africa are unknown. The *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, dated to 180, is the first Christian text we have from North Africa,²³ but the community seems to have already grown local roots—the names of the martyrs include several which are typically African.²⁴ It is possible that the church in Carthage was a daughter of that in Rome, but more likely that the gospel first arrived from the East.²⁵

¹⁷ For a detailed discussion, see Rives, *Religion and Authority*, 17-99.

¹⁸ Richard Saller defines it as “an exchange relationship between men of unequal social status.” Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 8. It was not legally defined in the imperial age, however. Richard P. Saller, “Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction,” in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (London: Routledge, 1989), 50-52.

¹⁹ Patronage as an instrument of social control “lay as much in [patrons’] power to refuse as in their readiness to deliver the goods.” Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “Patronage in Roman Society: From Republic to Empire,” in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (London: Routledge, 1989), 73.

²⁰ On the use of “amicus,” see Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 11-15.

²¹ Saller points out that it was possible for clients to have more than one patron, and that junior aristocrats could also be the clients, or protégés, of senior aristocrats, attending morning salutations. Saller, “Patronage and Friendship,” 52-61.

²² For perceived remnants of Punic religion in North African Christianity, see W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 77-79, 86.

²³ Herbert Musurillo, “Introduction,” in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, ed. Herbert Musurillo (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), xii.

²⁴ Rives, *Religion and Authority*, 223-24.

²⁵ Gilles Quispel points to a variant in Tertullian’s citation of Acts 2:9-11 to suggest a Carthaginian tradition that Africans beyond those in Cyrene were present at Pentecost: “regiones Africae, quae est trans Cyrenen, inhabitants—Romani et incolae.” Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.* 7.4 (CCSL 2:1354). Gilles Quispel, “African Christianity before Minucius Felix and Tertullian,” in *Gnostica, Judaica, Catholica. Collected*

There is, however, no evidence, or even a “pious tradition,” for a single apostolic point of origin.²⁶ Tertullian does not refer to one, even when, in his *De praescriptione haereticorum*, it would have been to his advantage to do so.²⁷ The father of Latin Christianity was not the only high-status convert, as the *Martyrdom of Perpetua* shows.²⁸ The high esteem in which martyrs were held is also evident from this document, although this attitude was not unique to North Africa.²⁹

Tertullian is, of course, central to our understanding of early North African Christianity. As prolific as he was passionate, he wrote polemical, ethical and doctrinal treatises in the late second to early third century. In them, he displays the moral earnestness and rigour which are considered characteristic of the region, although it is questionable whether his views represented those of his fellow Christians to the extent that is often assumed.³⁰ I concur with the scholarship on Tertullian that places him and other adherents of the New Prophecy as an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, still within the catholic church.³¹ Whether or not Jerome’s report of Cyprian’s words, “Da magistrum!”³² is

Essays of Gilles Quispel, ed. Johannes van Oort (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 405-7. Furthermore, Augustine states that the gospel came to Africa from the roots of the churches of the Orient: “ab illa radice orientalium ecclesiarum se esse praecisam, unde euangelium in africanam uenit.” *Ep.* 52.2 (CSEL 34.2:150).

²⁶ François Decret, *Early Christianity in North Africa*, trans. Edward Smither (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 12.

²⁷ *Praescr.* 36 (CCSL 1:216-17), as noted by T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 67.

²⁸ *Mart. Perp.* 2 (Musurillo, 108-9). For the authenticity of the sections attributed to Perpetua and Saturus, edited early in the third century, see Thomas J. Heffernan, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5. For a discussion of the views of the afterlife in this work and in Tertullian, see Eliezer Gonzalez, *The Fate of the Dead in Early Third Century North African Christianity: The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas and Tertullian* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

²⁹ For a discussion of martyrdom in different regions, see Candida R. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

³⁰ Frend attributes the harsh nature of North African Christianity, evident in Tertullian, to the influence of the cult of Saturn, although even he states, “Clearly, the way of life preached by Tertullian was beyond the powers of many convinced believers.” Frend, *Donatist Church*, 98-101, 123.

³¹ Douglas Powell, “Tertullianists and Cataphrygians,” *VC* 29 (1975): 33-54.

³² Jerome, *Vir. Ill.* 53 (PL 23:698).

correct, Cyprian was clearly influenced by Tertullian. A number of his works address similar issues to those of his predecessor,³³ but he also shows a great deal of independence³⁴ and Cyprian rails against schismatics rather than Marcionites and Gnostics.

Cyprian's life

In terms of Cyprian's own background, we are limited by the decision of his first biographer, presumably his deacon Pontius,³⁵ to begin his account with Cyprian's second birth rather than his first.³⁶ This decision has constrained all his successors,³⁷ and his *Vita* is supplemented only by what we can glean from Cyprian's letters and treatises. The overall picture which may be recreated from these sources is generally agreed upon, however, even if the details are lacking.

Cyprian was born sometime between 200 and 210,³⁸ a man of considerable property and wealth,³⁹ most likely inherited,⁴⁰ becoming a Christian in middle age. Although the

³³ For example, Cyprian's *De bono patientiae*, *De dominica oratione* and *De habitu virginum* reflect in varying degrees Tertullian's *De patientia*, *De oratione* and, finally, *De pudicitia*, *De virginibus velandis* and *De cultu feminarum*.

³⁴ In, for example, his attitudes to flight in persecution, marriage, and the intermediate state.

³⁵ For the sake of convenience, I will use Jerome's attribution of the *Vita Cypriani* to the deacon Pontius. Jerome, *Vir. Ill.* 68 (PL 23:714). For a defence of Pontius' authorship of the work, although not his position as a deacon, see Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 385-94.

³⁶ *Vit. Cypr.* 2 (CSEL 3.1:xc).

³⁷ Although somewhat dated now, a significant watershed in Cyprianic studies was Edward White Benson, *Cyprian: His Life, His Times, His Work* (London: Macmillan, 1897).

³⁸ Probably the earlier end of the range is to be preferred. Sage, *Cyprian*, 103-4. Paul Monceaux prefers the later date on the basis that Cyprian does not seem to have known Tertullian, "his master", but this is hardly compelling. Paul Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion arabe. Vol. 2: Saint Cyprien et son temps* (Paris: Leroux, 1902; repr., Bruxelles: Culture et civilisation, 1963), 203.

³⁹ Cyprian reflects that before his conversion it had seemed almost impossible to relinquish his wealth and honours to become a Christian. *Don.* 3 (CCSL 3A:4).

⁴⁰ For discussion see Sage, *Cyprian*, 104-7. G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, 4 vols. (New York: Newman, 1984-1989), 1:14-15.

exact length of the catechumenate in North Africa in this period is unknown,⁴¹ the evidence points to a time-frame of years rather than months.⁴² As Alan Kreider emphasises, baptism was the culmination of a process during which the catechumen was transformed in beliefs, behaviour and allegiance.⁴³ In Cyprian's case, this meant his conversion, socialisation and training under the aged presbyter Caecilianus,⁴⁴ who subsequently entrusted his wife and children to his protégé's care.⁴⁵ As it was forbidden to appoint members of the clergy as guardians,⁴⁶ Caecilianus must have died before Cyprian's ordination, suggesting their relationship prior to Cyprian's baptism was of significant duration.

The importance of this period for Cyprian's spiritual formation is evident. Pontius describes how he demonstrated his commitment to Christ even before he had been born again (i.e. baptised), exclaiming at such premature fruit.⁴⁷ Cyprian sold his property and gave it to the poor, although his *horti* were restored to him by the indulgence of God⁴⁸ and he remained a person of substantial means.⁴⁹ He also absorbed the biblical tradition

⁴¹ Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "Catechumenate and Contra-Culture: The Social Process of Catechumenate in Third-Century Africa and Its Development," *SVTQ* 47 (2003): 294.

⁴² The three-year catechumenate of the *Apostolic Tradition* (17.1) may have been specific to the school in which it originated. Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *Hippolytus. On the Apostolic Tradition* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 40. However, it appears there was sufficient standardisation of practice for the Roman clergy in *Ep.* 8 to assume similar procedures in Carthage to those in Rome. Clarke, *Letters*, 1:216.

⁴³ Alan Kreider, "Changing Patterns of Conversion in the West," in *The Origins of Christendom in the West*, ed. Alan Kreider (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 4-16.

⁴⁴ *Vit. Cypr.* 4 (CSEL 3.1:xciv-xcv). Stewart-Sykes divides this into an informal period and a comparatively brief formal catechumenate. Stewart-Sykes, "Catechumenate," 294.

⁴⁵ *Vit. Cypr.* 4 (CSEL 3.1:xcv).

⁴⁶ Decreed by Cyprian's predecessors, and enforced by Cyprian himself. *Ep.* 1.2.1 (CCSL 3B:3-4).

⁴⁷ "praevenit ... tritura sementem, vindemia palmitem, poma radicem." *Vit. Cypr.* 2 (CSEL 3.1:xcii-xciii).

⁴⁸ *Vit. Cypr.* 2, 15 (CSEL 3.1:xcii, cvi).

⁴⁹ From his place of withdrawal he was able to send his own funds to assist those in need. *Epp.* 7.2, 13.7 (CCSL 3B:39, 78). William Countryman suggests that this may be explained by Cyprian giving his wealth to the church in trust; on becoming bishop, he was then his own trustee. L. William Countryman, *The Rich Christian in the Church of the Early Empire: Contradictions and Accommodations* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1980), 187. This attractive suggestion does not quite seem to fit with the language of the *Vita*, however.

and doctrinal emphases of the North African church to such an extent that he subsequently avoided the classical allusions of his rhetorical training and replaced them with the biblical text. As Graeme Clarke concludes, “This can only be the result of conscious rejection and restriction.”⁵⁰ However, his prior career as a *rhetor* remains evident in his use of sources, his argumentation and his style.⁵¹

Within few enough years to be still regarded a neophyte,⁵² and possibly not even previously appointed as a presbyter,⁵³ Cyprian became bishop of Carthage in either 248 or 249,⁵⁴ with the support of the laity, and despite the opposition of a group of presbyters.⁵⁵ He was therefore not long in his office when the edict of Decius

⁵⁰ Clarke, *Letters*, 1:17. Other Latin writers were not so hesitant. See, for example, Mary Louise Carlson, “Pagan Examples of Fortitude in the Latin Christian Apologists,” *CP* 43 (1948): 93-104.

⁵¹ One may note, however, a change from *Ad Donatum*, with its somewhat overblown language, to a more restrained elegance in his later works. Gustave Bardy, *The Christian Latin Literature of the First Six Centuries*, trans. Mary Reginald (London: Sands, 1930), 41-45. On Cyprian’s former career, see G. W. Clarke, “The Secular Profession of St. Cyprian of Carthage,” *Lat* 24 (1965): 633-38. For an outline of the rhetorical structure of *De unitate* and *De lapsis*, see David Ivan Rankin, *From Clement to Origen: The Social and Historical Context of the Church Fathers* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 74.

⁵² *Vit. Cypr.* 5 (CSEL 3.1:xcv).

⁵³ Jerome believes Cyprian was a presbyter, albeit briefly: “post non multum temporis adlectus in presbyterium.” *Vir. Ill.* 67 (PL 23:714). Sage quotes Pontius as support for his belief that Cyprian was first ordained as a presbyter: “presbyterium vel sacerdotium statim accepit.” *Vit. Cypr.* 3 (CSEL 3.1:xciii). Sage, *Cyprian*, 135 n. 3. But see the discussion of this phrase by Charles Bobertz who considers that Cyprian had an “immediate rise from novice to bishop.” Charles Arnold Bobertz, “Cyprian of Carthage as Patron: A Social Historical Study of the Role of Bishop in the Ancient Christian Community of North Africa” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1988), 97. For a similar conclusion, relying on *Vit. Cypr.* 5 (CSEL 3.1:xcv) and citing Fabian’s appointment as precedent for the election of a layman as bishop, see J. Patout Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop* (London: Routledge, 2002), 16, 189 nn. 49-50. This latter claim is not, however, certain. See Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Cyprian and the Bishops of Rome: Questions of Papal Primacy in the Early Church* (Sydney: St Pauls, 2007), 15.

⁵⁴ Based on Cyprian’s defence of his ministry in *Ep.* 59.6.1 (CCSL 3C:346), dated to 252 by Clarke, *Letters*, 3:235-36. Cyprian indicates he had been bishop for a *quadrennium* (between three and four years). Sage, *Cyprian*, 138. Drawing on *Ep.* 29.1.2 (CCSL 3B:138), Clarke further suggests that “Cyprian was perhaps bishop by the time of the Easter ceremonies of 249.” Clarke, *Letters*, 1:127-28 n. 78.

⁵⁵ *Vit. Cypr.* 5 (CSEL 3.1:xcv-xcvi).

commanding general sacrifice was promulgated.⁵⁶ This edict, along with the circumstances of his status and election, was to have a dramatic effect on his episcopate. As a prominent person, aware that his presence in Carthage would cause trouble for the Christian community, he withdrew.⁵⁷ The presbyters who had opposed his election took advantage of his absence to rally support for themselves, especially by reconciling the lapsed prior to them doing penance, even prior to the peace of the church.⁵⁸ In doing so, they caused further problems for Cyprian by drawing to their side the widely respected confessors. Cyprian even accused them of preventing his return before Easter 251.⁵⁹ The persecution and the issue of the reconciliation of the lapsed divided the Church not only figuratively, but literally, with laxist and rigorist schisms arising. The existence of these rival communions also generated disputes over the efficacy of the baptism they administered.⁶⁰ In addition to the trials of persecution and schism, Carthage was menaced by a plague,⁶¹ and Numidia by barbarian raids.⁶² Throughout all these challenges, Cyprian sought to maintain discipline and unity while he encouraged his community to achieve the promised hope.

The dating of Cyprian's death presents none of the difficulties which surround that of his birth. He was beheaded on 14 September, 258,⁶³ just over a year after having been exiled to Curubis in the first phase of the Valerian persecution,⁶⁴ returning to make his

⁵⁶ Yvette Duval dates the edict as early as autumn 249. Yvette Duval, "Le début de la persécution de Dèce à Rome (Cyprien, *Ep.* 37)," *REAug* 46 (2000): 157-72. The latest possible date is 20 January, 250, on which Bishop Fabian of Rome, the first victim, died. *Mart. Hiero.* xiii Kal. Febr. (PL 30:454).

⁵⁷ Cyprian was required to defend himself against the charge of fleeing and deserting his flock for the rest of his life; even his martyrdom did not erase the obligation Pontius felt to justify Cyprian's actions. *Ep.* 14.1.2 (CCSL 3B:79-80), *Ep.* 20 (CCSL 3B:106-10), *Ep.* 66.4.1 (CCSL 3C:438), *Vit. Cypr.* 7-9 (CSEL 3.1:xcvii-c).

⁵⁸ See, for example, *Epp.* 15.1.2, 16.2.3 (CCSL 3B:85-87, 92-93).

⁵⁹ *Ep.* 43.1.2 (CCSL 3B:200-201).

⁶⁰ As early as *Unit.* 11 (CCSL 3:257), but escalating in the baptismal letters, *Epp.* 69-75 (CCSL 3C:469-604).

⁶¹ See *De mortalitate* (CCSL 3A:17-32).

⁶² *Ep.* 62 (CCSL 3C:385-88).

⁶³ *Acta* 1 (CSEL 3.1:cx).

⁶⁴ Clarke suggests that, if he did indeed retain ownership of the estate, he may have been relegated rather than exiled. Clarke, *Letters*, 4:314 n. 4.

confession in Carthage, surrounded by his flock.⁶⁵ In so doing, Cyprian joined in his own person the honour of the episcopate and that of martyrdom.

1.2 Bishop of Carthage: Pastor, theologian, patron

Cyprian sees himself primarily as a pastor, and scholars for the most part agree with him.⁶⁶ As Richard Seagraves notes, he seems to have adopted the words of Jeremiah, “*pascentes cum disciplina*,”⁶⁷ as his own personal motto.⁶⁸ But what does such shepherding involve? The aspects of pastoral care in late antiquity identified by Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer include “administration, education, direction for daily life, social welfare, mission, intercession, and the application of ritualised forms of care.”⁶⁹ Whilst the details of many of these daily interactions that constitute Cyprian’s interaction with his flock remain hidden, we are not completely bereft of information. As Geoffrey Dunn says, Cyprian frequently carries out pastoral care through writing, even when present in Carthage.⁷⁰ Furthermore, when defending his conduct to the presbyters and deacons at Rome, he produces letters written during his time of withdrawal from Carthage as evidence of his continuing pastoral concern.⁷¹ Cyprian’s correspondence therefore opens a window onto his pastoral concerns and direction. In

⁶⁵ *Ep.* 81.1.2 (CCSL 3C:629).

⁶⁶ Michel Spanneut’s comment is typical: “Saint Cyprien est avant tout un évêque et ses écrits sont presque exclusivement l’expression ou l’écho de ses activités pastorales.” Michel Spanneut, *Tertullien et les premiers moralistes africains* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1969), 65.

⁶⁷ Jer 3:15.

⁶⁸ Richard Seagraves, *Pascentes cum disciplina: A Lexical Study of the Clergy in the Cyprianic Correspondence* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1993), 238. Seagraves discusses the role of *pastor* (253-58), as well as the complementary roles of *sacerdos* (258-67), *doctor* (267-73) and *iudex* (273-77).

⁶⁹ Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, “Through a Bishop’s Eyes: Towards a Definition of Pastoral Care in Late Antiquity,” *Aug* 40 (2000): 393.

⁷⁰ Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Infected Sheep and Diseased Cattle, or the Pure and Holy Flock: Cyprian’s Pastoral Care of Virgins,” *J ECS* 11 (2003): 18. See Dunn’s extensive work on Cyprian’s pastoral care, both of his own flock and as carried out in synod. Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Cyprian of Carthage and the Episcopal Synod of Late 254,” *REAug* 48 (2002): 229-47; Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Cyprian and His *collegae*: Patronage and the Episcopal Synod of 252,” *JRH* 27 (2003): 1-13. Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Widows and Other Women in the Pastoral Ministry of Cyprian of Carthage,” *Aug* 45 (2005): 295-307; Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Cyprian and Women in a Time of Persecution,” *JEH* 57 (2006): 205-25.

⁷¹ *Ep.* 20.2.1 (CCSL 3B:107).

it, he “employs both the hortatory tradition and the judicial rhetoric of the Roman legal tradition.”⁷² The former dominates, but the latter appears particularly in *Ad Demetrianum* and the correspondence related to the baptismal dispute.

The results of these pastoral efforts have not been highly prized. Their value for the edification of the flock to which they were written is acknowledged, but, except for those concerned with the church and its ministry, they are regarded as having little importance for the present.⁷³ Thus, Cyprian’s pastoral focus is understood as an impediment to his role as a theologian. Whilst, as Hans von Campenhausen admits, “Cyprian is a biblical theologian and feels himself—as Origen and Tertullian had done—controlled first and foremost by the Bible,”⁷⁴ he also “interprets and distorts everything in accordance with the practical and pedagogic needs of contemporary Church life,” with the result that his exhortations, while useful at the time, “are no longer spiritually straightforward, and have no value as theological statements.”⁷⁵

However, even the words of the apostle Paul cannot be understood without attending to the specific context in which they are written. Cyprian’s pastoral reading of Scripture, and of Paul in particular, may therefore provide “a most suitable frame of reference.”⁷⁶ Cyprian was not a systematic or speculative theologian, but as Maurice Wiles wryly notes, Adhémar d’Alès did write a book on his theology without seeming to treat a non-existent subject.⁷⁷ This quest of faith for understanding, according to Daniel Migliore, has two roots—the first is God, and the second is the situation of faith.⁷⁸ “Questions ...

⁷² Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 45.

⁷³ S. L. Greenslade, *Early Latin Theology: Selections from Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose and Jerome* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 117.

⁷⁴ Hans von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries*, trans. J. A. Baker (London: Black, 1969), 278-79.

⁷⁵ von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 279.

⁷⁶ As Mitchell says with regard to Chrysostom. Mitchell, *Heavenly Trumpet*, 29.

⁷⁷ Maurice F. Wiles, “The Theological Legacy of St. Cyprian,” *JEH* 14 (1963): 139. Referring to Adhémar d’Alès, *La théologie de Saint Cyprien*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1922). Spanneut calls Cyprian a “théologien sérieux,” but adds “Mais l’évêque n’est pas un philosophe, ni même un moraliste ... L’évêque de Carthage est essentiellement un spirituel.” Spanneut, *Tertullien*, 65-66.

⁷⁸ Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 3-4.

thrust themselves on us with special force in times and situations of crisis such as sickness, suffering, guilt, injustice, personal or social upheaval, and death.”⁷⁹ Cyprian found himself as bishop in the midst of turbulent times which included all these dimensions. As a pastor, he must “do theology” in order to make sense of the situation, sustain his flock and lead them on the path to salvation.

Rowan Greer argues that theology “shapes exegesis in the sense that it determines the questions asked of the text.”⁸⁰ I agree, with the recognition that theology is itself shaped by the context in which it takes place. As Anthony Thistleton says, Migliore’s two roots “correspond respectively to the two dialectical poles of unity and contingency, of coherence and particularity, of ‘grand’ narrative and ‘little’ narratives that characterize theological hermeneutics. But they also characterize both *theology as such*, and *hermeneutics as such*.”⁸¹ Thus Cyprian’s situation of faith, in dialogue with the Scriptures, affects both his theology and his exegesis. His pastoral concerns will therefore provide a useful framework for examining his interpretation of Paul. Alongside these roles as pastor and theologian, however, is the representation of Cyprian as patron.

That the bishop acted as a patron to his flock has become a scholarly commonplace.⁸² Carole Straw understood Cyprian to be both critiquing patronage in his society and presenting God as the ideal patron, a role which the bishop undertakes as God’s representative. In her words, the “ideal of munificence ‘christens’ Roman patronage.”⁸³

⁷⁹ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 4.

⁸⁰ Rowan A. Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation: A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973), 5.

⁸¹ Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics: The Collected Works and New Essays of Anthony Thiselton* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 807.

⁸² Chadwick touched upon this aspect of the bishop’s role, although his comments are more closely related to the fourth century than to the third. Henry Chadwick, “The Role of the Christian Bishop in Ancient Society,” in *Heresy and Orthodoxy in the Early Church* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum, 1991), 8. See also Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 79. “It is not any far-fetched idea that Cyprian as a bishop continued to act as the patron of his flock.” Hugo Montgomery, “The Bishop Who Fled: Responsibility and Honour in Saint Cyprian,” *StPatr* 21 (1989): 267.

⁸³ Carole E. Straw, “Cyprian and Mt 5:45: The Evolution of Christian Patronage,” *StPatr* 18 (1989): 336.

However, it was Charles Bobertz who first developed at length the argument that Cyprian's episcopate was essentially based on a patron–client relationship. Bobertz closely examines *Ad Donatum*, the *Vita Cypriani* and the *Acta Cypriani*, as well as some epistles, to demonstrate Cyprian's high social status and wealth and his rapid rise from neophyte to bishop. He concludes: "Whilst there are other ways to interpret the portrayal of Cyprian by the *Vita*, its insistence on the wealth and generosity of Cyprian clearly pictures him as patron."⁸⁴ His ideas have been widely adopted and enlarged upon.⁸⁵

Dunn takes issue with this conclusion of Bobertz and demonstrates that Cyprian's conversion, as detailed in *Ad Donatum* and the *Vita Cypriani*, involved a rejection of patronage.⁸⁶ In this he also contradicts Straw, arguing that at this point, Cyprian "saw his conversion in terms of the abolition of patronage not its transformation."⁸⁷ Dunn believes that Cyprian was, however, forced to revert to a patron–client relationship with his flock due to the expectations of the laity who elected him, the lack of almsgiving among the wealthy members of the congregation, and the need to establish a loyal clientele in the face of opposition from the rebel presbyters.⁸⁸

As necessary as an understanding of Cyprian's social context is, it is insufficient to characterise gospel precepts as mere cover for his true motivations. Following Dunn, I will consider Cyprian's "theological-pastoral motives" as well as the "socio-political ones."⁸⁹ These become evident as we read Scripture with Cyprian, enabling us to appreciate his indebtedness to it.⁹⁰ Much effort has been devoted to establishing

⁸⁴ Bobertz, "Cyprian of Carthage as Patron," 128.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "Ordination Rites and Patronage Systems in Third-Century Africa," *VC* 56 (2002): 115-30; David Ivan Rankin, "Class Distinction as a Way of Doing Church: The Early Fathers and the Christian *Plebs*," *VC* 58 (2004): 298-315.

⁸⁶ Geoffrey D. Dunn, "The White Crown of Works: Cyprian's Early Pastoral Ministry of Almsgiving in Carthage," *CH* 73 (2004): 719-26.

⁸⁷ Dunn, "White Crown of Works," 725.

⁸⁸ Dunn, "White Crown of Works," 717.

⁸⁹ Dunn, "Cyprian and Women," 208.

⁹⁰ One such example of relying on Roman usage without attending to biblical allusions is found in David Rankin's work. With regard to Tertullian's use of *grex* (herd) to refer to the laity, he refers to its use in a number of Latin authors and concludes, "The agricultural connotations are never far from the surface. It is

Cyprian's appropriation of Roman ideals;⁹¹ we must also be attentive to his subversion of them. Examining how he uses biblical texts throughout his corpus provides a broader context in which to understand his thought than that gained from comparing individual letters with Roman sources.⁹²

1.3 Hearing God's voice: Text and canon

Scripture⁹³ is central to Cyprian's spiritual development, as Pontius attests,⁹⁴ and, as David Wilhite demonstrates, to his self-understanding in his role as bishop: "In contrast to the scripturally uninformed lapsed and the scripturally disobedient laxists, Cyprian constructs his own identity as that of bishop, whose primary function is to inform his flock about the Scriptures and uphold the scriptural mandates."⁹⁵ This conviction is also evident in the debate over heretical baptism, in which Cyprian contrasts his adherence to the teachings of Christ and the apostles with the mere tradition followed by his opponents.⁹⁶ From his composition of *Ad Quirinum*,⁹⁷ with the explicit intent of

rarely used as a compliment!" Rankin, "Class Distinction," 303 n. 21. This overlooks the biblical significance of the term. John 10:16 in the Old Latin reads: "Et erunt unus grex et unus pastor." Cyprian, *Unit. eccl.* 8. (CCSL 3:255). Rankin also refers to Tertullian's use of the term *pecus* to describe the laity, noting "*Pecus* is rarely used of humans and then only as a term of abuse," and citing Juvenal and Horace. Rankin, "Class Distinction," 303 n. 22. Yet Tertullian himself also uses the term to refer to Christ, echoing Isa 53:7: "cum adducitur ut pecus ad uictimam." *Pat.* 3.7 (CCSL 1:301).

⁹¹ "If anything, attention to the Fathers themselves is in danger of getting lost in interest in their social and political background." Andrew Louth, "Review of David Ivan Rankin, *From Clement to Origen: The Social and Historical Context of the Church Fathers*," *HeyJ* 50 (2009): 313.

⁹² For example, Charles Arnold Bobertz, "Patronal Letters of Commendation: Cyprian's *Epistulae* 38-40," *StPatr* 31 (1997): 252-59.

⁹³ For a discussion of Cyprian's terminology for and attitude towards Scripture, see Fahey, *Cyprian*, 29-56.

⁹⁴ *Vit. Cypr.* 2 (CSEL 3.1: xci-xciii).

⁹⁵ David E. Wilhite, "Cyprian's Scriptural Hermeneutic of Identity: The Laxist 'Heresy'," *HBT* 32 (2010): 81. See also Michel Réveillaud: "Partout et toujours l'évêque de Carthage revient à l'Écriture comme à l'autorité supreme qui inspire et juge les actes et l'enseignement de l'Église." Michel Réveillaud, *Saint Cyprien: L'oraison dominicale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 53.

⁹⁶ *Ep.* 74.2.2-3, 10.3 (CCSL 3C:565-66, 578). See also *Ep.* 63.10.1-3 (CCSL 3C:401-3), on the use of wine in the cup.

⁹⁷ For a discussion of the compilation of *Ad Quirinum*, see section 1.5 below.

enabling his flock to memorise and live in accordance with Scripture,⁹⁸ to his letters and treatises replete with divine precepts, Cyprian enacts his belief that “Scripture is God’s speaking in the present tense.”⁹⁹

Cyprian’s text of Scripture

Cyprian does not translate from the Greek himself, but works from an existing Latin text.¹⁰⁰ The scriptural citations in *Ad Quirinum* and Cyprian’s letters and treatises are remarkably consistent, especially when compared with Tertullian’s citations,¹⁰¹ leading many scholars to conclude that he relied on a codex.¹⁰² Intentional variants, whether for effect,¹⁰³ or substituting a Latin word for a Greek one,¹⁰⁴ often consist of a single

⁹⁸ *Test. 1.praef, Test. 3.praef.* (CCSL 3:3-4, 73). In the preface to *Ad Fortunatum*, Cyprian indicates that at least the headings should be kept in mind. *Fort. praef.3* (CCSL 3:184). For *Ad Quirinum* as a catechetical document, see Everett Ferguson, “Catechesis and Initiation,” in *The Origins of Christendom in the West*, ed. Alan Kreider (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 239-42; Andy Alexis-Baker, “*Ad Quirinum* Book Three and Cyprian’s Catechumenate,” *JECS* 17 (2009): 357-80.

⁹⁹ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 49. Cf. Paul, “Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Or does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake.” 1 Cor 9:9-10 (NRSV).

¹⁰⁰ H. A. G. Houghton, “The Use of the Latin Fathers for New Testament Textual Criticism,” in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 377-78. On the complexities of identifying text types, see Philip Burton, “The Latin Version of the New Testament,” in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 167-200.

¹⁰¹ These variations may be due to Tertullian’s own translation from the Greek, although he also shows familiarity with a number of Old Latin versions. Houghton, “Use of the Latin Fathers,” 377. For an example of the differences in Tertullian’s biblical citations, see Albert Verwilghen, “Ph 2,5-11 dans l’oeuvre de Cyprien et dans les écrits d’auteurs anonymes africains du IIIème siècle,” *Sal* 47 (1985): 711-12.

¹⁰² C. H. Turner, “Prolegomena to the *Testimonia* and *Ad Fortunatum* of St Cyprian, IV,” *JTS* 31 (1930): 225. Houghton, “Use of the Latin Fathers,” 378.

¹⁰³ For a list, see Fahey, *Cyprian*, 637 n. 24. Modifying the text to better suit one’s own purpose is evident in Paul himself. See, for example, his citation of Exod 16:18 in 2 Cor 8:15. For further discussion, see L. L. Welborn, “‘That There May Be Equality’: The Contexts and Consequences of a Pauline Ideal,” *NTS* 59 (2013): 87-88.

¹⁰⁴ See Hans Freiherr von Soden, *Das lateinische Neue Testament in Afrika zur Zeit Cyprian nach Bibelhandschriften und Väterzeugnissen* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1909), 62-64. Of course, not all Scriptures cited in the letters and treatises also appear in *Ad Quirinum*.

synonym. There is evidence, however, that Cyprian relied on his memory even in compiling *Ad Quirinum*. This is less surprising if we recognise he was part of what remained a largely oral culture.¹⁰⁵ As David Carr states, “*The mind* stood at the center of the often discussed oral-written interface. The focus was on inscribing a culture’s most precious traditions on the insides of people. Within this context, copies of texts served as solidified reference points for recitation and memorization of the tradition.”¹⁰⁶

In the preface to Book 1, Cyprian claims in a rhetorically modest way to have ordered the work “as far as my poor memory suggested.”¹⁰⁷ This could simply refer to recalling which verses should be included, but it appears that at least some of the texts are quoted from memory. In *Test.* 3.11, for example, two verses from Luke are attributed to Matthew, all the more noteworthy because correct attributions are made to Matthew and Luke in the same testimony.¹⁰⁸ That the texts show so little variation overall may be due more to the excellence of Cyprian’s memory than to his reliance on a written source.¹⁰⁹ Cyprian, therefore, seems to have worked from a fixed Old Latin text which is most clearly represented in *Ad Quirinum*, although it may not replicate it in every detail. At some times in his letters and treatises he changes words for effect; at others, his citation from memory may be the cause of the differences.¹¹⁰

Canon

What constitutes Scripture for Cyprian does not, however, correspond to the books regarded as authoritative by modern Christian communities. Many of the biblical books not cited by Cyprian are brief or otherwise not relevant to his pastoral concerns; their

¹⁰⁵ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2002), 2.

¹⁰⁶ David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6.

¹⁰⁷ “quantum mediocris memoria suggerebat” *Test.* 1.praef (CCSL 3:3). Jocelyn Small notes that memory is frequently mentioned by classical writers in their prefaces. Jocelyn Penny Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Memory and Literacy in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1997), 179.

¹⁰⁸ CCSL 3:100. For further examples, see Edwina Murphy, “‘As Far as My Poor Memory Suggested’: Cyprian’s Compilation of *Ad Quirinum*,” *VC* 68 (2014): 544.

¹⁰⁹ On his renowned memory, see *Vit. Cypr.* 5 (CSEL 3.1:xcvi).

¹¹⁰ This is also noted by d’Alès, *Théologie*, 47.

omission does not mean he regarded them as non-canonical.¹¹¹ There are, however, two books whose absence is significant: Cyprian never cites James, despite its utility in supporting his arguments, and this reflects the general non-acceptance of the book in the West.¹¹² Neither does he quote Hebrews. In this case, the very chapter that Tertullian found so useful in rejecting a second repentance may have discouraged Cyprian from using it, especially after the Decian persecution.¹¹³ This is unlikely to be the only reason, however, as Hebrews is not cited in *Ad Quirinum* and also has a different perspective on the priesthood from that expressed by Cyprian. In terms of broadening the canon, Cyprian uses scriptural formulae for deuterocanonical books¹¹⁴ and goes beyond contemporary Roman Catholic practice by citing 1 Esdras as Scripture.¹¹⁵

Cyprian's Paul

Naturally, Cyprian regards all the letters written in Paul's name as authentic, as seen in the attribution he gives the texts.¹¹⁶ For the purposes of this work, I will adopt Cyprian's perspective as he claims the apostle's authority for his teaching. Therefore, the books under consideration, listed in their present canonical order are: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus.¹¹⁷ Cyprian does not quote from or allude to Philemon.¹¹⁸

¹¹¹ For a list of books cited by Cyprian, see Fahey, *Cyprian*, 42-43.

¹¹² Hilary of Poitiers was the first Western writer to explicitly cite James in *Trin.* 4.8 (CCSL 62:108).

¹¹³ Tertullian, *Pud.* 20.1-5 (CCSL 2:1324). For a discussion of the attribution of Hebrews, see E. A. de Boer, "Tertullian on 'Barnabas' Letter to the Hebrews' in *De pudicitia* 20.1-5," *VC* 68 (2014): 243-63.

¹¹⁴ For a sample of deuterocanonical books that Cyprian introduces with citation formulae, see Craig D. Allert, *A High View of Scripture? The Authority of the Bible and the Formation of the New Testament Canon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 181-82.

¹¹⁵ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 40-41.

¹¹⁶ Cyprian also interprets the seven children of the barren woman (1 Sam 2:5) as churches, mentioning that Paul wrote to seven of them. *Test.* 1.20 (CCSL 3:19-20).

¹¹⁷ When Cyprian gives an explicit source for his quotations from Titus in *Ad Quirinum*, he attributes them to Colossians. *Test.* 3.78, 107 (CCSL 3:161, 174). Turner suggests that Titus may have followed Colossians in Cyprian's codex and the headline been continued by mistake. C. H. Turner, "Prolegomena to the *Testimonia* of St Cyprian," *JTS* 6 (1905): 262.

¹¹⁸ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 40.

Like the Scillitan martyrs before him,¹¹⁹ Cyprian holds Paul in high esteem, regarding his letters as forming their hearers to a “course of living by divine teaching.”¹²⁰ Through them, Paul is still teaching, exhorting, warning and instructing the congregation in order to advance their faith.¹²¹ Cyprian sometimes introduces citations from Paul with an extended formula, particularly when he wants to emphasise Paul’s authority.¹²² As with Christ,¹²³ it is not only Paul’s words, but Paul’s life that must be imitated. Cyprian’s use of Paul as a model for Christians will form an important part of this study.

1.4 Appropriating Scripture: Patristic exegesis and the early Latin tradition

For a long time, modern scholarship on patristic exegesis¹²⁴ focussed on the differences between the allegorical Alexandrians and the literalist Antiochenes.¹²⁵ The supposedly historical-critical school of Antioch was comfortingly in the image of its scholarly makers, far from the speculative fancies of a Clement or Origen. This happy conclusion has been progressively revised, with Young demonstrating that the “traditional categories of ‘literal’, ‘typological’ and ‘allegorical’ are quite simply inadequate as descriptive tools.”¹²⁶ For Greer, theology is the key: “When we conclude that for the early church the Rule of faith supplied the basic hermeneutical principle and framework for interpreting Scripture, we are really saying that for the church fathers the true meaning of Scripture was a theological one.”¹²⁷ Donald Fairbairn, seconding Greer,

¹¹⁹ In the earliest document from the North African church, the Scillitan Martyrs were arrested in possession of “libri et epistulae Pauli uiri iusti.” *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, 12 (Musurillo, 88).

¹²⁰ “ad curricula uiuendi per diuina magisteria.” *Hab. virg.* 2 (CSEL 3.1:188).

¹²¹ See, for example, *Fort.* 8 (CCSL 3:196), *Dom. or.* 19 (CCSL 3A:102).

¹²² For example, “Beatus quoque apostolus Paulus a domino electus et missus et praedicator ueritatis euangelicae.” *Ep.* 63.10.1 (CCSL 3C:401).

¹²³ “Hoc est enim uelle cum Christo inueniri, id quod Christus et docuit et fecit imitari.” *Ep.* 58.1.3 (CCSL 3C:320).

¹²⁴ “Fundamentally, exegesis explicates the meaning of a ‘text’, usually written but potentially anything in words, potentially even a symbolic artefact without words.” Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 2.

¹²⁵ Donald Fairbairn, “Patristic Exegesis and Theology: The Cart and the Horse,” *WTJ* 69 (2007): 1-3.

¹²⁶ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 2.

¹²⁷ Rowan A. Greer, “The Christian Bible and Its Interpretation,” in *Early Biblical Interpretation*, ed. James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 177. See also Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation: A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Hebrews*, 357.

suggests that “perhaps we need to ask what theological assumptions led [a certain father] to treat the text the way he does.”¹²⁸ Young acknowledges this importance of theology, but also retains a place for method, situating early Christian exegesis within Greco-Roman debates over how to treat texts.¹²⁹ She attributes the differences between Alexandria and Antioch to the greater influence of the philosophical and rhetorical schools respectively.¹³⁰ She also identifies a range of reading strategies which may be applied to the text, combining these with more traditional categories to form a matrix of the Fathers’ approach to Scripture.¹³¹ Behind all this lay the *oikonomia* of Scripture, the hypothesis, the rule of faith.¹³²

How does the Latin tradition of scriptural interpretation relate to these eastern concerns? As Joseph Trigg notes, it lacks the “the self-consciousness about hermeneutics that we find in the Alexandrian and Antiochene traditions,”¹³³ at least in its earliest iterations. Despite Tertullian’s occasional statements about his exegetical practice,¹³⁴ we must heed Mitchell’s caution against “prematurely systematizing from any single moment of interpretation and the rationale given there.”¹³⁵ As Jan Waszink concludes, “There is no one exegetical method in Tertullian ... the whole of this activity cannot be summed up

¹²⁸ Fairbairn, “Patristic Exegesis,” 19.

¹²⁹ Frances M. Young, “The Rhetorical Schools and their Influence on Patristic Exegesis,” in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 189.

¹³⁰ Frances M. Young, “Alexandrian and Antiochene Exegesis,” in *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 352. Young, “Rhetorical Schools,” 188.

¹³¹ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 212-13.

¹³² For a discussion focussed on Irenaeus, see Frances M. Young, *The Art of Performance: Towards a Theology of Holy Scripture* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1990), 46-53.

¹³³ Joseph W. Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation* (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1988), 39.

¹³⁴ For example, “Aduersus regulam nihil scire omnia scire est.” *Praescr.* 14.5 (CCSL 1:198); “si quid diuersa pars turbat obtenu figurarum et aenigmatum, manifestiora quaeque praeualeant et [de] incertis certiora praescribant.” *Res.* 19.1 (CCSL 2:944); “secundum plura intellegi pauciora.” *Prax.* 20.2 (CCSL 2:1186); “Sed numquam discordabunt sententiae sanctae.” *An.* 21 (CCSL 2:814).

¹³⁵ Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul, the Corinthians and the Birth of Christian Hermeneutics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), x. See also Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Tertullian’s Scriptural Exegesis in *de praescriptione haereticorum*,” *JECS* 14 (2006): 141-55.

in a single formula without straining the sense of a considerable number of passages.”¹³⁶ It is clear, however, that Tertullian is influenced by the rhetorical, rather than philosophical, schools.¹³⁷ He certainly demonstrates the “strategic and adaptable” nature of early Christian exegesis.¹³⁸

Cyprian's exegesis

Cyprian does not explicitly state his hermeneutical principles,¹³⁹ unlike his contemporary Origen,¹⁴⁰ and successors Tyconius¹⁴¹ and Augustine.¹⁴² Perhaps it is this reticence, along with his lack of commentaries, which has led to only a cursory mention of his exegesis in works on early Biblical interpretation.¹⁴³ According to Fahey, Cyprian “never develops a consistent theory of hermeneutics.”¹⁴⁴ Some key aspects can be discerned, however. First and foremost, Cyprian regards the Bible as a unity, with a declared, but not necessarily employed, priority of the New Testament over the Old.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁶ J. H. Waszink, “Tertullian's Principles and Methods of Exegesis,” in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition*, ed. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 17. He does, however, note the importance of the rule of faith and the exegetical principles of certainty, clearness, frequency and coherence. Waszink, “Tertullian's Principles,” 24-26, 28. See also T. P. O'Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible: Language, Imagery, Exegesis* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1967). John F. Jansen, “Tertullian and the New Testament,” *SecCent* 2 (1982): 191-207.

¹³⁷ Robert Dick Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971). See also Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian's Adversus Iudaeos: A Rhetorical Analysis* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

¹³⁸ Mitchell, *Paul*, x.

¹³⁹ There is a hint that Christ is the key to interpretation in the testimony, “Nihil posse Iudaeos intellegere de scripturis, nisi prius crediderint in Christo.” *Test.* 1.5 (CCSL 3:10-11).

¹⁴⁰ Origen, *Princ.* 4.1 (PG 11:311-402).

¹⁴¹ Tyconius, *Liber Regularum*.

¹⁴² Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*. Augustine summarises Tyconius' rules in *Doctr. chr.* 3.30-37 (CCSL 32:103-15).

¹⁴³ For example, there is only one sentence devoted to him in Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, 87. In his chapter devoted to Scripture in Cyprian's thought, d'Alès focuses on the Latin bible and its text; only the final paragraph mentions his exegesis. d'Alès, *Théologie*, 37-72.

¹⁴⁴ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 625.

¹⁴⁵ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 625-26. Wiles examines two influential aspects of Cyprian's teaching (ministry and Eucharist) noting that “much in [his] thought is based on ... an approach to the Old Testament which is

One manifestation of this perceived unity is Cyprian's frequent use of two or more texts to support his thesis,¹⁴⁶ often drawn from different parts of Scripture. Another is, as Nienke Vos notes, a fusion between "the biblical context and the context of Cyprian's day."¹⁴⁷

With regard to interpretation, Cyprian employs the literal sense as well as the typological, following the lead of the New Testament.¹⁴⁸ He also develops both literal and spiritual senses, as seen in his discussion of the request, "Give us this day our daily bread."¹⁴⁹ Unlike Origen, however, he does not consider one superior to the other—each is useful to salvation.¹⁵⁰ An extension of this practice is Cyprian's discussion of "Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"¹⁵¹ where heaven and earth can represent the spirit and the body, but also the regenerated Christian as opposed to those who are still fleshly.¹⁵² The role of the Holy Spirit in this process should not be underestimated; it is he who speaks in the Scriptures and his voice to which Christians must attend.¹⁵³

arbitrary and liable to minimise the distinctively new elements in Christian thought." Wiles, "Theological Legacy," 149.

¹⁴⁶ Réveillaud, *L'oraison dominicale*, 55.

¹⁴⁷ Nienke Vos, "A Universe of Meaning: Cyprian's Use of Scripture in Letter 58," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language and Thought*, ed. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 65-93.

¹⁴⁸ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 555-56. As Réveillaud states, "L'exégèse typologique est d'ailleurs immédiatement étayée par de claires exhortations tirées des saintes Écritures." Réveillaud, *L'oraison dominicale*, 55. For a discussion of this interplay between the literal and typological, see Maureen A. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997), 35-41.

¹⁴⁹ "Quod potest et spiritaliter et simpliciter intellegi." *Dom. or.* 18 (CCSL 3A:101).

¹⁵⁰ *Dom. or.* 18 (CCSL 3A:101). Cf. Origen, *Princ.* 4.1.9 (PG 11:360). Réveillaud, *L'oraison dominicale*, 55.

¹⁵¹ *Dom. or.* 16-17 (CCSL 3A:99-101).

¹⁵² "Cette page est une sorte de symphonie biblique jouée sur les thèmes «terre» et «ciel». La Bible est traitée comme un tout indivisible. Ceci reste vrai pour l'ensemble de l'exégèse cyprienne." Réveillaud, *L'oraison dominicale*, 56.

¹⁵³ E.g. *Unit.* 8, 10 (CCSL 3:255, 256), *Dom. or.* 5 (CCSL 3A:92). "Im Vordergrund steht die geistliche Schriftauslegung, das sorgsame Achthaben auf das, was der Geist den Gemeinden sagen will." Raymund Noll, "Doctor Sacrae Scripturae—Schrift Hermeneutik und Lehren anhand der Heiligen Schrift bei Cyprian von Karthago," in *Lebendige Gemeinde: Beiträge aus biblischer, historischer, systematischer und praktischer Theologie*, ed. Maria Neubrand (Regensburg: Pustet, 2005), 266.

Still, the portrait of Cyprian's exegesis has been painted with a broad brush, and a more detailed study is required.

Cyprian and Paul

Like other early Christian writers, Cyprian often designates Paul simply as “the apostle.” As far as the bishop of Carthage is concerned, Paul speaks through all the letters attributed to him. According to Fahey, the most cited books of those attributed to Paul are undisputed—1 Corinthians (80), Romans (53) and Galatians (27). These are followed by Ephesians (26), due to frequent quotation of and allusion to chapter 4,¹⁵⁴ 2 Corinthians (17), 1 Timothy (16), 2 Timothy (12), Colossians (12), Philippians (11), 2 Thessalonians (6), Titus (6), and 1 Thessalonians (4).¹⁵⁵ These figures vary slightly depending on whether allusions are attributed to one book or another.¹⁵⁶ Naturally, the relative lengths of the books, as well as their importance to Cyprian, impact how frequently he refers to them.

Benjamin White has demonstrated that certain works of Paul are privileged in forming modern perceptions of the apostle,¹⁵⁷ and in recent times, it has become popular to contrast the main themes of Paul's thought with the deutero-Paulines, or indeed with the anti-Paulines.¹⁵⁸ By looking at the letters through Cyprian's eyes, however, we gain a different perspective. Are the Hauptbriefe really so opposed to the Pastoral Epistles? How different are the ethical injunctions of the “genuine” epistles from those of the “non-genuine”? Do they cohere only because Cyprian radically misinterprets them?

¹⁵⁴ This chapter is also appealed to by the bishops in the third baptismal council, as noted by Enrique Contreras, “Sententiae Episcoporum Numero LXXXVII de Haereticis Baptizandis,” *Aug* 27 (1987): 411-13.

¹⁵⁵ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 43.

¹⁵⁶ For example, “putting off the old man,” occurs in both Rom 6:6 and Eph 4:22.

¹⁵⁷ Benjamin L. White, *Remembering Paul: Ancient and Modern Contests over the Image of the Apostle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2-4.

¹⁵⁸ For example, Richard I. Pervo, *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2010).

The latter conclusion is arrived at by Eva Aleith in her rather unsympathetic reading of Cyprian's use of Paul.¹⁵⁹ Karl Schelkle's work is more nuanced, but only deals with one, albeit significant, letter of Paul in which Cyprian's interpretation competes for attention with the entire patristic witness.¹⁶⁰ Due to the book's focus on commentaries, Cyprian is not considered in Wiles' *The Divine Apostle*,¹⁶¹ and the recent revival of interest in the patristic interpretation of the Scriptures,¹⁶² particularly of Paul, has not yet extended to Cyprian.¹⁶³ Some detailed examinations of Cyprian's use of certain Pauline passages have been made,¹⁶⁴ but a comprehensive treatment of Cyprian's citations and allusions to Paul is lacking. This study will enable us to see how a key figure in Latin Christianity appropriated the apostle in his endeavour to guide his flock to salvation.

¹⁵⁹ "Es ist bezeichnend, daß Paulus vom »Evangelium« spricht, während Cyprian weniger an die Lehre denkt, die Christus zum Inhalt hat, als an die von Christus gebrachte und vertretene Sammlung von Vorschriften, die sich mit der apostolischen Lehre deckt." Eva Aleith, *Paulusverständnis in der alten Kirche* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1937), 67.

¹⁶⁰ Karl Hermann Schelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter: Die altkirchliche Auslegung von Römer 1-11*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1959).

¹⁶¹ Maurice F. Wiles, *The Divine Apostle: The Interpretation of St Paul's Epistles in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 1.

¹⁶² See, for example, the comprehensive work by Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

¹⁶³ For example, Cyprian does not feature in two recent collections of essays, Kathy L. Gaca and L. L. Welborn, eds., *Early Patristic Readings of Romans* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005). Jeffrey P. Greenman and Timothy Larsen, eds., *Reading Romans through the Centuries: From the Early Church to Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2005). He is treated only briefly in James W. Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008).

¹⁶⁴ For example, Gert Haendler, "Cyprians Auslegung zu Gal 2,11ff," *TLZ* 97 (1972): 561-68; Verwilghen, "Ph 2,5-11," 707-34; Domingo Ramos-Lissón, "Exégesis de 1 Cor 7,32-34 en el 'De habitu virginum' de San Cipriano," in *Biblia y Hermenéutica. VII Simposio Internacional de Teología* (Pamplona: Eunsas, 1986), 645-54.

1.5 Writing pastoral care: Treatises, testimonia, and letters

Cyprian's works are traditionally divided into treatises and letters although, as Dunn points out, there is no great distinction in form between the two.¹⁶⁵ Cyprian's undisputed treatises, in the order they are listed by Pontius, are *Ad Donatum*,¹⁶⁶ *De habitu virginum*, *De lapsis*, *De unitate*, *De dominica oratione*, *Ad Demetrianum*, *De mortalitate*, *De opere et eleemosynis*, *De bono patientiae*, *De zelo et livore* and *Ad Fortunatum*.¹⁶⁷ As Fahey notes, they are alluded to in a rhetorical manner and are not necessarily in chronological order;¹⁶⁸ no consensus has emerged as to what that order might be, however. I will discuss the dating of individual treatises as part of establishing the context of Cyprian's thought in a given work, although his exegetical methods vary little over the decade of his episcopate.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Dunn, "Infected Sheep," 19. For example, Augustine refers to *De zelo et livore* as a letter. Augustine, *Bapt.* 4.8 (CSEL 51:234).

¹⁶⁶ Following Sage in regarding "quis emolumentum gratiae per fidem proficientis ostenderet?" (*Vit. Cypr.* 7 [CSEL 3.1:xcvii]), as a reference to *Ad Donatum*. Sage, *Cyprian*, 377. This could otherwise be considered as a summary of Cyprian's entire ministry.

¹⁶⁷ *Vit. Cypr.* 7 (CSEL 3.1:xcvii-xcviii). Although Pontius' list does include all the treatises now considered authentic, it does not exactly correspond to it. After the reference to *Ad Fortunatum*, there is an additional work on martyrdom which has not been definitively identified and is therefore often overlooked. "Quis denique tot confessores frontium notatarum secunda inscriptione signatos et ad exemplum martyrii superstites reservatos incentivo tubae caelestis animaret?" *Vit. Cypr.* 7 (CSEL 3.1:xcviii). Sage thinks it has probably been lost. Sage, *Cyprian*, 379-80. I am more inclined to agree with Turner that it could refer to a letter (*Ep.* 58) or letters (*Epp.* 10, 28, 37, 11, 38, 39 and perhaps 58) on martyrdom. The close connection between *Ep.* 58 and *Ad Fortunatum* is in favour of the first identification, whereas the second has the advantage that the letters have been found together in the manuscripts and the Cheltenham list. C. H. Turner, "Two Early Lists of St. Cyprian's Works," *CR* 6 (1892): 206. If the work to which Pontius refers is a letter (or group of letters), it highlights that our method of classification, which affects what we expect to be included, is not the same as that of Pontius.

¹⁶⁸ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 19. Turner suggests that Pontius is following the order of treatises in an established collection. Turner, "Two Early Lists," 207.

¹⁶⁹ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 18. There are, however, some shifts in his patterns of citation. Karl Shuve, "Cyprian of Carthage's Writings from the Rebaptism Controversy: Two Revisionary Proposals Reconsidered," *JTS* 61 (2010): 643.

Quod idola dii non sint

Omitted from the above list is *Quod idola dii non sint*.¹⁷⁰ Jerome¹⁷¹ and Augustine¹⁷² both attribute it to Cyprian and this, along with the similarity of its style to his other works, has been sufficient to convince some.¹⁷³ Sage challenges this conclusion by arguing that there is insufficient comparable material to make an accurate assessment.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, he believes that the method of compilation—simply borrowing from Tertullian and Minucius Felix¹⁷⁵—is quite different from that of Cyprian’s undisputed writings where “elements from Tertullian ... are changed and arranged in an entirely new manner.”¹⁷⁶ Hans van Loon disagrees with this assessment of the composition, arguing for more originality than Sage allows, and reaffirming the authenticity of the work based on the similarity of its Christology to *Ad Quirinum*.¹⁷⁷ While not making a definitive statement on authorship, Nicholas Thomas notes that *Quod idola* has in common with *Ad Demetrianum* an explicitly christological ending, as well as a shared purpose in the “importance of the evangelising role of apologetics, by concluding with exhortations to the Christian way of salvation.”¹⁷⁸ The authenticity of *Quod idola dii*

¹⁷⁰ For a discussion of the pseudo-Cyprianic treatises, see Pierre de Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius*, trans. Herbert Wilson (New York: Knopf, 1924), 162-68.

¹⁷¹ Jerome, *Ep.* 70.5 (CSEL 54:707).

¹⁷² Augustine, *Bapt.* 6.44 (CSEL 51:340)

¹⁷³ For example, Hugo Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen* (Bonn: Marcus & Webers, 1926), 1-78. Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 4 vols. (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1953-1986), 2:364.

¹⁷⁴ Sage, *Cyprian*, 375.

¹⁷⁵ George Carver instead believes that in *Oct.* 38.6 (CSEL 2:54-55), Minucius Felix borrows from Cyprian’s *Pat.* 3 (CCSL 3A:119). George L. Carver, “Minucius Felix and Cyprian: The Question of Priority,” *TAPA* 108 (1978): 21-34.

¹⁷⁶ Sage, *Cyprian*, 374. See also Maurice Bévenot, *The Tradition of Manuscripts: A Study in the Transmission of St. Cyprian’s Treatises* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 55.

¹⁷⁷ 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: Peeters, 2010), 127-41.

¹⁷⁸ Nicholas L. Thomas, *Defending Christ: The Latin Apologists before Augustine* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 114.

non sint is still contested but, as it contains only one possible Pauline allusion,¹⁷⁹ the uncertainty does not affect this study.

Ad Quirinum

There remains the question of *Ad Quirinum*.¹⁸⁰ Hugo Koch's argument, particularly focussing on the authenticity of Book 3,¹⁸¹ persuaded most scholars it was Cyprian's work, although there were dissenters from the consensus position. Richard Hanson thought the work relied on existing testimonia, perhaps originating in Rome around 200, which Cyprian revised.¹⁸² Michel Réveillaud, while not doubting that *Ad Quirinum* was the result of Cyprian's hand, hypothesised the prior existence of an analogous collection (*Testimonia Inedita*) as the source of the scriptural quotations in a number of the letters and treatises as well as some of those in *Ad Quirinum* itself.¹⁸³ However, it was Bobertz who re-stated the case that *Ad Quirinum* should not be attributed to Cyprian.¹⁸⁴ Since then, scholars have noted the possibility that Cyprian did not compile *Ad Quirinum*, but

¹⁷⁹ "falluntur et fallunt." *Idol.* 7 (CSEL 3.1:24). Cf. 2 Tim 3:13.

¹⁸⁰ *Ad Quirinum* is the title in the earliest manuscripts; a later, rather inaccurate, name for the work is *Testimoniorum libri aduersus Iudaeos*. Turner, "Prolegomena, IV," 228.

¹⁸¹ "Im ganzen Schrifttum Cyprians zeigen sich Spuren dieses Buches, und es ist durch und durch cyprianischer Geist, der sich in diesem Buche in den Gedanken und in ihrer sprachlichen Fassung kundgibt." Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen*, 184. The lingering concerns expressed by Pierre Monat regarding the grammar of the headings and the lack of structure in Book 3 are addressed by Simone Deléani and Andy Alexis-Baker respectively, although Alexis-Baker's categories are sometimes forced. Pierre Monat, "Les *testimonia* bibliques de Cyprien à Lactance," in *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Pietri (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985), 502-3. Simone Deléani, "Quelques observations sur la syntaxe des titres dans les florilèges scripturaires de saint Cyprien," *StPatr* 31 (1997): 285-86. Alexis-Baker, "Ad *Quirinum*," 357-80.

¹⁸² R. P. C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (London: SCM, 1962), 264.

¹⁸³ Most likely originating in Caesarea. Réveillaud, *L'oraison dominicale*, 7-24. Rendel Harris believes there was an early collection of testimonies against the Jews which was drawn on by both New Testament and later authors. Rendel Harris, *Testimonies, Part I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 25.

¹⁸⁴ Charles Arnold Bobertz, "An Analysis of *Vita Cypriani* 3, 6-10 and the Attribution of *Ad Quirinum* to Cyprian of Carthage," *VC* 46 (1992): 112-28.

have not engaged with Bobertz's argument in detail.¹⁸⁵ Here I summarise my reasons for regarding Cyprian as responsible for the work.¹⁸⁶

Bobertz rejects the attribution of *Ad Quirinum* to Cyprian for a number of reasons.¹⁸⁷ He attributes great significance to the textual differences between the quotations in *Ad Quirinum* and those in Cyprian's letters and treatises.¹⁸⁸ He seems to believe that Cyprian cited from a codex,¹⁸⁹ and that these variations must therefore indicate an independent text.¹⁹⁰ This would be a reasonable surmise; however, Bobertz does not examine all the relevant evidence. A broader sample reveals that such minor discrepancies also occur between texts in Cyprian's undisputed works, and cannot, therefore, be used to support a case for different authorship.¹⁹¹ Here I will consider just one example that Bobertz himself uses to highlight the difference between *Ad Quirinum* and *De lapsis*. While he quotes Exod 32:31-33 in full as it appears in those two works, he only cites the reference to *Ad Fortunatum* after the *De lapsis* quotation.¹⁹² Yet this gives a very misleading impression, as is evident when all three references are quoted in full:

Praecor, Domine, deliquit populus hic delictum grande. Fecerunt sibi deos aureos et argenteos: et nunc si dimittis eis delictum, dimitte: sin autem, dele me de libro quem scripsisti. Et dixit Dominus ad Moysen: si qui deliquit ante me, deleam eum de libro meo.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁵ For example, Geoffrey D. Dunn, "References to Mary in the Writings of Cyprian of Carthage," *StPatr* 42 (2006): 370-71. Alexis-Baker, "Ad Quirinum," 358.

¹⁸⁶ For more detail, see Murphy, "Ad Quirinum," 533-50.

¹⁸⁷ The discussion of Cyprian's catechumenate (section 1.1 above) addresses Bobertz's contention that, as a neophyte when elected bishop, there would have been insufficient time for Cyprian to have gained the wealth of scriptural knowledge evident in *Ad Quirinum*. Bobertz, "Analysis of *Vita Cypriani*," 127 n. 25.

¹⁸⁸ Bobertz, "Analysis of *Vita Cypriani*," 118-20.

¹⁸⁹ I have discussed the evidence for the role of memory in Cyprian's citations in section 1.3 above.

¹⁹⁰ "Such variations in the biblical texts would be inexplicable if he had put together the *compendium* using the same biblical text he uses in his letters and treatises." Bobertz, "Analysis of *Vita Cypriani*," 118.

¹⁹¹ Murphy, "Ad Quirinum," 536-41.

¹⁹² Bobertz, "Analysis of *Vita Cypriani*," 126-27.

¹⁹³ *Test.* 1.1 (CCSL 3:6).

*Precor, Domine, deliquit populus hic delictum grande. Et nunc si dimittis eis delictum, dimitte; sin autem, dele me de libro quem scripsisti. Et dixit Dominus ad Mosen: si qui deliquit ante me, deleam eum de libro meo.*¹⁹⁴

*Praecor, Domine, deliquit populus hic delictum grande, fecerunt sibi deos aureos et argenteos. Et nunc si dimittis eis delictum, dimitte: sin autem, dele me de libro quem scripsisti. Et dixit Dominus ad Moysen: si qui deliquit ante me, deleam eum de libro meo.*¹⁹⁵

Ad Fortunatum does not agree with *De lapsis*, but rather with *Ad Quirinum*. It is evident from this example that *Ad Quirinum* does not represent an independent source of biblical citation; Cyprian has modified and abbreviated the text in the treatise. This increases the likelihood that other differences between *Ad Quirinum* and Cyprian's treatises and letters are due to reasons of composition rather than reflecting different Old Latin texts.¹⁹⁶

Bobertz also believes that removing Cyprian as the compiler of *Ad Quirinum* resolves the conflict between the rigorist stance on discipline in *Test.* 3.28 and Cyprian's actual practice.¹⁹⁷ This apparent inconsistency, perceived by many scholars, does not actually exist—the title of the testimony has obscured its contents.¹⁹⁸ The verses focus on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which is expressly differentiated from blasphemy against the Son in the first verse quoted, Matt 12:32.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, verses cited in *Ad Fortunatum* after the Decian persecution take at least as harsh a line, if not more so.²⁰⁰ It must be remembered that in the testimonia collections, Cyprian is directing his congregation to follow Christ, not addressing their failure to do so.

A further concern raised by Bobertz is that Pontius did not include *Ad Quirinum* in his list of Cyprian's treatises, although he himself had used the work and was therefore

¹⁹⁴ *Laps.* 19 (CCSL 3:231).

¹⁹⁵ *Fort.* 4 (CCSL 3:190).

¹⁹⁶ Common variations are discussed in section 1.3 above.

¹⁹⁷ Bobertz, "Analysis of *Vita Cypriani*," 120-22.

¹⁹⁸ "Non posse in ecclesia remitti ei qui in Deum deliquerit." CCSL 3:122.

¹⁹⁹ Followed by Mark 3:28-29, 1 Sam. 2:25. *Test.* 3.28 (CCSL 3:122-23).

²⁰⁰ *Fort.* 4-5 (CCSL 3:190-93). See also *Laps.* 17 (CCSL 3:230).

aware of it.²⁰¹ However, *Ad Quirinum* is not a treatise, but a true testimonia collection; *Ad Fortunatum*, despite Cyprian's claim to simply provide texts for others to enlarge upon,²⁰² actually contains far more of his own perspective—the final chapter includes but a single verse.²⁰³ I am also inclined to credit Turner's suggestion that Pontius' list may reflect a collection of Cyprian's writings that had already been compiled at the time he wrote, and that *Ad Quirinum*, due to its length, was circulated separately.²⁰⁴

There is, then, no compelling reason to reject the attribution of *Ad Quirinum* to Cyprian. The arrangement and selection of Scriptures in the work provide an insight into Cyprian's biblical exegesis and pastoral concerns and will be examined along with his letters and treatises.

De unitate

Whilst the authorship of the work itself is not in question, the text of chapter 4 of *De unitate* has been the subject of considerable dispute.²⁰⁵ In 1902-3, John Chapman concluded that Cyprian had composed both the *Textus Receptus* (TR) and the so-called "Primacy" Text (PT), rather than the differences being due to modification of one text or the other as had previously been thought.²⁰⁶ Most scholars accepted this resolution, although Koch maintained that the PT was not written by Cyprian but contained "papalist" interpolations.²⁰⁷ In 1933, Damien van den Eynde proposed that PT was the

²⁰¹ Bobertz, "Analysis of *Vita Cypriani*," 117-18.

²⁰² *Fort. praef.*3 (CCSL 3:184).

²⁰³ Rom 8:18. *Fort.* 13 (CCSL 3:214).

²⁰⁴ Turner, "Two Early Lists," 207.

²⁰⁵ With related variations in chapters 5 and 19. For thorough summaries of the discussion to date, see Paolo Siniscalco, "Introduction," in *Cyprien de Carthage: L'unité de l'église* (Paris: Cerf, 2006), 89-115. Also Dunn, *Cyprian*, 71-79.

²⁰⁶ Chapman believed that TR was written with regard to the schism of Felicissimus in Carthage and then revised to become PT in the light of the Novatianist schism in Rome. John Chapman, "Les interpolations dans le traité de S. Cyprien sur l'unité de l'Église," *RBén* 19 (1902): 246-54, 357-73; 20 (1903): 26-51. Pierre Batiffol argued that PT was the first, TR being a later, more generally applicable version. P. Batiffol, "Ecclesia Principalis," in *Cathedra Petri. Études d'histoire ancienne de l'Église* (Paris: Cerf, 1938), 135-50.

²⁰⁷ Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen*, 83-110. Jean Le Moyne later revived this position. Jean Le Moyne, "Saint Cyprien est-il bien l'auteur de la rédaction brève du 'De Unitate' chapitre 4?," *RBén* 63

original version, not necessarily related to Rome, which Cyprian then revised in light of the baptismal controversy.²⁰⁸ Othmar Perler and Maurice Bévenot, working independently, confirmed this view by a more thorough investigation of the texts and their relative lengths, demonstrating that TR contained additional bible verses which did not require removal by a “papalist” but which were appropriate to the new situation.²⁰⁹ These verses include Ephesians 4 which will form part of this study. The reason, of course, for such an emphasis on this text was an attempt to understand—or co-opt—Cyprian’s views on the bishop of Rome, which will be discussed in the chapter on the unity of the church.

More recently, there has been renewed discussion regarding the context and intended recipients of the editions. Bobertz has presented a persuasive argument for the view that PT was written to address schism in Carthage, although not all its elements stand up to scrutiny.²¹⁰ Patout Burns has added a new dimension to the debate by suggesting that there are not two but three versions of *De unitate* from Cyprian’s hand,²¹¹ which seems to complicate the matter unnecessarily. Further, Stuart Hall has demonstrated that the texts included in TR do not necessarily link it to the baptismal controversy, and that Bévenot’s argument regarding unity among the bishops being relevant only to the later period may similarly be refuted. Hall’s argument, then, is that TR was addressed to the bishops in council in May 252. There was no need to emphasise the primacy of the bishop in his congregation; that was taken as given. What now needed to be emphasised

(1953): 70-115. He was refuted in some detail by Maurice Bévenot, “‘Primatus Petro Datur’: St. Cyprian on the Papacy,” *JTS* 5 (1954): 19-35.

²⁰⁸ D. Van den Eynde, “La double édition du «De Unitate» de S. Cyprien,” *RHE* 29 (1933): 22-23.

²⁰⁹ They did, however, differ as to whom PT was originally addressed, Bévenot favouring a dual focus against Perler’s Carthaginian focus. Bévenot, “‘Primatus Petro Datur’,” 20. Van den Eynde had noted that these verses did not appear in Cyprian prior to the baptismal dispute. Van den Eynde, “La double édition,” 12.

²¹⁰ Charles Arnold Bobertz, “The Historical Context of Cyprian’s *De unitate*,” *JTS* 41 (1990): 107-11. His point regarding the vocative “dilectissimi fratres” as being Cyprian’s standard address to the laity, particularly in Carthage (111) has been demonstrated to be unfounded by Dunn, *Cyprian*, 80-81.

²¹¹ i.e. the original version directed towards the situation in Carthage, a PT revision sent to Rome to address the Novatianist schism, and a TR version which he places in the period of the baptismal dispute. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, viii, 93-96, 159-62.

was the need for the unity of the episcopate in light of the Novatianist schism.²¹² Dunn is basically in accord with this position with regard to the dating, but believes it is a post-synodal document. In his opinion, Cornelius receiving the letters from Cyprian's laxist opponents was the prompt for the revision, linking it with *Ep. 59*.²¹³ The views of Hall and Dunn, allowing for their minor variations, bring us as close to the truth as can be ascertained at this distance.²¹⁴

Letters

As Clarke notes, whereas the *corpus* of Cyprian's treatises was established early, that of the letters was slow to take shape, with manuscripts varying in the number and order of the letters they contain.²¹⁵ The letters we now have include sixty by Cyprian, six synodal letters from Cyprian in council with other bishops²¹⁶—which I also take into consideration in this work—and sixteen letters by others.²¹⁷ From the evidence of the letters themselves, there are a large number that have not been preserved, whether by active suppression, chance, or the perceived irrelevance of the subject matter for later copyists.²¹⁸ The traditional numbering of the letters is therefore not chronological, and the order must be inferred from internal, and some external, evidence. I generally follow

²¹² Stuart G. Hall, "The Versions of Cyprian's *De Unitate*, 4-5. Bévenot's Dating Revisited," *JTS* 55 (2004): 138-46.

²¹³ Dunn, *Cyprian*, 71-102.

²¹⁴ This also explains why the references to the *sacrificati* in chapter 19 remain, which would be unlikely if, as Bévenot suggests, the document had been revised during the baptismal controversy. Maurice Bévenot, ed. *Cyprian: De Lapsis and De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), xv.

²¹⁵ Clarke, *Letters*, 1:8.

²¹⁶ Or seven, if the more ad-hoc *Ep. 61* (CCSL 3C:380-84) is included among them.

²¹⁷ Clarke, *Letters*, 1:7.

²¹⁸ Clarke, *Letters*, 1:7-11.

Clarke's.²¹⁹ Deléani has retained the familiar numbering but has put the first twenty letters into chronological order,²²⁰ her assessment agreeing with that of Clarke.

Versions

The text used here is the critical edition of *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*. The first volume includes *Ad Quirinum*, *Ad Fortunatum*, *De unitate* and *De lapsis* (CCSL 3);²²¹ the second contains the rest of the treatises (CCSL 3A), with the unfortunate omission of *De habitu virginum*, for which I rely on William Hartel's text (CSEL 3.1).²²² The letters appear in two further volumes (CCSL 3B and 3C), followed by one devoted to the manuscripts, editions and indices, including a biography of Cyprian and chronology of the letters by Clarke (CCSL 3D). Finally, the *Sententiae episcoporum numero LXXXVII de haereticis baptizandis* has been published, edited by Gerard Diercks (CCSL 3E).

For English translations of the letters, I use Clarke. Although he was forced to rely on Hartel's edition, with the restrictions which that entails and so are offered by him as "a working translation and commentary of the Hartel text,"²²³ they are generally adequate for the purposes of this work.²²⁴ Where the CCSL text affects the English translation, I indicate it. I use Bévenot's translations of *De lapsis* and *De unitate* which are based on his critical edition of the Latin text which was then incorporated into CCSL.²²⁵ The

²¹⁹ G. W. Clarke, "Chronology of the Letters," in *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina IIID Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera Pars III, 3*, ed. G. F. Diercks and G. W. Clarke (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 691-705. Luc Duquenne's ordering of the letters differs slightly. For a summary, see Luc Duquenne, *Chronologie des lettres de S. Cyprien: Le dossier de la persécution de Dèce* (Brussels: Société des Bolandistes, 1972), 159-61.

²²⁰ Simone Deléani, *Saint Cyprien: Lettres 1-20* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 2007), 11.

²²¹ CCSL 3.

²²² I have, however, benefited from aspects of Laetitia Ciccolini's work on *De habitu virginum*, to be published in forthcoming volume (CCSL 3F), edited by Ciccolini and Paul Mattei.

²²³ Clarke, *Letters*, 1:46.

²²⁴ As Fahey notes "though marred by occasional errors of judgment and a confusion regarding the MSS families, [it] is not seriously defective." Fahey, *Cyprian*, 24.

²²⁵ Maurice Bévenot, ed. *St. Cyprian: The Lapsed, The Unity of the Catholic Church* (New York: Newman, 1957).

English is somewhat dated, but adequate. All other translations into English are my own.²²⁶

1.6 Interpreting Paul: Pastoral concerns and reading strategies

As Richard Pervo says, “At one time Protestant scholarship, in particular, saw the task of analyzing pre- (and post-) Augustinian exegesis of Paul as demonstrating how ‘they’ misunderstood him. Today, that task involves showing how these interpreters *understood* Paul,”²²⁷ recognising that Luther’s interpretation was affected by the issues and methods of his time, just as earlier interpreters were by theirs.²²⁸ I will be joining the modern quest and examining how the issues and methods of Roman North Africa in the third century impacted Cyprian’s reading.

As Cyprian’s preoccupations as bishop stand at the intersection of his theology and practice, I use them as the framework for examining the use of each quotation of and allusion to Paul in his works.²²⁹ I begin with a chapter on the importance of divine truth

²²⁶ While English speakers have access to an excellent translation of and commentary on the letters, but not the treatises, the situation is reversed in the case of the French. Critical editions, incorporating the Latin text, of a number of the treatises have been published in the series *Sources Chrétiennes*: Jean Molager, *Cyprien de Carthage: À Donat et La vertu de patience* (Paris: Cerf, 1982). Michel Poirier, *Cyprien de Carthage: La bienfaisance et les aumônes* (Paris: Cerf, 1999). Jean-Claude Fredouille, *Cyprien de Carthage: À Démétrien* (Paris: Cerf, 2003). Michel Poirier, *Cyprien de Carthage: L’unité de l’église* (Paris: Cerf, 2006). Michel Poirier, *Cyprien de Carthage: La jalousie et l’envie* (Paris: Cerf, 2008). G. W. Clarke and Michel Poirier, *Cyprien de Carthage: Ceux qui sont tombés* (Paris: Cerf, 2012). However, until recently, only one volume of the letters had been published since Louis Bayard, *Saint Cyprien. Correspondence*, 2 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1925; 2nd ed. 1962). i.e. Deléani, *Lettres 1-20*. This situation has been remedied by the publication of Michel Poirier, *Cyprien de Carthage: Correspondance* (Paris: Migne, 2015). This work lacks the detailed commentary on the text provided by Clarke and Deléani, however. It seems German speakers must still rely on the volumes by Julius Baer, *Des heiligen Kirchenvaters Caecilius Cyprianus Traktate* (Munich: Kösel, 1918). (This does not include *Ad Quirinum* or *Ad Fortunatum*, but does include the *Vita Cypriani*.) Also, Julius Baer, *Des heiligen Kirchenvaters Caecilius Cyprianus Briefe* (Munich: Kösel & Pustet, 1928).

²²⁷ Pervo, *Making of Paul*, 4. Cf. Wiles: “My main purpose is descriptive rather than evaluative. I have not attempted to adjudge in detail just how far the early commentators were or were not correct in their understanding of St Paul.” Wiles, *Divine Apostle*, 2.

²²⁸ Pervo, *Making of Paul*, 4.

²²⁹ Here I am particularly indebted to Fahey; where I deviate from his judgement, I note it.

in presenting a counter-cultural worldview, one which enables the Christian to re-frame present suffering, which is temporary, in the light of future reward, which is eternal. Then, in turn, I consider the church's unity, ministry, and sacraments; the necessity of discipline and repentance; and finally, wealth and welfare, which may be considered as a special case of discipline and repentance. The importance of each of these areas in Cyprian's ministry will be discussed at the beginning of each chapter.

Within each chapter, I analyse the strategies Cyprian employs as he appropriates Paul to direct and correct his flock, fellow bishops and opponents. I have allowed these categories to emerge from Cyprian's use rather than imposing an external framework.²³⁰ While these overlap somewhat with categories on both axes of Young's chart, I have not adopted her distinction between paraenetic and mimetic readings.²³¹ For Cyprian, paraenesis is a governing strategy that applies to almost all his writing, according to Stanley Stowers' understanding that it "includes not only precepts but also such things as advice, supporting argumentation, various modes of encouragement and dissuasion, the use of examples, models of conduct, and so on."²³²

The first of these reading strategies is *model*, in which Cyprian presents a biblical character as someone to be emulated.²³³ Both Aristotle and Quintilian give attention to

²³⁰ For reading strategies which relate to the early church's appropriation of the entire Scripture, see Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 212-13.

²³¹ For a discussion of the paraenetic and mimetic in Chrysostom, see Mitchell, *Heavenly Trumpet*, 385. As Young herself says, "Great heroes were listed to illustrate a particular virtue, so a character like Job came to embody patience, and Christ's life and death were set forth as a way to be imitated. Such 'mimetic' use of literary heroes reinforced the paraenetic use of scripture with which we began, and provided 'types'." Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 209.

²³² Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 23.

²³³ In his excursus on Cyprian's typology, Fahey writes: "The substantive *exemplum* is used three times in connection with Biblical figures when the context is one of imitation of or determent from paradigms," citing Moses, *Fort.* 8 (CCSL 3:197); Core, Dathan and Abiron, *Ep.* 69.9 (CCSL 3C:483); and Pharoah, *Ep.* 69.15 (CCSL 3C:493-94). Fahey, *Cyprian*, 618. In fact, the three youths in the furnace (*Dom. or.* 8 [CCSL 3A:93]) and Zechariah (*Ep.* 59.17.1 [CCSL 3C:368]) are also designated as "exempla." Because of the focus of the section, Fahey naturally does not refer to Christ as an "exemplum," but he is the one to whom the term most frequently refers (e.g. *Unit. eccl.* 2 [CCSL 3:249], *Ep.* 6.2.1 [CCSL 3B:32]). Many other characters are presented by Cyprian as models for imitation and these are included in the list of "Biblical Figures" in Fahey, *Cyprian*, 555-611.

the use of *exempla* in rhetoric.²³⁴ Jean Daniélou sees this form of “moral exegesis” as particularly Latin in nature,²³⁵ and the Latin apologists exploit not only biblical but also pagan examples of fortitude.²³⁶ However, it is not absent from the Greek tradition—as Mitchell demonstrates, Chrysostom makes particular use of Paul in this respect.²³⁷ I do not limit the use of model to ethical exhortation, however; I also use it with regard to the eschatological implications of being in Christ’s likeness.

Another strategy is the use of *images*, in which a scriptural image is deployed by Cyprian to support his argument. I am using the term in a broad way. With regard to Cyprian’s use of Paul, metaphor dominates, but the typological sense is also present. Fahey identifies a number of typological terms used by Cyprian: *sacramentum*, *typus*, *imago/umbra*, *veritas/res*, *figura* and *similitudo*.²³⁸ Whilst Young demonstrates that a person can be both a model and a type,²³⁹ people are not types in Cyprian’s use of Paul.

Further reading strategies include *maxims*, in which a pithy phrase from Scripture can be applied to a range of situations;²⁴⁰ *titles*, in which a scriptural phrase is used as a title; *contextual exegesis*, in which Cyprian examines the original context of a passage in order to respond to its use by his opponents; *direct application*, in which Cyprian takes a text and directly applies it to a situation in his own congregation, whether or not that is similar to that originally addressed by Paul;²⁴¹ *prophetic fulfilment*, where a text is used

²³⁴ Although more to promote a person or argument than to provide material for imitation. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.9 (LCL 193:90-105); Quintilian, *Inst.* 5.11 (LCL 125:430-41).

²³⁵ 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 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1977), 321.

²³⁶ For a discussion of *exempla*, see Carlson, “Pagan Examples,” 93-94.

²³⁷ Mitchell, *Heavenly Trumpet*.

²³⁸ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 612-18. See also Brigitte Proksch, *Christus in den Schriften Cyprians von Karthago* (Vienna: LIT, 2007), 41-54.

²³⁹ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 209-10.

²⁴⁰ Robert Sider notes the utility of such maxims in developing an argument. Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric*, 15.

²⁴¹ I have removed the distinction I made in earlier work between direct and indirect application. Edwina Murphy, “Divine Ordinances and Life-Giving Remedies: Galatians in the Writings of Cyprian of Carthage,” *JTI* 8 (2014): 84, 95-97.

in relation to the fulfilment of a prophecy; and *qualification*, in which Cyprian places some caveats on his teaching.

Cyprian therefore appropriates Paul in a variety of ways to direct his flock in light of their needs and his theological perspective, revealing the “inseparability of theology, exegesis of scripture and spirituality”²⁴² in his work. His shaping of Paul’s legacy—selecting texts, applying reading strategies—gives us insight into the early North African hermeneutical tradition. But we also see how Cyprian’s theology and practice is shaped by the thought of the most important New Testament writer. This study, then, contributes to our understanding of the reception of Paul in early Christianity, as well as Paul’s substantial role in forming that tradition.

²⁴² Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 265.

2. Hope does not disappoint: Divine truth and eternal glory

*The one who is greater than the world can crave nothing, can desire nothing, from the world. How stable, how unshakeable is that safeguard; how heavenly the protection in its perennial benefits—to be freed from the snares of this entangling world, to be purged from earthly dregs in the light of eternal immortality!*¹

In *Ad Donatum*, one of his earliest works, Cyprian sharply distinguishes between this world and the next, juxtaposing present bondage with the glorious liberty of the world to come. This stark contrast between the earthly and the heavenly, so characteristic of Cyprian, is yoked to his opposition of worldly wisdom to divine truth—he is a man of one book. Certainly, he also receives inspiration from dreams,² but there is no danger of those dreams condemning him as a Ciceronian.³ Despite his rhetorical training, he neither quotes from nor alludes to classical authors, but wholly relies on the Scriptures.⁴

Cyprian therefore bears witness to the early Christian construction of reality through text and practice.⁵ Through the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit speaks, revealing eternal truth. This truth is opposed to the world's wisdom, including that of the philosophers. Only through attending to divine teaching can Christians be freed from falsehood. Only through clinging to the hope of the gospel can its ethical demands be lived out. And only through setting their minds on things above can Christians regard present suffering as insignificant, departing this decaying world confident in future glory.

¹ “Nihil adpetere iam, nihil desiderare de saeculo potest, qui saeculo maior est. Quam stabilis, quam inconcussa tutela est, quam perennibus bonis caeleste praesidium, implicantis mundi laqueis solui, in lucem immortalitatis aeternae de terrena faece purgari.” *Don.* 14 (CCSL 3A:12).

² *Ep.* 11.4.1-2 (CCSL 3B:60-61), *Ep.* 63.1.2 (CCSL 3C:390). For a discussion of how Cyprian describes and uses dreams and visions, see Seagraves, *Pascentes*, 240-53.

³ Unlike Jerome, *Ep.* 22.30 (CSEL 54:190).

⁴ Cf. Tertullian, who despite his oft-quoted “Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis?” (*Praescr.* 7.9 [CCSL 1:193]), cites a great variety of classical authors, perhaps by using anthologies. Eric Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 32-34.

⁵ Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 21.

That the world is passing away is a commonplace of late antique thought⁶ which Cyprian particularly exploits in his apologetic work. Given that whatever is born dies,⁷ it is irrational to blame Christians for the fact that “everything is diminished as the world grows old.”⁸ Whatever the similarities between Cyprian and the classical tradition,⁹ however, there are a number of significant differences. The Christian expectation of the new age, inaugurated by Christ’s return, is at odds with both the Stoic anticipation of cosmic conflagration and rebirth, and the Lucretian view that the universe ends simply because nothing is eternal.¹⁰ Cyprian declares that “the world is tottering and collapsing and bearing witness to its ruin, *not now through age*, but through the end of things.”¹¹ Furthermore, Cyprian is at variance with the ancient traditions in that, for him, “the old age of the world is laden with implications of hope, not of pessimism.”¹² Whereas Roman historians, philosophers and poets bemoan a falling away from the golden age, Cyprian eagerly awaits the fulfilment of all things. The passing of the world is cause for rejoicing, not despair.

These two aspects of divine truth—the role of the Scriptures and the future versus the present—are apparent in *Ad Demetrianum*:

There flourishes with us the strength of hope and firmness of faith, and in the midst of the very ruins of a collapsing world our mind is lifted up and our

⁶ Despite the presence of other themes such as the *Aeternitas* of *Roma perpetua* or *aeterna*. Henri-Irénée Marrou, “La fin du monde antique vue par les contemporains,” in *Christiana tempora* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1978), 80.

⁷ “omnia orta occidunt.” *Demetr.* 3 (CCSL 3A:37). This echoes Sallust’s “omnia orta intereunt.” *Rep.* 1.5 (LCL 522:488). There is, however, a significant difference between the two; Sallust is concerned about the fate of Rome and the need for Caesar to establish harmony. Santo Mazzarino, *The End of the Ancient World* [La fine del mondo antico], trans. George Holmes (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 27.

⁸ “minuantur singula mundo senescente.” *Demetr.* 4 (CCSL 3A:37). Other references to the decline of the world are to be found in *Unit. eccl.* 16 (CCSL 3:261), and *Epp.* 58.2.1, 67.7 (CCSL 3C:321, 458). The more general theme of the end of the world is found in *Demetr.* 23 (CCSL 3A:48-49).

⁹ This “common backcloth” is detailed by Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 96-116.

¹⁰ Natale Spineto, “L’escatologia nel mondo classico,” *ASE* 16 (1999): 19.

¹¹ “Mundus ecce nutat et labitur et ruinam sui non iam senectute rerum sed fine testatur.” *Mort.* 25 (CCSL 3A:30). Italics mine.

¹² Luigi Castagna, “Vecchiaia e morte del mondo in Lucrezio, Seneca e San Cipriano,” *AevAnt* 13 (2000): 252 n. 23.

courage is unshaken, and never is our patience unhappy, and our soul is always secure in its God, just as the Holy Spirit says and exhorts through the prophet, strengthening the firmness of our hope and faith by His heavenly voice.¹³

Hope is therefore central to Cyprian's exhortations to the members of his flock to keep their faith in the midst of trials; his strong orientation to the future is clearly discernible.¹⁴ As Greer states, "Paradoxically, it is only the appeal to the 'there and then' that can make sense of the 'here and now.'"¹⁵ Cyprian's eschatology provides both an alternative vision of reality and a reason to persevere in a way of life that may prove very costly.¹⁶ Earthly pleasures and pursuits are to be forsworn for the greater joys promised to the believer.

This opposition of present privation and future reward, worldly wisdom and divine truth, undergirds all Cyprian's work. In this chapter, I restrict myself to those aspects in which the focus is most explicit, although there are necessarily links with the other areas of Cyprian's pastoral concern. Cyprian uses a wide variety of reading strategies as he appropriates Paul in this regard: model, image, maxim, direct application, prophetic fulfilment and qualification. Given that biblical truths in Cyprian's writings are frequently directed towards paraenesis, straightforward doctrinal statements mostly occur in *Ad Quirinum* 1 and 2.

¹³ "Viget apud nos spei robur et firmitas fidei et inter ipsas saeculo labentis ruinas erecta mens est et immobilis uirtus et numquam non laeta patientia et de Deo suo semper anima secure, sicut per prophetam Spiritus sanctus loquitur et hortatur spei ac fidei nostrae firmitatem caelesti uoce corroborans: [cites Isa 13:6-9]." *Demetr.* 20 (CCSL 3A:46-47).

¹⁴ "Das Thema der künftigen Belohnung klingt fortwährend an." Basil Studer, "Hoffnung," in *RAC*, ed. Ernst Dassmann (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1991), 1211.

¹⁵ Rowan A. Greer, *Christian Hope and Christian Life: Raids on the Inarticulate* (New York: Herder & Herder, 2001), 8.

¹⁶ For a discussion of the social and moral function of eschatology in the early church, see Helen Rhee, "Wealth, Poverty, and Eschatology: Pre-Constantine Christian Social Thought and the Hope for the World to Come," in *Reading Patristic Texts on Social Ethics: Issues and Challenges for Twenty-First-Century Christian Social Thought*, ed. Johan Leemans, Brian J. Matz, and Johan Verstraeten (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 66.

2.1 Model

The Christian's identification with Christ is a constant theme in Cyprian's work.¹⁷ Here the focus is on the contrast between present suffering and future glory. Paul, a faithful follower of Christ in this respect, is likewise a model to be emulated. On the other hand, worshipping other gods results in immoral behaviour and is to be avoided.

Paul's words in Rom 8:16b-17 are used a number of times by Cyprian as he identifies Christians as sons of God and, therefore, co-heirs with Christ. Having included it as support for the testimony, "On the good of martyrdom,"¹⁸ Cyprian makes direct use of the verses in his letter to Sergius, Rogantianus and the other confessors in prison. After highlighting the example Christ himself has set, he continues:

Paul, too, exhorts that as we desire to gain the Lord's promises, so we must imitate the Lord in all things. "We are," he says, "sons of God: but if sons, heirs of God also and joint-heirs with Christ—if, indeed, we share in His sufferings so that we may share in his glory."¹⁹

Enduring tribulation, as Christ did, is possible when one's focus is on the glory and splendour which will be shared with him. The crucial link between identification with Christ and imitation of Christ is found again in Cyprian's letter to the laity in Thibaris, who are anticipating a savage persecution. He introduces the above verses with 1 John 2:6²⁰ and the statement: "For it proves our willingness to be found with Christ if we imitate what Christ did and taught."²¹ The nexus between imitating Christ in his suffering and participating in his glory is again alluded to in *Fort.* 13. The co-heir of Christ, who has suffered earthly tortures and punishments, will

¹⁷ "Le Christ est le modèle qui incarne notre perfection." Spanneut, *Tertullien*, 67.

¹⁸ "De bono martyrii." *Test.* 3.16 (CCSL 3:107, 111).

¹⁹ Rom 8:16b-17. "Paulus etiam nos adhortatur ut qui ad domini promissa uenire cupimus imitari dominum in omnibus debeamus. 'Sumus,' inquit, 'filii dei: si autem filii, et heredes dei, coheredes autem Christi, siquidem compatiamur ut et conmagnificemur.'" *Ep.* 6.2.1 (CCSL 3B:33). He continues by citing Rom 8:18 which will be discussed below, in section 2.4.

²⁰ "qui dicit se in Christo manere, debet quomodo ille ambulauit et ipse ambulare."

²¹ "Hoc est enim uelle cum Christo inueniri, id quod Christus et docuit et fecit imitari." *Ep.* 58.1.3 (CCSL 3C:320-21).

“accompany him when he comes to take vengeance on his enemies, to stand at his side when he shall sit to judge ... to rejoice in the possession of the heavenly kingdom” with the angels, patriarchs, apostles and prophets.²²

In *De dominica oratione*, being a co-heir with Christ is once again linked with doing what Christ both taught and did, which includes, but is not limited to, suffering for his name. Believers must therefore imitate Christ in everyday life—being humble, steadfast, modest, merciful and disciplined, loving God with all one’s heart—as well as in death, exhibiting “that patience whereby we are crowned: this is to desire to be a co-heir with Christ, this is to do the commandment of God, this is to fulfil the will of the Father.”²³ Likewise, in *De unitate*, Cyprian emphasises an aspect of the inheritance in line with the theme of the work. Here, peace is a pledge of the rewards to come; those who are heirs of Christ and sons of God must dwell in his peace.²⁴ Again, in *De opere et eleemosynis*, the one who desires to be a fellow-heir with Christ in his heavenly kingdom will in this world make him a partner in financial matters.²⁵ It must be remembered, however, that it is through the blood of Christ himself that believers are made sons of God.²⁶

The Christian’s identification with Christ, and the consequent glory to come, is highlighted in Cyprian’s allusion to Col 2:12 in his discussion of the phrase “Your kingdom come,” in the Lord’s Prayer. “For since he himself is the resurrection, since in him we rise again, so also the kingdom of God may be understood to be himself, since

²² “comitari eum cum uenire coeperit uindictam de inimicis recepturus, lateri eius adsistere cum sederit iudicaturus, coheredem christi fieri, angelis adaequari, cum patriarchis, cum apostolis, cum prophetis caelestis regni possessione laetari.” *Fort.* 13 (CCSL 3:214-15).

²³ “patientiam qua coronamur: hoc est coheredem Christi uelle esse, hoc est praeceptum Dei facere, hoc est uoluntatem patris implere.” *Dom. or.* 15 (CCSL 3A:99).

²⁴ “Hanc nobis hereditatem dedit, dona omnia suae pollicitationis et praemia in pacis conseruatione promisit. Si heredes Christi sumus, in Christi pace maneamus; si filii Dei sumus, pacifici esse debemus.” *Unit. eccl.* 24 (CCSL 3:267).

²⁵ *Eleem.* 13 (CCSL 3A:63).

²⁶ *Demetr.* 26 (CCSL 3A:51).

in him we shall reign.”²⁷ Just as all Christians anticipate the resurrection, so too all will reign with Christ; it is not only martyrs who will receive this reward.

Future glory therefore belongs not only to those who imitate Christ when under persecution, but also to those who persevere in daily life. A particular challenge was posed by the plague—Christians wondered why they were suffering and dying alongside their non-Christian, “gentile” neighbours.²⁸ *De mortalitate* is Cyprian’s response to their questioning, an *anticonsolatio*²⁹ in which he aims to fortify them by reframing the situation from one to be feared to one to be embraced. As part of his demonstration that the transition from the temporal to the eternal should be welcomed, Cyprian draws on Phil 3:20-21: “But our life, he says, is in heaven, from where we look for the Lord Jesus Christ who will transfigure the body belonging to our lowly state and give it a form like that of his own radiant body.”³⁰ All Christians will share the glorified state of Jesus the exemplar; death is merely the prelude to eternal joy.

In *Ep.* 76, Cyprian, banished to Curubis himself, again uses Phil 3:21 when writing to those in the mines, contrasting temporary earthly suffering with eternal heavenly

²⁷ “Nam cum resurrectio ipse sit, quia in ipso resurgimus, sic et regnum Dei potest ipse intellegi, quia in illo regnaturi sumus.” *Dom. or.* 13 (CCSL 3A:97). The same principle appears in *Mort.* 2 (CCSL 3A:18): “Eius est ad Christum nolle ire qui se non credit cum Christo incipere regnare.”

²⁸ “At enim quosdam mouet quod aequaliter cum gentilibus nostros morbi istius ualitudo corripiat.” *Mort.* 8 (CCSL 3A:20). Cyprian uses “gentile” both in distinction to “Jew,” e.g. “Quod gentes magis in Christum crediturae essent” (*Test.* 1.21 [CCSL 3:21]), and, as here, in distinction to “Christian.”

²⁹ From the logical standpoint that there is no need to console those whose loved ones are now experiencing immortality and eternity. J. H. D. Scourfield, “The *De mortalitate* of Cyprian: Consolation and Context,” *VC* 50 (1996): 31.

³⁰ “Paulo apostolo praedicante: ‘Nostra autem conuersatio, inquit, in caelis est, unde et Dominum expectamus Iesum Christum qui transformabit corpus humilitatis nostrae conformatum corpori claritatis suae.’” *Mort.* 22 (CCSL 3A:29). The quotation from Paul places the timing of transformation at the return of Christ, whereas Cyprian implies that the sooner the Christian leaves this world, the more quickly he or she will be “changed and reformed to the image of Christ” (*mutari et reformari ad Christi speciem*). *Mort.* 22 (CCSL 3A:29).

reward.³¹ Unusually for Cyprian, he changes the mood and tense of the verb in order to incorporate it into the sentence:³²

Think of the splendour you'll receive in compensation for all this squalor which pagans³³ find so loathsome and repulsive. Think of the rewards of radiant and everlasting glory you'll receive in exchange for this brief and transient suffering, when, in the words of the blessed Apostle, "the Lord will transfigure the body belonging to our lowly state and give it a form like that of His own radiant body."³⁴

If Christ is the ultimate model for Christians, Paul as an imitator of Christ is likewise someone to be emulated. Cyprian combines the two in *De mortalitate*, citing Christ's words to his disciples³⁵ before citing Paul's agreement in his statement from Phil 1:21: "For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."³⁶ Cyprian then elaborates on the reasoning for Paul's preference, his gloss emphasising the benefits of being free from the world, the flesh and the devil, trading the troubles of this life for the joy of eternal salvation. This interpretation aligns with Cyprian's perspective as a new Christian in *Ad Donatum*.³⁷

The elevation of Paul as model is further invoked in *De mortalitate* with reference to 2 Corinthians:

³¹ For a discussion of dating, see Clarke, *Letters*, 4:277-78.

³² Citing "transformauerit" instead of "transformauit." See Clarke, *Letters*, 4:283 n. 11.

³³ Note that Cyprian never uses the term "paganus," but rather "gentiles." For a reconsideration of the emergence of the term "pagan" to describe non-Christians, see Douglas Boin, "Hellenistic 'Judaism' and the Social Origins of the 'Pagan-Christian' Debate," *JECS* 22 (2014): 167-96.

³⁴ "Omnis ista deformitas detestabilis et taetra gentilibus quali splendore pensabitur. Saecularis haec et brevis poena quam clari et aeterni honoris mercede mutabitur, cum secundum beati apostoli uocem 'transformauerit dominus corpus humilitatis nostrae conformatum corpori claritatis suae.'" *Ep.* 76.2.4 (CCSL 3C:610-11).

³⁵ "Si me dilexissetis, gauderetis quoniam uado ad Patrem." John 14:28 in *Mort.* 7 (CCSL 3A:20).

³⁶ "Cuius rei memor beatus apostolus Paulus in epistula sua ponit et dicit: Mihi uiuere Christus est et mori lucrum." *Mort.* 7 (CCSL 3A:20).

³⁷ For a summary of the ideas expressed, see *Don.* 14 (CCSL 3A:11-12).

And so, the Apostle Paul, after shipwrecks, after scourgings, after many and grievous tortures of the flesh and body,³⁸ says that he is not grieved, but benefited by his adversity, so that while he is grievously afflicted he might more truly be proved. “I was given,” he says, “a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan to beat me, so that I would not become conceited. Because of this, I begged the Lord three times to take it away from me and he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for strength is made perfect in weakness.”³⁹ When, therefore, weakness and frailness and devastation attack us, then our strength is made perfect; then our faith, if it withstands trial, is crowned.⁴⁰

The withstanding of trials, which even the apostle Paul had to face, will be rewarded. In fact, the righteous will suffer more in order to be proved,⁴¹ but if proved, crowned. Mappalicus is one such believer who, by suffering a martyr’s death, is identified with both Christ and Paul:

This is the contest which the blessed Apostle Paul has also revealed to us, the contest in which we are to run and to attain to a crown of glory. [Cites 1 Cor 9:24-25]. Likewise he revealed his own contest and he promised he would soon be a victim offered to the Lord with these words: “Now I am poured out in libation and the time is at hand when I am to be taken up. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is left for

³⁸ Allusion to 2 Cor 11:24-27.

³⁹ 2 Cor 12:7-9.

⁴⁰ “Sic et apostolus Paulus post naufragia, post flagella, post carnis et corporis multa et grauia tormenta non uexari sed emendari se dicit aduersis, ut dum grauius adfligitur uerius probaretur. ‘Datus est mihi,’ inquit, ‘stimulus carnis meae, angelus Satanae qui me colafizet ut non extollar. Propter quod ter Dominum rogaui ut discederet a me, et dixit mihi: sufficit tibi gratia mea, nam uirtus in infirmitate perficitur.’ Quando ergo infirmitas et inbecillitas et uastitas aliqua grassatur, tunc uirtus nostra perficitur, tunc fides si temptata perstiterit coronatur.” *Mort.* 13 (CCSL 3A:23). Note the loan word “colafizet” from the Greek *κολαφίζω*.

⁴¹ 2 Cor 12:7-9 is also cited as support for the testimony, “Bonos quosque et iustos plus laborare, sed tolerare debere, quia probantur.” *Test.* 3.6 (CCSL 3:94).

me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day, and not to me only, but to all who have loved His coming.”⁴²

Mappalicus likewise joined the contest and, by imitating Christ and the apostles, has fulfilled what was foretold by the prophets, his glorious death resulting in the palm of victory. This imagery of palms and crowns will be discussed below.

Cyprian also uses a Pauline reference to supply a negative model—one to be avoided by the Christian. As support for the testimony, “We must trust in God only, and in Him we must glory,”⁴³ Cyprian cites Rom 1:25-26a: “Of this same thing to the Romans: ‘And they worshipped and served the creature, forsaking the Creator. Because of this, God gave them up to shameful passions.’”⁴⁴ In *Ad Donatum*, he alludes to Rom 1:27 in his description of the world Christians have escaped.⁴⁵ The immorality of the gods, as depicted in the theatre, is replicated in private by those who worship them.⁴⁶

Cyprian adopts Paul’s presentation of Christ as the model for the future transformation of Christians. Whether their suffering is the result of plague or persecution, the coming great reversal will render the present circumstances inconsequential by comparison. Paul fully embraced such a perspective towards death and other believers should follow his example. For Cyprian, the traditional fate of the martyrs is that of all faithful believers.

⁴² 2 Tim 4:6-8. “Hic est agón quem nobis ostendit et beatus apostolus Paulus, in quo oportet nos currere et ad coronae gloriam peruenire. [Cites 1 Cor 9:24-25, discussed under image.] Item suum certamen ostendens et hostiam se domino cito futurum esse promittens ait: ‘ego iam libor, et tempus instat adsumptionis. Bonum agónem certavi, cursum perfecí, fidem seruavi. Iam superest mihi corona iustitiae quam mihi reddet dominus in illa die ille iudex iustus, non solum autem mihi, sed et omnibus qui dilexerunt aduentum eius.’” *Ep.* 10.4.3 (CCSL 3B:52). The quotation of 1 Tim 4:6-8 is also cited under the heading, “On the benefit of martyrdom” (*De bono martyrii*). *Test.* 3.16 (CCSL 3:107, 111).

⁴³ “In Deum solum fidendum et in ipso gloriandum” *Test.* 3.10 (CCSL 3:97).

⁴⁴ “De hoc ipso ad Romanos: ‘Et coluerunt et seruierunt creaturae relicto creatore. Propter quod et tradidit illos Deus in passiones ignominiae.’” *Test.* 3.10 (CCSL 3:98-99).

⁴⁵ “Libidinibus insanis in uiros uiri prouunt.” *Don.* 9 (CCSL 3A:8). Not noted by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 423.

⁴⁶ *Don.* 8-9 (CCSL 3A:8).

2.2 Image

The images of soldiers, athletic contests and the arena are particularly prevalent in Paul,⁴⁷ and given Cyprian's context, it is unsurprising that the crowns and palms of victory feature strongly in his work.⁴⁸ In *Ep.* 10, considered above, Cyprian makes use of this Pauline imagery by quoting 1 Cor 9:24-25:

This is the contest which the blessed Apostle Paul has also revealed to us, the contest in which we are to run and to attain to a crown of glory. "Do you not know," he says, "that of those who run in a race, all indeed run but only one receives the palm. So run that you may win it. In their case their object is to receive a corruptible crown, but ours an incorruptible."⁴⁹

In his treatise on martyrdom, *Ad Fortunatum*, Cyprian uses a string of Pauline quotes⁵⁰ to demonstrate, "That we must press on and persevere in faith and virtue, and in completion of heavenly and spiritual grace, that we may attain to the palm and the crown."⁵¹ He follows the citation of 1 Cor 9:24-25 with 2 Tim 2:4-5:

⁴⁷ For recent discussion, see Cavan Concannon, "'Not for an Olive Wreath, but Our Lives': Gladiators, Athletes, and Early Christian Bodies," *JBL* 133 (2014): 193-214; James R. Unwin, "'Thrown down but not Destroyed': Paul's Use of a Spectacle Metaphor in 2 Corinthians 4:7-15," *NovT* 57 (2015): 379-412.

⁴⁸ For a comprehensive study of the "corona" or wreath among the Greeks, see Michael Blech, *Studien zum Kranz bei den Griechen* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982). Blech notes the widespread use of the metaphor among early Christians (e.g. "corona vitae"), but the focus of the work is on the Greek origins and use of the crown, the literal wearing of which Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria opposed. Blech, *Studien zum Kranz*, 1-3.

⁴⁹ "Hic est agone quem nobis ostendit et beatus apostolus Paulus, in quo oportet nos currere et ad coronae gloriam pervenire. 'Nescitis,' inquit, 'quia qui in stadio currunt omnes quidem currunt, unus tamen accipit palmam. Sic currite ut occupetis. Et illi quidem ut corruptibilem coronam accipiant, nos autem incorruptam.'" *Ep.* 10.4.3 (CCSL 3B:52). 1 Cor 9:24-25 also appears as support for the testimony (with a more disciplinary tone), "Parum esse baptizari et eucharistiam accipere, nisi quis factis et opere proficiat." *Test.* 3.26 (CCSL 3:121).

⁵⁰ 1 Cor 9:24-25, 2 Tim 2:4-5, Rom 12:1-2, Rom 8:16-17.

⁵¹ "Insistendum esse et perseverandum in fide et uirtute et caelestis ac spiritalis gratiae consummatione ut ad palmam et coronam possit perveniri." *Fort.* 8 (CCSL 3:195).

No soldier fighting in God's service entangles himself in the anxieties of this world, thereby enabling himself to be free to please the one who enlisted him. Moreover, if anyone competes, he will not be crowned unless he has fought lawfully.⁵²

This image of a soldier or athlete is also alluded to in the preface to *Ad Fortunatum*: "Neither is it possible for someone to be a soldier fit for war who has not first been trained in the field; nor will the one who seeks to gain the crown of contest be crowned in the stadium unless he first considers the use and skillfulness of his powers."⁵³

This imagery is more fully developed by Cyprian's use of a lengthy quotation of Eph 6:12-17 in *Ep.* 58.⁵⁴ This could be considered under the category of discipline, but I have included it here because the biblical text is framed by references to future glory:

How weighty is our glory, how great our happiness, to engage in the contest with God presiding and to win our crowns with Christ judging! Let us arm ourselves, dearly beloved brethren, with all our strength ... The blessed Apostle teaches us how to arm and prepare ourselves saying: "Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against powers and the princes of this world and of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the heavenly realms."⁵⁵ Therefore, put on full armour that you may be able to withstand on the most evil of days, so that when you have arranged all these things you

⁵² "Nemo militans Deo obligat se molestiis saecularibus, ut possit placere ei qui se probavit. Sed et si certabit quis, non coronabitur, nisi legitime pugnaverit." *Fort.* 8 (CCSL 3:196-97). These verses also appear as support for the testimony, "Eum qui fidem consecutus est exposito priore homine caelestia tantum et spiritalia cogitare debere nec attendere ad saeculum, cui iam renuntiavit." *Test.* 3.11 (CCSL 3:99-102).

⁵³ "Neque enim idoneus potest esse miles ad bellum qui non exercitatus in campo prius fuerit, aut qui agonisticam coronam quaerit adipisci in stadio coronabitur, nisi usum et peritiam uirium ante meditetur." *Fort. praef.* 2 (CCSL 3:183).

⁵⁴ For a detailed analysis of Cyprian's use of military imagery in this letter, see Vos, "Universe of Meaning," 73-93.

⁵⁵ Allusions to this battle against the devil are in *Mort.* 4-5 (CCSL 3A:18-19), *Pat.* 12 (CCSL 3A:125) and *Hab. virg.* 21 (CSEL 3.1:202). Fahey lists *Hab. virg.* 5 (CSEL 3.1:190-91) instead of *Hab. virg.* 21, but the former is concerned with the battle is against the flesh. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 494.

may stand, having your loins girt with truth, having put on the breastplate of justice, having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, taking up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one,⁵⁶ and taking up the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.”⁵⁷ Such are the arms we should now take up ourselves.⁵⁸

Cyprian then directs the laity at Thibaris in the use of these “spiritual and heavenly weapons” in order to “withstand and repel the menaces of the devil”,⁵⁹ reiterating the main images and applying them to the situation at hand. He ends with an exhortation to reject pagan sacrifices, remembering that those right hands “which now receive the Lord’s body [in the Eucharist] may one day clasp the Lord Himself when they accept from Him hereafter heavenly crowns as their reward.”⁶⁰ The Christian, like the soldier, does not enter the contest in vain, but for the prize to come.

Cyprian particularly enjoys using his rhetorical prowess to contrast conditions faced by those presently imprisoned with the glories which are to come. Writing to the confessors in *Ep.* 6, Cyprian encourages them to press on to gain their crowns, likening

⁵⁶ This image is also used in *Mort.* 4 (CCSL 3A:18-19), *Pat.* 18 (CCSL 3A:128), *Zel. liv.* 3 (CCSL 3A:76), *Zel. liv.* 16 (CCSL 3A:84).

⁵⁷ Eph 6:12-17 is also the only scriptural proof for the testimony, “Fortem congressionem esse aduersus diabolum et ideo fortiter nos stare debere ut possimus uincere.” *Test.* 3.117 (CCSL 3:177).

⁵⁸ “Quanta est gloriae dignitas, quanta felicitas praeside deo congregi et Christo iudice coronari? Armemur, fratres dilectissimi, uiribus totis ... Armari et parari nos beatus apostolus docet dicens: ‘non est nobis conluctatio aduersus carnem et sanguinem, sed aduersus potestates et principes huius mundi et harum tenebrarum, aduersus spiritus nequitiae in caelestibus. Propter quod induite tota arma, ut possitis resistere in die nequissimo, ut cum omnia perfeceritis stetis adcincti lumbos uestros in ueritate, induti lorica iustitiae et calciati pedes in praeparatione pacis euangelii, adsumentes scutum fidei, in quo possitis omnia ignita iacula nequissimi extinguere et galeam salutis et gladium spiritus, qui est sermo dei.’ Haec arma sumamus.” *Ep.* 58.8.1-9.1 (CCSL 3C:331-32).

⁵⁹ “his nos tutamentis spiritalibus et caelestibus muniamus, ut in die nequissimo resistere diaboli minis et repugnare possimus.” *Ep.* 58.9.1 (CCSL 3C:332). Allusions to the military imagery of Eph 6:11 to encourage Christians to stand against the devil are also found in *Fort. praef.* 2 (CCSL 3:183), *Zel. liv.* 3 (CCSL 3A:76), and *Ep.* 43.3 (CCSL 3B:202). See Fahey, *Cyprian*, 493.

⁶⁰ “quae domini corpus accipit ipsum conplectatur, postmodum a domino sumptura praemium caelestium coronarum.” *Ep.* 58.9.2 (CCSL 3C:333).

them to temples of God⁶¹ raised amidst the darkness of the prison—a darkness which now outshines the sun due to their presence.⁶² Similarly, in *Ep.* 37, he encourages those who have been imprisoned by alluding to Gal 6:7b-8, comparing the seasons with the experience of the confessors in prison: “And lo! summer came, fertile with abundant harvests and the threshing-floor was filled with crops; but you have sown glory and a harvest of glory you will reap.”⁶³

This use of imagery is particularly evident in *Ep.* 76, written to bishops, presbyters, deacons and others in the mines. Cyprian first pictures them as “vessels of gold and silver,”⁶⁴ the mines now receiving the precious metals rather than producing them.⁶⁵ He continues with one of his favourite Pauline images—being clothed with Christ,⁶⁶ combined with one from 1 Cor 11:3—Christ as the head of man: “You want for clothing and go shivering, but the man who puts on Christ is abundantly clothed and attired. Unkempt is the hair on your half-shaven heads, but in the case where Christ is the head of man, anything will be an adornment on a head made illustrious by its adherence to the Name of Christ.”⁶⁷ Cyprian then completes the section by looking to their

⁶¹ The image “temples of God” (1 Cor 3:16), along with “temples of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19), is one of Cyprian’s favourites. He uses it in a number of areas: the unity of the Church (*Epp.* 69.11, 73.12.2, 74.5 [CCSL 3C:486, 542-43, 569]); discipline (*Hab. uirg.* 2 [CSEL 3.1:188], *Dom. or.* 11 [CCSL 3A:96], *Zel. liv.* 14 [CCSL 3A:82]); a combination of the two, *Ep.* 55.26-27 (CCSL 3B:289-90); and wealth and welfare (*Ep.* 62.2 [CCSL 3C:386]).

⁶² *Ep.* 6.1.2 (CCSL 3B:30).

⁶³ “Aestas ecce messium fertilitate fecunda est et area frugibus plena est, sed uos qui gloriam seminastis frugem gloriae metitis.” *Ep.* 37.2 (CCSL 3B:179).

⁶⁴ “uasa aurea et argentea.” Allusion to 2 Tim 2:20.

⁶⁵ *Ep.* 76.2.2 (CCSL 3C:608). Clarke does not believe that this rhetorical flourish indicates that they were indeed in gold and silver mines. Clarke, *Letters*, 4:282 n. 7.

⁶⁶ Gal 3:27. The image of being clothed with Christ is also frequently found elsewhere in Cyprian’s writings: on the unity of the church (*Unit. eccl.* 7 [CCSL 3:254], *Ep.* 74.5 [CCSL 3C:570]); discipline (*Pat.* 9 [CCSL 3A:123], *Laps.* 30, 35 [CCSL 3:238, 240], *Hab. uirg.* 13 [CSEL 3.1:197]); and wealth and welfare (*Ep.* 62.2 [CCSL 3C:386]). Laurance suggests that this emphasis may reflect a rite of vesting as part of the baptismal ritual. John D. Laurance, “Priest” as Type of Christ: The Leader of the Eucharist in Salvation History according to Cyprian of Carthage (New York: Lang, 1984), 157.

⁶⁷ “Vestis algentibus deest, sed qui Christum induit et uestitus abundanter et cultus est. Semitonsi capitis capillus horrescit, sed cum sit caput uiri Christus, quaecumque illud caput deceat necesse est quod ob domini nomen insigne est.” *Ep.* 76.2.4 (CCSL 3C:610).

transfiguration into Christ's radiant body discussed above. In these epistles to the imprisoned, Cyprian is addressing those who, from an earthly perspective, are in a dire situation. Exploiting imagery from Scripture, he reinterprets their experience in light of the Christ event and future hope, pointing them towards their "spiritual deserts and heavenly rewards."⁶⁸

Cyprian makes two further creative uses of the image of Christ as the head of man. In *Ad Quirinum*, in support of the testimony, "That [Christ] also is called a Stone,"⁶⁹ he cites Acts 4:8-12, including the Scripture, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"⁷⁰ and then elaborates: "This is the stone in Genesis, which Jacob places at his head, because the head of the man is Christ; and as he slept he saw a ladder reaching to heaven, on which the Lord was placed, and angels were ascending and descending."⁷¹ In *Ad Fortunatum*, referring to the second Maccabean brother to be tortured, he identifies the form of punishment with the ultimate recipient of the persecution:

Before he tortured the other limbs, he tore off the skin of his head with the hair, doubtless with a purpose in his hatred. For since Christ is the head of the man, and God is the head of Christ, he who tore the head of the martyr was persecuting God and Christ in that head.⁷²

In both cases, Cyprian takes an image from Paul and uses it to inform his typological reading of Old Testament texts.

⁶⁸ "spiritualibus meritis et caelestibus praemiis." *Ep.* 37.2 (CCSL 3B:180).

⁶⁹ "Quod idem et lapis dictus sit." *Test.* 2.16 (CCSL 3:51). This testimony is one of the few in *Ad Quirinum* where Cyprian does not simply cite the verses.

⁷⁰ "Hic est lapis qui contemptus est a uobis qui aedificabatis, qui factus est in caput anguli." *Test.* 2.16 (CCSL 3:52).

⁷¹ "Hic est lapis in Genesi, quem ponit Iacob ad caput suum, quia caput uiri Christus, et dormiens uidet scalam ad caelum pertingentem, in qua constitutus erat Dominus, et angeli ascendebant et descendebant." *Test.* 2.16 (CCSL 3:52).

⁷² "antequam cetera membra torqueret, cutem capitis cum capillis detraxit, odio scilicet certo: Nam cum caput uiri Christus sit et caput Christi Deus, qui caput laniabat in martyre Deum et Christum persequabatur in capite." *Fort.* 11 (CCSL 3:206-7).

The image of sacrifice is an important one for Cyprian which appears in a number of different contexts.⁷³ In *Ep.* 10, discussed above, Paul is a model for believers. The citation from 2 Timothy 4 includes verse 6: “Now I am poured out in libation and the time is at hand when I am to be taken up.”⁷⁴ Paul’s offering of himself as a sacrificial victim to the Lord is rewarded with the crown of righteousness.⁷⁵ Likewise, in *Ep.* 76, Cyprian presents those confined to the mines, unable to celebrate the Eucharist, as offering to God “a truly precious and glorious sacrifice which will aid you greatly in gaining the recompense of heavenly rewards.”⁷⁶ He continues by citing Rom 12:1-2:

You have become yourselves sacrificial offerings to God, you are presenting yourselves as holy and unspotted victims, you are following the exhortation of the Apostle when he says: “And so, my brothers, I do urge you by God’s mercy that you make your very selves into a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. Conform no more to the pattern of this world but let your hearts be renewed and yourselves be transformed so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing to Him and perfect.”⁷⁷

Again, self-sacrifice is linked with heavenly rewards; present trial will give way to future glory. But beyond that, offering oneself as a sacrifice is a means by which the Christian identifies with Christ and participates in his sacrifice. This aspect of Cyprian’s thought will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

⁷³ For a discussion of sacrifice in the eastern fathers, see Frances M. Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom* (Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979).

⁷⁴ “ego iam libor, et tempus instat adsumptionis.” *Ep.* 10.4.3 (CCSL 3B:52).

⁷⁵ 2 Tim 4:8. *Ep.* 10.4.3 (CCSL 3B:52).

⁷⁶ “sacrificium deo et pretiosum pariter et gloriosum et plurimum uobis ad retributionem praemiorum caelestium profuturum.” *Ep.* 76.3.1 (CCSL 3C:611).

⁷⁷ “hostiae facti deo et uosmet ipsos sanctas atque immaculatas uictimas exhibentes, sicut apostolus adhortatur et dicit: ‘oro ergo uos, fratres, per misericordiam dei ut constituatis corpora uestra hostiam uiuam, sanctam, placentem deo, nec configuremini saeculo huic, sed transformemini in renouatione sensus ad probandum quae sit uoluntas dei bona et placens et perfecta.’” Rom 12:1-2. *Ep.* 76.3.2 (CCSL 3C:611-12). Rom 12:1-2 also appears in *Fort.* 8 under the heading “Insistendum esse et perseuerandum in fide et uirtute et caelestis ac spiritalis gratiae consummatione ut ad palmam et coronam possit perueniri.” *Fort.* 8 (CCSL 3:195).

Finally, Cyprian makes interesting use of two images from Corinthians as he demonstrates the revelation of the truth in the testimony, “That the Jews would not understand the Holy Scriptures, but that they would be intelligible in the last times, after Christ had come.”⁷⁸ The veil, which is removed in Christ, reflects the use Paul makes of the image in 2 Cor 3:14-16.⁷⁹ However, in his citation of 1 Cor 10:1a,⁸⁰ “Brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant that all our fathers were under the cloud,”⁸¹ the cloud, as Fahey comments, “is interpreted not as a reassuring symbol of God’s abiding presence but seems to be understood rather curiously as a cloud or veil of ignorance.”⁸² For Cyprian, only in Christ can the promises and prophecies of Scripture be rightly known.

Cyprian uses Pauline imagery to exhort persecuted Christians to persevere. They are athletes who must run to gain the prize, soldiers who must take up arms in order to win the crown, living sacrifices offering themselves to the eternal God. Present suffering is reimagined as the first-fruits of the glory to come. Through Christ, the Scriptures are understood and the path to heavenly reward is revealed.

2.3 Maxim

Paul’s citation of Hab 2:4b in Rom 1:17b,⁸³ “The just [righteous] will live by faith,” is used as a maxim by Cyprian in his exhortation to those facing the plague:

⁷⁸ “Quod scripturas sanctas intellecturi Iudaei non essent, intellegi autem haberent in nouissimis temporibus, posteaquam Christus uenisset.” *Test.* 1.4 (CCSL 3:9).

⁷⁹ “Item ad Corinthios II: ‘Obtusi sunt sensus eorum usque in hunc diem hoc eodem uelamento in lectione ueteris testamenti manente, quod non reuelatur, quia in Christo euacuatur: et usque in hodiernum, si quando legitur Moyses, uelamentum est super cor eorum. Mox autem conuersus est ad Dominum, aufertur uelamentum.’” *Test.* 1.4 (CCSL 3:9-10).

⁸⁰ The use of 1 Cor 10:1-2 as a symbol of baptism in *Ep.* 69 is discussed in chapter 3.

⁸¹ “Nolo enim uos ignorare, fratres, quia patres nostri omnes sub nube fuerunt.” *Test.* 1.4 (CCSL 3:9-10).

⁸² Fahey, *Cyprian*, 455-56.

⁸³ The context suggests a New Testament quotation, especially when combined with the model of Simeon. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 422. Cyprian explicitly cites Habakkuk in *Test.* 1.5 (CCSL 3:10), where he uses it as a prophecy supporting the testimony, “Nihil posse Iudaeos intellegere de scripturis, nisi prius crediderint in Christo.” He quotes: “Fide autem stare iustitiam et illic esse uitam praedictum est apud Ambacum: ‘Iustus autem ex fide mea uiuit.’” He also quotes it in support of the testimony, “Fidem totum prodesse, et tantum nos posse quantum credimus.” *Test.* 3.42 (CCSL 3:133-34). In both these testimonies, he also cites Gen 15:6.

For it is written that the just lives by faith. If you are just, and live by faith, if you truly believe in God, why, since you are about to be with Christ, and are secure of the Lord's promise, do you not embrace the assurance that you are called to Christ, and rejoice that you are freed from the devil?⁸⁴

As support, he draws on the example of Simeon who gladly departed having seen the Lord's salvation.⁸⁵ It is clear that for Cyprian, the use of the phrase, "The just lives by faith," does not amount to a fully-fledged theology of justification by faith.⁸⁶ It does, however, emphasise the assurance that the one who believes has in Christ's promise. Even here, Cyprian does not separate faith from works, as he commends Simeon as a "just man, who was truly just, who kept God's commands with a full faith."⁸⁷ However, as is evident from Cyprian's use of Pauline models and imagery discussed above, neither does Paul. It is not possible to separate belief in Christ from the imitation of Christ, or the rewards in heavenly from the spiritual battle beforehand, or God's mercy from devoting oneself as a living sacrifice.

⁸⁴ "Scriptum est: 'Iustum fide uiuere.' Si iustus es et fide uiuis, si uere in Deum credis, cur non cum Christo futurus et de Domini pollicitatione securus, quod ad Christum uoceris amplecteris et quod diabolo careas gratularis?" *Mort.* 3 (CCSL 3A:18). Fahey wonders whether there is some significance in "Cyprian's substitution of the present infinitive *uiuere* for *ζήσεται*," emphasising that "faith gives meaning to one's present life." Fahey, *Cyprian*, 422-23. This is possible as Cyprian does sometimes alter the tense of verbs (e.g. *Ep.* 76.2.4 [CCSL 3C:610-11]). Cyprian's use of this verse is not included in the discussion in Schelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter*, 46-48.

⁸⁵ Luke 2:29.

⁸⁶ "In none of these instances [from the Apostolic Fathers] can one say that we are witnessing the initial expounding of a doctrine of justification by faith. It is accurate to say only that they are occasional moments of direct reflection on Pauline theology during the first three centuries, and when these instances do occur, there is often recognition that the righteous are made righteous by faith." D. H. Williams, "Justification by Faith: A Patristic Doctrine," *JEH* 57 (2006): 654. Williams does not consider Cyprian in this paper.

⁸⁷ "Simeon denique ille iustus qui uere iustus fuit, qui fide plena Dei praecepta seruauit." *Mort.* 3 (CCSL 3A:18). There is also a possible allusion to Rom 1:17b (or Hab 2:4b) in *Ep.* 59.5.3 (CCSL 3C:345): "fidem ... qua uiuimus." Clarke, *Letters*, 3:243 n. 22.

2.4 Direct application

Cyprian directly applies Pauline texts to emphasise the truth of the gospel and to assure Christians of the heavenly rewards which will be theirs. Firstly, he contrasts the teaching and deportment of the philosophers with divine truth. Although it has been argued that his work has been influenced by Stoic thought,⁸⁸ and he employs Stoic modes of argumentation in his work,⁸⁹ Cyprian never speaks positively of philosophy, representing it as being empty and false since it is separated from God. In *De bono patientiae*, Cyprian uses Paul to demonstrate this opposition between philosophy and the wisdom of God, and the philosophers' consequent inability to obtain the patience they pursue:

Moreover, the blessed Apostle Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, and sent forth for the calling and training of the gentiles, bears witness and instructs us, saying, "See that no-one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, following human tradition, following the elements of the world, and not following Christ, because in him dwells all the fullness of divinity."⁹⁰ And in another place he says: "Let no-one deceive themselves. If anyone among you thinks he is wise, let him become a fool to this world, that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, I will reprove the wise in their own craftiness. And again: The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are foolish."⁹¹

⁸⁸ Particularly Koch, who I think is overstating the case when he says, "Im Bischof Cyprian von Karthago wird der stoische Weise zum Christen und Kirchenfürsten." Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen*, 312. There are some similarities of attitude regarding the end of the world (as discussed above) and female adornment (as expressed in *De habitu virginum*); Cyprian's discussion of slavery in *Demetr.* 8 (CCSL 3A:39) has some correspondence with Seneca, *Ep.* 47 (LCL 75:300-313).

⁸⁹ Kossi Adiavu Ayedze, "Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine on Patience: A Comparative and Critical Study of Three Treatises on a Stoic-Christian Virtue in Early North Africa" (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 2000), 182.

⁹⁰ Col 2:8-9.

⁹¹ 1 Cor 3:18-20. "item beatus apostolus Paulus plenus Spiritu sancto et uocandis formandisque gentibus missus contestetur et instruat dicens: 'Videte ne qui uos depraedetur per philosophiam et inanem fallaciam secundum traditionem hominum, secundum elementa mundi et non secundum Christum, quia in

Since the philosophers do not possess true wisdom, they cannot possess true patience. This is evident from their behaviour as, instead of being humble and meek⁹² as befits the patient person, they are self-satisfied and boastful. Here again we see the clear link for Cyprian between divine truth and the commensurate behaviour. In the testimony, “The kingdom of God is not in worldly wisdom or eloquence, but in the faith of the cross and the power of life,”⁹³ Cyprian introduces the above verses from 1 Cor 3:18-20 with a quotation of 1 Cor 1:17-24:

In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: “Christ sent me to preach,⁹⁴ not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be in vain. For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will reprove the prudence of the prudent. Where is the wise person? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Since indeed, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom did not know God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe. [v 22] Because the Jews desire signs, and the Greeks seek for wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those that are called, Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”⁹⁵

ipso habitat omnis plenitudo diuinitatis.’ Et alio loco, ‘Nemo se,’ inquit, ‘decipiat. Si qui putat sapientem se esse in uobis, mundo huic stultus fiat ut fiat sapiens. Sapientia enim mundi huius stultitia est apud Deum. Scriptum est enim: reprehendens sapientes in astutia ipsorum. Et iterum: cognouit Deus cogitationes sapientium quia sunt stultae.’ *Pat.* 2 (CCSL 3A:118-19).

⁹² “humilis et mitis.” *Pat.* 2 (CCSL 3A:119).

⁹³ “Non in sapientia mundi nec in eloquentia esse regnum Dei sed in fide crucis et uirtute conuersationis.” *Test.* 3.69 (CCSL 3:157). As Clarke notes, however, the idea that “sophisticated reasoning only disguises the simple Truth” was also a philosophical *topos*. Clarke, *Letters*, 3:189 n.71.

⁹⁴ Cyprian replaces the original text, “Christ did not send me to baptise but to preach the gospel” with “Christ sent me to preach,” probably because it would have confused his audience, as noted by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 663 n. 27.

⁹⁵ “In epistula Pauli ad Corinthios I: ‘Misit me Christus adnuntiare, non in sermonis sapientia, ne inanis fiat crux Christi. Verbum enim crucis stultitia est his qui pereunt, his autem qui saluantur uirtus Dei est.

Cyprian therefore emphasises the contrast between human wisdom and divine truth through his use of these Pauline texts—a contrast which also has implications for living. In *De bono patientiae*, the inadequacy of the philosophers’ understanding results in an inability to obtain the patience they seek. On the other hand, the lifestyle of those who place their faith in the cross, rather than in worldly wisdom, is one of doing good.

Cyprian uses Gal 6:10, 9 to demonstrate that those who do good will be rewarded: “So then, while we have time, let us do what is good to all, especially those of the household of faith. Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due time we will reap.”⁹⁶ The re-arrangement of the verses places the emphasis on “reaping,” reinforcing the ideas which precede the quotation—the “divine usury” of *De bono patientiae* and the introductory exhortation of *De opere et eleemosynis*: “That we may not reap little, let us sow abundantly.”⁹⁷ Because of the strong future orientation of these verses, I have chosen to include them in this section. The clear link to giving alms, however, demonstrates the close connection between present action and future reward in Cyprian.⁹⁸ So, in *De opere et eleemosynis*, with minds lifted up “to things heavenly and divine,”⁹⁹ those who fear God are encouraged to exchange earthly clothing for heavenly garments from Christ,

Scriptum est enim: perdam sapientiam sapientium et prudentiam prudentium reprobabo. Vbi sapiens, ubi scriba, ubi conquisitor saeculi huius? Nonne infatuavit Deus sapientiam huius mundi? Quoniam quidem in sapientia Dei non cognovit mundus per sapientiam Deum, conplacuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis saluare credentes: quoniam Iudaei signa desiderant et Graeci prudentiam quaerunt. Nos autem praedicamus Christum crucifixum, Iudaeis quidem scandalum, gentibus autem stultitiam, ipsis autem uocatis Iudaeis et Graecis Christum Dei uirtutem et Dei sapientiam.” *Test.* 3.69 (CCSL 3:157-58). 1 Cor 1:22-24 is also cited, along with Col. 1:15, 18b, for the testimony, “Christum primogenitum esse et ipsum esse sapientiam Dei, per quem omnia facta sunt.” *Test.* 2.1 (CCSL 3:28).

⁹⁶ “Ergo dum tempus habemus, operemur quod bonum est ad omnes, maxime autem ad domestic fidei. Bonum autem facientes non deficiamus, tempore enim suo metemus.” (*Eleem.* 24 [CCSL 3A:71], *Pat.* 13 [CCSL 3A:125]). As Fahey notes, Cyprian cites these verses in reverse order both times that he uses them. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 479.

⁹⁷ “Ne parum metamus plurimum seminemus.” *Eleem.* 24 (CCSL 3A:71). Contra Fahey, who believes this arrangement puts the emphasis on “operemur quod bonum est.” Fahey, *Cyprian*, 479.

⁹⁸ Hence my discussion of these verses in Edwina Murphy, “Cyprian, Paul, and Care for the Poor and Captive: Offering Sacrifices and Ransoming Temples,” *ZAC* (forthcoming).

⁹⁹ “ad superna et diuina.” *Eleem.* 24 (CCSL 3A:71).

and earthly food for the heavenly banquet with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.¹⁰⁰ Using the quotation from Paul, Cyprian directs their attention towards their security and eternal salvation.

In *De bono patientiae*, in line with the aim of the treatise, Cyprian focuses less on giving and more on the need for perseverance, so that the hope and faith of the Christian may attain their result—not present, but future, glory. This time he precedes Gal 6:10, 9 with a quotation of Rom 8:24-25: “Paul the apostle also warns us, and says, ‘We are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope. Why hope for what you see? But if we hope for what we do not see, then we wait for it with patience.’”¹⁰¹ These passages together exhort the Christian to persevere “so that the one who strives towards the crown with the praise now near at hand, may be crowned by the continuance of patience.”¹⁰² Once more, Cyprian uses the imagery of crowns to indicate the rewards awaiting the one who perseveres, not in suffering, but in doing good. In both uses of Gal 6:10, 9, future hope is central to his exhortation for the present.

This theme is continued in Cyprian’s use of Paul’s words in Rom 8:18: “The sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come which shall be revealed in us.”¹⁰³ In *Ep.* 6, to the confessors, it follows the image of being a co-heir with Christ¹⁰⁴ and, therefore, a partner in both his sufferings and his glory. In Cyprian’s other uses of the text, it stands alone as a shorthand juxtaposition of present privation and future reward. For example, in *Ep.* 58, he writes: “That what we there receive far outweighs the labour or the sufferings we endure here on earth the Apostle declares in

¹⁰⁰ *Eleem.* 24 (CCSL 3A:71).

¹⁰¹ Rom 8:24-25. “Paulus apostolus monet dicens: ‘Spe saluati sumus. Spes autem quae uidetur non est spes. Quod enim uidet quis, quid sperat? Si autem quod non uidemus speramus per expectationem speramus.’” *Pat.* 13 (CCSL 3A:125-26). This is the sole text cited for the testimony, “Spem futurorum esse, et ideo fidem circa ea quae promissa sunt patientem esse debere.” *Test.* 3.45 (CCSL 3:135).

¹⁰² “ut qui ad coronam laude iam proxima nititur durante patientia coronetur.” *Pat.* 13 (CCSL 3A:125-26).

¹⁰³ “non sunt condignae passiones huius temporis ad superuenturam claritatem quae reuelabitur in nobis.” *Ep.* 6.2.1 (CCSL 3B:33). The verse also appears as support for the testimony, “Minora esse quae in saeculo patimur quam sit praemium quod promissum est.” *Test.* 3.17 (CCSL 3:111).

¹⁰⁴ Rom 8:16b-17.

these words: [cites Rom 8:18].”¹⁰⁵ In *Ep.* 76, he introduces the text by attributing to the bishops and others in the mine joyful impatience to be with God and receive the rewards of their martyrdom. He continues: “After the darkness of this universe, you are about to behold the most brilliant of light and to receive a glory that outshines all struggles and sufferings. As the Apostle testifies with these words: [cites Romans 8:18].”¹⁰⁶ In *Ad Fortunatum*,¹⁰⁷ he introduces the verse with a fulsome tribute to Paul’s authority:

The blessed Apostle Paul, who by the divine condescension, being caught up into the third heaven and into paradise,¹⁰⁸ testifies that he heard unspeakable words, who boasts that he saw Jesus Christ by the faith of sight, who professes that which he both learnt and saw with the greater truth of consciousness, says: [cites Rom 8:18].¹⁰⁹

The frequency with which Cyprian uses this text points to its central place in his thinking—present suffering, no matter how severe from an earthly perspective, is nothing in comparison to the glory which awaits the Christian.

The close connection between divine truth and discipline, hope and perseverance, is apparent in Cyprian’s use of Rom 8:35-37. He first cites it as support for the testimony, “That nothing is to be preferred to the love of God and Christ”:¹¹⁰

Also in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: For your sake we are killed all

¹⁰⁵ “Maiores enim nos accipere quam quod hic aut operamur aut patimur apostolus praedicat dicens: [cites Rom 8:18].” *Ep.* 58.10.2 (CCSL 3C:334).

¹⁰⁶ “post has mundi tenebras uisuri candidissimam lucem et accepturi maiorem passionibus omnibus et conflictationibus claritatem apostolo contestante et dicente: [cites Rom 8:18].” *Ep.* 76.7.2 (CCSL 3C:616).

¹⁰⁷ In support of the testimony, “Plus nos accipere in passionis mercede quam quod hic sustinemus in ipsa passione.” *Fort.* 13 (CCSL 3:214).

¹⁰⁸ Cf. 2 Cor 12:2-4.

¹⁰⁹ “beatus apostolus Paulus qui dignatione diuina usque in tertium caelum adque in paradysum raptus audisse se inenarrabilia testatur, qui oculata fide Iesum Dominum uidisse se gloriatur, qui id quod et didicit et uidit maioris conscientiae ueritate profitetur: [cites Rom 8:18].” *Fort.* 13 (CCSL 3:214).

¹¹⁰ “Dilectioni Dei et Christi nihil praeponendum.” *Test.* 3.18 (CCSL 3:112).

day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we are more than conquerors for him who loved us.”¹¹¹

Again in *Ad Fortunatum*, he cites the verses in conjunction with others from Paul to show “That, being redeemed and made alive by the blood of Christ, we ought to prefer nothing to Christ.”¹¹²

Moreover, the Apostle Paul says: [cites Rom 8:35-37]. And again: “You are not your own, for you were bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body.”¹¹³ And again: “Christ died for all, that those who now live may not live for themselves, but for him who died for them and rose again.”¹¹⁴

The love of Christ seems to be interpreted more as love for Christ than Christ’s love for his people. This is more fully seen in *Ep.* 11, where the trials encountered are the Father’s means of proving his people. Cyprian cites Rom 8:35 before continuing, “None of these can separate those who believe, none can prise away those who cling to His body and blood.”¹¹⁵ The truth, for Cyprian, is that salvation is found in Christ and, characteristically, this truth must be lived out. To receive the hope won by Christ’s death and resurrection, believers must devote themselves to him, standing firm in the midst of trial and persevering to the end.

¹¹¹ “In epistula Pauli ad Romanos: ‘Quis nos separabit ab agape Christi, praessura an angustiae an persecutio an famis an nuditas an periculum an gladius? Sicut scriptum est: Quoniam causa tui occidimur tota die, deputati sumus ut oves uictimae. Sed in his omnibus superuincimus pro eo quod dilexit nos.’” *Test.* 3.18 (CCSL 3:112-13).

¹¹² “Quod redempti et uiuificati Christi sanguine nihil Christo praeponere debeamus.” *Fort.* 6 (CCSL 3:193).

¹¹³ 1 Cor 6:20.

¹¹⁴ 2 Cor 5:15. “Item apostolus Paulus: ‘Quis nos,’ inquit, ‘separabit a **caritate** Christi, praessura an **angustia** an persecutio an famis an nuditas an periculum an gladius? sicut scriptum est: **Quia propter te** occidimur tota die, **aestimati** sumus ut oves uictimae. Sed in his omnibus **superamus** pro eo **qui** dilexit nos.’ Et iterum: ‘non estis uestri: empti enim estis magno. Clarificate et portate deum in corpore uestro.’ Et iterum: ‘pro omnibus mortuus est, ut qui uiuunt iam non sibi uiuant sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est et resurrexit.’” *Fort.* 6 (CCSL 3:194). The words in bold show where the text differs from *Ad Quirinum*.

¹¹⁵ “Nihil horum potest separare credentes, nihil potest auellere corpori eius et sanguini cohaerentes.” *Ep.* 11.5.3 (CCSL 3B:63).

This conviction is further demonstrated in Cyprian's use of Rom 5:2b-5, which is cited in both *Test* 3.6 and *Fort.* 9 to demonstrate that, "The good and righteous labour more, but ought to endure because they are proved,"¹¹⁶ and that, "Sufferings and persecutions arise so we may be proved."¹¹⁷

We glory in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we also glory in sufferings: knowing that suffering produces endurance; and endurance, proving; and proving, hope: and hope does not disappoint; because the love of God is infused in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given to us.¹¹⁸

If sufferings are something in which believers glory, and trials a precursor to hope, death is likewise transformed from a source of sorrow to a cause for joy. Cyprian uses a number of proofs from Paul to demonstrate, "That no-one should be made sad by death, since in living is labour and peril, in dying peace and the certainty of resurrection":¹¹⁹

Also in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: "You fool, what you sow will not live unless it has first died."¹²⁰ And again: "Star differs from star in glory, so also the resurrection. The body is sown in corruption, it rises without corruption; it is sown in ignominy, it rises again in glory; it is sown in weakness, it rises again in power; it is sown an animal body, it rises again a spiritual body."¹²¹ And again: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. Then shall come to pass the word that is

¹¹⁶ "Bonos quosque et iustos plus laborare, sed tolerare debere, quia probantur." *Test.* 3.6 (CCSL 3:94).

¹¹⁷ "Ad hoc prassuras et persecutions fieri ut probemur." *Fort.* 9 (CCSL 3:197).

¹¹⁸ Rom 5:2b-5. "Gloriamur in spe claritatis Dei: non solum autem, sed et gloriamur in praessuris scientes quoniam praessura tolerantiam operatur, tolerantia autem probationem, probatio autem spem. Spes autem non confundit, quia dilectio Dei infusa est [in] cordibus nostris per Spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis." *Test.* 3.6 (CCSL 3:95). "in" is included in *Fort.* 9 as well as in many variant readings. *Fort.* 9 (CCSL 3:198).

¹¹⁹ "Neminem contristari morte debere, cum sit in uiuendo labor et periculum, in moriendo pax et resurgendi securitas." *Test.* 3.58 (CCSL 3:143).

¹²⁰ 1 Cor 15:36.

¹²¹ 1 Cor 15:41b-44.

written, Death is swallowed up in striving. Where, O death, is your sting? Where, O death, is your striving?”¹²²

Cyprian alludes to 1 Cor 15:53 in *De mortalitate* as he corrects the perspective of those who are disturbed that the plague affects them in the same way as others. Christians are, at present, subject to the same physical constraints as the rest of humanity, but differ in their spirits: “Therefore until this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal receives immortality,¹²³ and the Spirit leads us to God the Father, whatever are the disadvantages of the flesh are common to us with the human race.”¹²⁴ The eternal perspective is emphasised by Cyprian later in the same work as orients his congregation away from grief, arguing that it is antithetical to hope, using 1 Thessalonians:

Finally, the Apostle Paul reproaches and rebukes and blames any who grieve the departure of their friends. “We do not,” he says, “want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, so that you do not grieve like others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so those who are asleep in Jesus God will bring with him.”¹²⁵ He says that those who grieve the departure of their friends have no hope.¹²⁶

¹²² 1 Cor 15:53-55. “Item ad Corinthios I: ‘Stulte, tu quod seminas, non uiuificatur, si non mortuum fuerit.’ Et iterum: ‘Stella ab stella differt in claritate, sic et resurrectio mortuorum. Seminatur corpus in corruptione, resurgit sine corruptela: seminatur in ignominia, resurgit in gloria: seminatur in infirmitate, resurgit in uirtute: seminatur corpus animale, resurgit spiritale.’ Et iterum: ‘Oportet enim corruptituum istud induere incorruptionem et mortale hoc induere immortalitatem. Tunc fiet uerbum quod scriptum est: assumpta est mors in contentionem. Vbi est, mors, aculeus tuus? Vbi est, mors, contentio tua?’” *Test.* 3.58 (CCSL 3:145-46). Missing 1 Cor 15:54a.

¹²³ Allusion to 1 Cor 15:53.

¹²⁴ “Itaque donec corruptituum istud induat incorruptionem, et mortale hoc accipiat immortalitatem, et spiritus nos perducatur ad Deum patrem, quaecumque sunt carnis incommoda sunt nobis cum humano genere communia.” *Mort.* 8 (CCSL 3A:20-21).

¹²⁵ 1 Thes. 4:13-14.

¹²⁶ “Inprobat denique apostolus Paulus et obiurgat et culpat, si qui contristentur excessu suorum. ‘Nolumus,’ inquit, ‘ignorare uos, fratres, de dormientibus, ne contristemini sicut et ceteri qui non habent spem. Si enim credimus quia Iesus mortuus est et resurrexit, sic et Deus eos qui dormierunt in Iesu adducet cum eo.’ Eos contristari dicit in excessu suorum qui spem non habent.” *Mort.* 21 (CCSL 3A:28).

Christ has overcome death; there is therefore no reason to fear it. Cyprian uses these verses from Corinthians and Thessalonians to engineer a shift in his flock's thinking, presenting death as merely the transition to the promised hope of immortality.

Another aspect of this future hope is the anticipation of heavenly rewards. Cyprian twice alludes to Eph 2:3 to designate those due to virgins. In doing so, he takes a verse which originally referred generally to the direction of a life without Christ, "the cravings of the flesh," and specifically directs it towards sexual desires. The rewards are bestowed for renouncing such desires. In *De habitu virginum*, those who cut away "the desires of the flesh obtain the reward of a greater grace in the heavenly home,"¹²⁷ the better dwellings that Jesus announced. In *De mortalitate*, Cyprian describes the paradise awaiting Christians, where they will join the apostles, prophets, "the innumerable multitude of martyrs, crowned for the victory of their struggle and passion [and] the triumphant virgins, who subdued the lust of the flesh and of the body by the strength of their continency."¹²⁸ Cyprian, therefore, narrows the application of the verse whilst holding out the hope of reward to those who achieve freedom from the flesh by practicing virginity.

It is not only virgins and martyrs who will be rewarded, however. A similar vision of the joy that awaits the faithful Christian on the Day of the Lord is written to encourage the laity at Thibaris. Whilst they are facing persecution, the hoped-for bliss will be enjoyed by all Christians: "there in the kingdom of heaven to rejoice in the delights of the immortality bestowed upon us in the company of the just and the friends of God, to receive 'what eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, what has not entered into the heart of man.'"¹²⁹ The corporate dimension of the Christian hope is again emphasised.

These verses also appear in the testimony, "Neminem contristari morte debere, cum sit in uiuendo labor et periculum, in moriendo pax et resurgendi securitas." *Test.* 3.58 (CCSL 3:143, 145).

¹²⁷ "carnis desideria castrantes maioris gratiae praemium in caelestibus obtinetis." *Hab. virg.* 23 (CCEL 3.1:203-4).

¹²⁸ "Illic apostolorum gloriosus chorus, illic prophetarum exultantium numerus, illic numerus, illic martyrum innumerabilis populus ob certaminis et passionis uictoriam coronatus, triumphantes uirgines quae concupiscentiam carnis et corporis continentiae robore subegerunt." *Mort.* 26 (CCSL 3A:31).

¹²⁹ 1 Cor 2:9. "cum iustis et dei amicis in regno caelorum datae immortalitatis uoluptate gaudere, sumere illic 'quod nec oculus uidit nec auris audiuit nec in cor hominis ascendit.'" *Ep.* 58.10.1 (CCSL 3C:333-

The obverse of such a picture is found in *Fort.* 5, where Paul's words are employed to emphasise the consequences of denying Christ in the testimony, "That God is so angry against idolatry, that He has even enjoined those to be slain who persuade others to sacrifice and serve idols."¹³⁰ He writes: "The Apostle Paul also says: 'For if we die with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us.'"¹³¹ Cyprian does not include verse 13, "if we do not believe, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself,"¹³² probably because it would confuse the message.

Finally, there are a number of quotations of Paul that only appear in *Ad Quirinum* as teaching on divine truth. As the first book is devoted to proofs against the Jews, Cyprian supports the testimony, "That the first circumcision of the flesh is made void, and the second circumcision of the spirit is promised instead,"¹³³ by citing Col 2:11: "Paul also, to the Colossians: 'You are circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands in the putting off of the flesh, but with the circumcision of Christ.'"¹³⁴ The early Latin tradition seems to associate the "putting off of the flesh" with physical circumcision rather than as a metaphor for the removal of the fleshly nature in Christ.¹³⁵

The second book focusses on testimonies concerning the nature and mission of Christ. Citations of Paul that are not used elsewhere by Cyprian include several that are noteworthy. In Rom 9:3-5, Paul wishes that he was separated from Christ for the sake of

34). Fahey notes that, unlike his usual practice, Cyprian does not use an introductory formula here. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 442.

¹³⁰ "Quod sic idolatriae indignetur Deus ut praeceperit etiam eos interfici qui sacrificare et seruire idolis suaserint." *Fort.* 5 (CCSL 3:191-93).

¹³¹ 2 Tim 2:11-12. "Item apostolus Paulus: 'Si enim commorimur,' inquit, 'et conuiuemus: Si toleramus, et conregnabimus: Si negamus, et ipse negabit nos.'" *Fort.* 5 (CCSL 3:193).

¹³² "si non credimus, ille fidelis permanet, negare seipsum non potest." Vulgate.

¹³³ "Quod circumcisio prima carnalis euacuata sit et secunda spiritalis repromissa sit." *Test.* 1.8 (CCSL 3:12).

¹³⁴ "Item Paulus ad Colosenses: 'Circumcisi estis circumcisione non manufacta in expoliationem carnis sed in circumcisione Christi.'" *Test.* 1.8 (CCSL 3:12).

¹³⁵ Vulgate: "in quo et circuncise estis circumcisione non manufacta in expoliatione corporis carnis, sed in circumcisione Christi." Cf. RSV: "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ."

Israel. However, the part of his statement that Cyprian exploits, along with other Fathers,¹³⁶ is the affirmation that “Christ is God” and the citation appears under that heading in *Test* 2.6.¹³⁷

Also Paul to the Romans: “I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren and my kindred according to the flesh: who are Israelites: Theirs are the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, and the appointment of the law, and the service (of God), and the promises; whose are the fathers, of whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for evermore.”¹³⁸

Among the passages cited as evidence for the evangelical testimony, “That it is not possible to come to God the Father except by his Son Jesus Christ,”¹³⁹ are two from Paul:

Also Paul to the Ephesians: “And when he had come, he preached peace to you who are far off, and peace to those who are near, because through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”¹⁴⁰ Also to the Romans: “For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; but they are justified by the gift of his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ “Invariably and unhesitatingly applied to the Son rather than to the Father by all patristic writers.” Wiles, *Divine Apostle*, 83. See also Schelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter*, 331-34. Texts include Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.16 (PG 7.1:922); Tertullian, *Prax.* 15.7 (CCSL 2:1180); Novatian, *Trin.* 13 (CCSL 4:33); Origen, *Comm. Rom.* 7.13 (PG 14:1140-41).

¹³⁷ “Quod Deus Christus.” *Test.* 2.6 (CCSL 3:35).

¹³⁸ “Item Paulus ad Romanos: ‘Optabam ego anathema esse ipse a Christo pro fratribus cognatis meis qui sunt secundum carnem, qui sunt Israhelitae, quorum adoptio et claritas et testamentum et legis constitutio et famulatus et promissiones, quorum patres et ex quibus Christus secundum carnem, qui est super omnia Deus benedictus in saecula.’” *Test.* 2.6 (CCSL 3:37).

¹³⁹ “Quod perueniri non possit ad Deum Patrem nisi per Filium eius Iesum Christum.” *Test.* 2.27 (CCSL 3:65).

¹⁴⁰ Eph 2:17-18.

¹⁴¹ Rom 3:23-24. “Item Paulus ad Ephesios: ‘Et cum uenisset, adnuntiavit uobis pacem qui longe et pacem his qui prope, quia per ipsum habemus ambo in uno spiritu ad patrem.’ Item ad Romanos: ‘Omnes enim peccauerunt et egent claritatem Dei, iustificantur autem dono ipsius et gratia per redemptionem quae est in Christo Iesu.’” *Test.* 2.27 (CCSL 3:65).

This is the only time Cyprian cites Rom 3:23-24, although the ideas expressed are not as far from his thoughts as is sometimes claimed.¹⁴²

Another statement on the role of Christ is, “That he will come as judge,”¹⁴³ supported by 2 Cor 5:10.¹⁴⁴ Further testimonies related to judgement are included in Book 3: “That the end of the world comes suddenly,”¹⁴⁵ is demonstrated by 1 Thess 5:2-3a;¹⁴⁶ and Cyprian cites Rom 2:12¹⁴⁷ to show that, “Judgement will be according to the times, either of justice prior to the law, or of law after Moses.”¹⁴⁸

Also in Book 3, Cyprian uses a number of Pauline texts to demonstrate that “God’s mysteries cannot be seen, and therefore our faith should be simple.”¹⁴⁹ These emphasise the limitations of human knowledge. Indirectly, they suggest to Cyprian that in the face of God’s greatness, one should maintain a simple faith. This statement of divine truth, as is usual with Cyprian, has a practical application—one must not cause disputes over things which cannot be known, but live in peace:

In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: “Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know partly; but then I shall know just as I am also known.”¹⁵⁰ Also in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans: “Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgements, and how unsearchable are his ways! For who has known

¹⁴² For example, by Hanson, *Tradition*, 263.

¹⁴³ “Quod ipse iudex uenturus sit.” *Test.* 2.28 (CCSL 3:66).

¹⁴⁴ “Omnes nos manifestari oportet ante tribunal Christi, ut reportet unusquisque sui corporis propria secundum quae egit siue bona siue mala.” *Test.* 2.28 (CCSL 3:67). This verse is also used in the testimony, “Dominum nihil latere ex his quae geruntur.” *Test.* 3.56 (CCSL 3:142-43).

¹⁴⁵ “Subito uenire finem mundi.” *Test.* 3.89 (CCSL 3:166).

¹⁴⁶ “Dies Domini sicut fur nocte ita adueniet. Cum dixerint: pax et firmitas, tunc illis repentinus adueniet interitus.” *Test.* 3.89 (CCSL 3:166).

¹⁴⁷ “Quodquod inique peccauerunt, inique peribunt. Et quodquod in lege peccauerunt, per legem et iudicabuntur.” *Test.* 3.99 (CCSL 3:170).

¹⁴⁸ “Iudicium secundum tempora futurum uel aequitatis ante legem uel legis post Moysen.” *Test.* 3.99 (CCSL 3:170).

¹⁴⁹ “Dei arcana perspicere non posse, et ideo fidem nostram simplicem esse debere.” *Test.* 3.53 (CCSL 3:140).

¹⁵⁰ 1 Cor 13:12.

the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor? Or who has first given to him, that he should be repaid? For from him, and through him, and in him, are all things: to him be glory for ever and ever.”¹⁵¹ Also to Timothy: “But avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they generate strife. And God’s servant should not cause strife, but be gentle to all.”¹⁵²

Cyprian directly employs a large number of Pauline texts in this area. Most notable is the juxtaposition of opposing elements: human philosophy and divine wisdom; earthly trial and heavenly glory; death and immortality; present suffering and future rewards; mortal frailty and Christ as God, mediator and judge. By emphasising the transitory nature of the human, and the permanence of the divine, Cyprian exhorts his congregation to persevere in order to achieve the promised hope.

2.5 Prophetic fulfilment

Cyprian twice uses Paul to demonstrate prophetic fulfilment in establishing divine truth. Firstly, the famous hymn¹⁵³ of Phil 2:6-11 appears in *Test.* 2.13 as the crown of a series of texts drawn from Isaiah, Psalms and Zechariah.¹⁵⁴ Together, they prove that, “In his first coming, he was to come in humility.”¹⁵⁵

Also Paul to the Philippians: “Who, being in the form of God, did not think it robbery to be equal with God, but taking on the form of a servant, being made

¹⁵¹ Rom 11:33-36.

¹⁵² 2 Tim 2:23-24. “In epistula Pauli ad Corinthios I: ‘Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem faciem ad faciem. Nunc scio ex parte, tunc autem cognoscam, sicuti ego cognitus sum.’ In epistula Pauli ad Romanos: ‘O altitudo diuitiarum et sapientiae et scientiae Dei! Quam inexscrutabilia sunt iudicia eius et quam inuestigabiles viae eius! Quis enim cognouit sensum Domini aut quis consiliarius eius fuit uel quis prior dedit ei, et retribuetur illi? Quoniam ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso sunt omnia: Ipsi claritas in saecula saeculorum.’ Item ad Timotheum: ‘Stultas autem et ineruditas quaestiones euita sciens quia lites generant. Seruum autem Dei non oportet litigare sed mitem esse ad omnes.’” *Test.* 3.53 (CCSL 3:140-41).

¹⁵³ For a questioning of whether the passage does, in fact, fit this genre, see Benjamin Edsall and Jennifer R. Strawbridge, “The Songs We Used to Sing? Hymn ‘Traditions’ and Reception in Pauline Letters,” *JSNT* 37 (2015): 290-311.

¹⁵⁴ Isa 53:1-7, Isa 50:5-7, Isa 42:2-4, Ps 21:7-9, Ps 21:16, Zech 3:1, Zech 3:3-5. CCSL 3:45-47.

¹⁵⁵ “Quod humilis in primo aduentu suo ueniret.” *Test.* 2.13 (CCSL 3:45-47).

in the likeness of a man and being found as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”¹⁵⁶

Although the intention of the section is to show the humility of Christ in his first coming, the quotation from Philippians continues to his exaltation. The use of other texts from this testimony to discipline confessors¹⁵⁷ shows that for Cyprian, those who confess Christ must also imitate him. This is further evidenced by the use of the hymn as support for the testimony, “An example of how to live has been given to us in Christ.”¹⁵⁸

The second use of Paul in this way appears in *Ad Demetrianum*. Cyprian employs Paul’s citation of Deuteronomy to demonstrate that the recent disasters experienced by the empire are in fact due to God’s vengeance, fulfilling the Scriptures:

No-one should think that this occurred by chance or luck, since long ago the divine Scripture laid this down and said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.”¹⁵⁹ And again the Holy Spirit forewarns and says, “Do not say, I will avenge myself of my enemy, but wait on the Lord, that he may be your

¹⁵⁶ “Item Paulus ad Philippenses: ‘Qui in figura Dei constitutus non rapinam arbitratus est, esse se aequalem Deo, sed se inaniuit formam serui accipiens, in similitudine hominis factus, et habitu inuentus homo humiliavit se, factus obaudiens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis. Propter quod et Deus exaltauit illum et donauit illi nomen, ut sit super omne nomen, ut in nomine Iesu omnes genu curuent caelestium et terrestrium et infernorum, et omnis lingua confiteatur, quia Dominus Iesus in gloria est Dei patris.’” *Test.* 2.13 (CCSL 3:47).

¹⁵⁷ Isa 53:7b and Isa 50:5-6 are quoted in *Ep.* 13.4.2 (CCSL 3B:75-76).

¹⁵⁸ “Datum nobis exemplum vivendi in Christo.” *Test.* 3.39 (CCSL 3:131).

¹⁵⁹ Rom 12:19b, citing Deut 32:25 (CCSL 3A:45). See also Fahey, *Cyprian*, 436-37. This verse also appears in the testimony, “Item illic iniuria accepta patientiam tenendam et ultionem deo relinquendam.” *Test.* 3.106 (CCSL 3:173).

help.”¹⁶⁰ From which it is clear and manifest, that not by us, but for our sakes, all these things which are happening come down from the wrath of God.¹⁶¹

Cyprian’s frequent use of Scripture in this work is unparalleled in North African Latin apologetics.¹⁶² Lactantius criticises him for this, claiming that Demetrian¹⁶³ should not have been presented with divine testimonies, but rather refuted by his own authorities—philosophers and historians.¹⁶⁴ As Jean-Claude Fredouille notes, however, Cyprian had his own rationale for his use of scriptural testimonies, which are overwhelmingly drawn from the Old Testament.¹⁶⁵ Oracles from the gods were one type of evidence that could be adduced in support of a case, as both Cicero¹⁶⁶ and Quintilian¹⁶⁷ note. Furthermore, current events demonstrate the proof of the Scriptures—the fulfilment of prophecy.¹⁶⁸ Here, Cyprian creates a case that, whilst Christians are patient in the face of persecution, the troubles experienced by the world are God’s action on behalf of his people.

¹⁶⁰ Prov 20:22, which also appears in *Test.* 3.106 (CCSL 3:173).

¹⁶¹ “Nec hoc casu accidisse aliquis existimet aut fuisse fortuitum putet, cum iam pridem scriptura diuina posuerit et dixerit: ‘Mihi uindictam, ego retribuam, dicit Dominus,’ et iterum Spiritus sanctus praemoneat et dicat: ‘Ne dixeris: ulciscar me de inimico meo, sed expecta Dominum ut tibi auxilio sit.’ Vnde clarum est adque manifestum quia non per nos sed pro nobis accidunt cuncta ista quae de Dei indignatione descendunt.” *Demetr.* 17 (CCSL 3A:45).

¹⁶² Thomas, *Defending Christ*, 108.

¹⁶³ Perhaps a local magistrate. See Sage, *Cyprian*, 276.

¹⁶⁴ Lactantius, *Inst.* 5.4 (CSEL 19:412).

¹⁶⁵ There are only two New Testament citations—three including the citation of Deut 32:35 through Rom 12:19b here—and 23 (22) from the Old Testament. Fredouille, *À Démétrien*, 39.

¹⁶⁶ “Diuina haec fere sunt testimonia: primum orationis—oracula enim ex eo ipso appellate sunt, quod inest in his deorum oratio—; deinde rerum, in quibus insunt quasi quaedam opera diuina ... a dormientibus quoque multa significata uisis. Quibus ex locis sumi interdum solent ad fidem faciendum testimonia deorum.” Cicero, *Top.* 77 (LCL 386:442).

¹⁶⁷ “His adicere si qui uolet ea quae diuina testimonia vocant, ex responsis oraculis omnibus.” As always, there are different ways of either crediting or discrediting such evidence. Quintilian, *Inst.* 5.7 (LCL 125:352).

¹⁶⁸ “Les Écritures, plus exactement les prophéties de l’Ancien Testament, valorisées par leur haute antiquité, ne sont pas une preuve de la dégradation présente, mais la dégradation présente prouve la vérité des Écritures.” Fredouille, *À Démétrien*, 39-40.

Cyprian therefore uses Paul's words in Philippians to demonstrate that the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ have come to fulfilment, and uses the current trials of the Empire to demonstrate the veracity of the Old Testament warnings, as mediated by Paul.

2.6 Qualification

Despite the great emphasis Cyprian puts on the rewards of martyrdom, he does qualify them by using Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 13. In *De unitate*, he demonstrates that schism is a "grievous irremissible sin"¹⁶⁹ which cannot be purged by dying for the name of Christ:

No one can claim the martyr's name who has broken off his love for the brethren. This is the Apostle Paul's teaching and witness: "And if I should have faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods in food, and if I should deliver my body to be burned and have not charity, I profit nothing. Love is great-hearted, charity is kind, charity envieth not, is not puffed up, is not provoked to anger, dealeth not perversely, thinketh no evil, loveth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, beareth all things. Charity shall never fall away."¹⁷⁰

The close union of brothers and sisters in Christ will continue forever in the eternal kingdom, so those who destroy that unity *now* will be not be able to enjoy it *then*. The same argument is developed against heretical baptism in *Ep.* 73, alluding to 1 Cor 13:3. It is certainly not possible for water baptism to be efficacious if not even the baptism of blood can benefit the heretic who confesses Christ outside the church:

¹⁶⁹ "inexpiabilis et grauis culpa." *Unit. eccl.* 14 (CCSL 3:259).

¹⁷⁰ 1 Cor 13:2b-8a. "Exhibere se non potest martyrem qui fraternam non tenuit caritatem. Docet hoc et contestatur Paulus apostolus, dicens: 'Et si habuero fidem ita ut montes transferam, caritatem autem non habeam, nihil sum; et si in cibos distribuero omnia mea, et si tradidero corpus meum ut ardeam, caritatem autem non habeam, nihil proficio. Caritas magnanima est, caritas benigna est; caritas non aemulatur, non inflatur, non inritatur, non agit perperam, non cogitat malum; omnia diligit, omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet. Caritas numquam excidet.'" *Unit. eccl.* 14 (CCSL 3:259).

Otherwise one would have to suppose that the supporters and spokesmen of the heretics successfully proclaim them martyrs when they are killed for a confession of Christ that is false, and that they assign to them the crown and glory for a martyr's sufferings despite the explicit testimony of the Apostle that even if they are burnt and put to death it will profit them nothing.¹⁷¹

In *De zelo et livore*, Cyprian demonstrates the importance of being free from jealousy and envy in being able to maintain love, without which, as the Apostle Paul asserts, “neither faith nor alms, nor even the passion itself of the confessor and the martyr, would avail him.”¹⁷² This emphasis on unity as love is, of course, characteristic of Cyprian and his use of Paul to demonstrate the oneness of the church is the subject of the next chapter.

2.7 Conclusion

Cyprian takes full advantage of the eschatological element in Paul's thinking—there is no hint of embarrassment that the end has not yet come. In fact, it is eagerly anticipated; although, as Burns notes, its timing and the rationale behind it are subject to modification.¹⁷³ The attitude Cyprian enjoins upon Christians does not change significantly, however; the leaving behind of the present in light of the future is consistently taught through a variety of reading strategies.

Unsurprisingly, many Pauline texts which emphasise heavenly reward are employed in letters to those threatened with, or currently enduring, persecution. The hardships common to both Cyprian's congregation and Paul's audience,¹⁷⁴ and the personal

¹⁷¹ “nisi si haeticorum patroni et aduocati haeticos in falsa confessione Christi interfectos martyras praedicant et contra apostoli contestationem, qui nihil eos quamuis exustos et occisos dicit posse proficere, gloriam eis et coronam passionis adsignant.” *Ep.* 73.21.1 (CCSL 3C:554-55).

¹⁷² Allusion to 1 Cor 13:2-3. “nec fidem sibi nec eleemosynas nec passionem quoque ipsam confessoris et martyris profuturam.” *Zel. liv.* 13 (CCSL 3A:82).

¹⁷³ J. Patout Burns, “Cyprian's Eschatology: Explaining Divine Purpose,” in *The Early Church in its Context: Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson*, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe, Frederick Norris, and James Thompson (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 59-73.

¹⁷⁴ For a study of Romans that gives a great deal of attention to its context, see Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007).

suffering of which Paul boasts,¹⁷⁵ make these obvious choices. So Cyprian liberally combines models, images and direct application in order to exhort his flock.

Testimonies concerning martyrdom naturally draw on a large number of texts as well. Direct application is the dominant reading strategy, but Cyprian also makes creative use of imagery and models.

That Cyprian highly esteems martyrdom is well known, but the same use of Christ and Paul as models, direct application of texts regarding the coming transformation, and even the maxim “the just lives by faith” are found in *De mortalitate*. Here, Paul’s context does not always align with that of Cyprian. There does not appear to be any contention about the Parousia or the resurrection in Cyprian’s time.¹⁷⁶ Rather, he uses Paul’s texts to remind his congregation of the impact these doctrines should have on their attitudes and behaviour. Cyprian always presents death as something “positive and advantageous”¹⁷⁷—no matter how it is met. Release from this world will result in a restoration to paradise and the kingdom.¹⁷⁸ Not only will the apostles, prophets, martyrs, virgins and the merciful greet them, but also a “great number of our dear ones there await us, parents, brothers, children.”¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, all the faithful will join the martyrs in living and reigning with Christ.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ For suffering as verification of Paul’s apostleship, see Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit: Paul’s Defense of His Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14-3:3* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990).

¹⁷⁶ For the context of 1 Thess 4:13-18, see Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 260-86. For a discussion of the resurrected body in 1 Corinthians 15, see Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1995), 104-36.

¹⁷⁷ Scourfield, “*De mortalitate*,” 15.

¹⁷⁸ *Mort.* 26 (CCSL 3A:31). For Cyprian, paradise does not refer to an intermediate place other than heaven, contra d’Alès, *Théologie*, 34 n. 3. See also *Demetr.* 26 (CCSL 3A:51). In *Ep.* 66.7.4 (CCSL 3C:442), Cyprian suggests sarcastically that Puppianus alone will be dwelling “in paradiso atque in regno caelorum.”

¹⁷⁹ “Magnus illic nos carorum numeras expectat, parentum, fratrum, filiorum.” *Mort.* 26 (CCSL 3A:31).

¹⁸⁰ *Fort.* 12 (CCSL 3:213-14). See also *Mort.* 2, 21 (CCSL 3A:18, 28).

This is not a new discovery,¹⁸¹ but it is one which has been overlooked in some significant recent works. For example, in her study which carefully distinguishes between various regional beliefs regarding martyrdom, Candida Moss simply notes Cyprian's statements regarding the fate of martyrs without considering the above texts, allowing her to conclude: "Martyrs alone go directly to heaven, and martyrs alone avoid judgment. Their place in heaven—enthroned and reigning with God—elevates the martyr above the rank and file of the Christian congregation."¹⁸² Similarly, in his otherwise stimulating book, Peter Brown suggests that, in Cyprian's view, "Only the martyrs were certain to enter directly into the presence of God. The entire balance of his view of the afterlife was tilted towards the martyrs."¹⁸³ And yet, the work to which he refers, *De mortalitate*, was written precisely to those who were not threatened with death for their beliefs, but with a more prosaic death from plague. Brown acknowledges the plague in passing, but does not connect it with the content of *De mortalitate* in his determination to insist: "Normal death was of little interest; martyrdom was special."¹⁸⁴

Both these works miss what is most interesting about Cyprian in this regard—his independence from his North African predecessors and successors. Like them, he certainly values martyrdom, but not only does he extend its traditional definition, as Allen Brent has noted,¹⁸⁵ he also uses Paul in extending its rewards to all faithful Christians. Brent attributes the former to Cyprian's desire to deconstruct the legitimating authority of the Church of the Martyrs,¹⁸⁶ but the same reasoning cannot be applied to the latter. As Kate Cooper recognises, *De mortalitate* is "a masterful attempt

¹⁸¹ Brian Daley, for example, correctly emphasises the distinctiveness of Cyprian in this respect. Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 42.

¹⁸² Candida R. Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 177.

¹⁸³ Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 5.

¹⁸⁴ Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 6.

¹⁸⁵ Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 273-80.

¹⁸⁶ Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 276.

to reinterpret the Christian Church as a federation of spiritual warriors.”¹⁸⁷ Likewise, in *De zelo et livore*, Cyprian pictures the entire Christian life as a battle with rewards for those who conquer.¹⁸⁸ In this, he is distinct from Tertullian, who distinguishes between the immediate entry into heaven of the martyrs and the *refrigerium* experienced by other Christians until the resurrection.¹⁸⁹ Important here is the difference in context. Hope for Tertullian is “founded on the resurrection of the flesh,”¹⁹⁰ which he must thoroughly explain and defend against his Gnostic opponents. Cyprian, with no such battle to fight, refers to the doctrine of the resurrection only in passing.¹⁹¹ His focus is on exhorting his flock to perseverance, a goal best achieved by emphasising the immediacy of the reward, rather than relegating it to an indeterminate point in the future.

The intermediate state therefore recedes in Cyprian’s work, itself a hiatus between the interest displayed by Tertullian and Augustine. It does not completely disappear, however, and at times Cyprian wants to retain an element of incompleteness before the second coming of Christ.¹⁹² In these works, whether enjoining patience or limiting the

¹⁸⁷ Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 77. An example of such military terminology applied to all Christians is in *Mort.* 12 (CCSL 3A:23): “Nisi praecesserit pugna, non potest esse uictoria; cum fuerit in pugnae congressione uictoria, tunc datur uincentibus et corona.”

¹⁸⁸ *Zel. liv.* 16 (CCSL 3A:84-85).

¹⁸⁹ Tertullian, *An.* 55, 58 (CCSL 2:861-63, 867-69). “Refrigerium” is used only twice by Cyprian in the context of the Christian’s experience after death: in *Ep.* 59.3 (CCSL 3C:342), alluding to the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16, and in *Mort.* 15 (CCSL 3A:24), contrasting the deaths of the good and the wicked. A third use in *Ep.* 6.3 (CCSL 3B:34-35) refers to the refreshment experienced by the three youths in the furnace which proves that the “gehennae ardor” can have no power over martyrs and confessors; it may therefore have some eschatological implications.

¹⁹⁰ Waldemar Turek, *La Speranza in Tertulliano* (Roma: LAS, 1997), 65-91.

¹⁹¹ That it will be a bodily resurrection is clear from *Ad Donatum* where Cyprian compares the body to a house, or even a temple, in which the Lord and the Holy Spirit dwell: “Aboleri non potest nec extingui, potest tantum in melius corpore redeunte formari.” *Don.* 15 (CCSL 3A:15).

¹⁹² Charles E. Hill, *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Future Hope in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 149. Cf. Gisbert Greshake and Gerhard Lohfink, *Naherwartung Auferstehung Unsterblichkeit: Untersuchungen zur Christlichen Escatologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1982), 91. “Sie sind in Freiden, frei von allen Anfechtungen, vollendet. Nur die Auferstehung, die ihnen gewiß ist, steht noch aus.”

power of the martyrs, he uses Revelation rather than Paul.¹⁹³ There is just one passage that could be taken to indicate purgation for sins after death in *Ep.* 55.¹⁹⁴ Pierre Jay demonstrates, however, that the contrast is not between martyrs and “ordinary” Christians, but rather between martyrs and the lapsed. Their positions could not be more different now. While the former are immediately crowned by the Lord, the latter must undergo the Church’s penance—exaltation versus humiliation, attainment versus suspense. The suffering of the lapsed is on this side of the grave, rather than the other.¹⁹⁵ Further, as Charles Hill notes: “Ignorance of an idea of purgatory is evidenced not only by Cyprian’s assumption that the dedicated Christian attains the same post-mortem bliss as the martyr ... but by the fact that even the lapsed, if they repent and die while in communion with the Church, are said to ‘come to the Lord’ when they die.”¹⁹⁶

In terms of divine truth, the quotations in *De bono patientiae* are particularly notable. It is precisely in the common value of patience that Cyprian distances himself from the Stoics. The Christian God is not *extra patientiam*; rather, Christ models suffering and his imitators will be co-heirs with him. Patient waiting therefore results in attainment of the promised hope, rather than the Stoic view that waiting leads to anxiety.¹⁹⁷ The eschatological quality of Christian patience, consisting “not so much in bearing of current evil as in waiting for the good to come”¹⁹⁸ as Spanneut has expressed it, is

¹⁹³ For example, he quotes Rev 6:9-11 in *Pat.* 21 (CCSL 3A:131), and Rev 6:10 in *Laps.* 18 (CCSL 3:231).

¹⁹⁴ “[Le] feu dont il est question dans ce texte, ne peut être que le feu du purgatoire.” d’Alès, *Théologie*, 35 n. 1. Joseph Fischer correctly interprets *Ad Fortunatum* 13 to mean: “Nicht nur das Martyrium führt in den Himmel, sondern auch gewissenhaftes christliches Leben und Sterben in normalen Zeiten.” Joseph A. Fischer, *Studien zum Todesgedanken in der alten Kirche*, vol. 1 (Munich: Hueber, 1954), 267. He does, however, identify this passage as referring to purgatory for those not yet worthy of heaven. A similar perspective to Fischer’s is found in J. Patout Burns and Robin M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 499.

¹⁹⁵ Pierre Jay, “Saint Cyprien et la doctrine du purgatoire,” *RTAM* 27 (1960): 133-36.

¹⁹⁶ Hill, *Regnum Caelorum*, 149. *Epp.* 18.1, 19.2, 20.3 (CCSL 3B:101, 104, 109).

¹⁹⁷ Ivano Dionigi, “La *Patientia*: Seneca contro i Cristiani,” *AevAnt* 13 (2000): 426-27.

¹⁹⁸ “La patience, pour saint Cyprien, n’est pas tant dans le support du mal actuel que dans l’attente du bien à venir. Elle est essentiellement eschatologique.” Spanneut, *Tertullien*, 100.

central. Hope is reliant upon patience to bring it to its fulfilment, but that same hope of glory is what provides the Christian with the ongoing motivation to endure.

There are, therefore, only two ways for Cyprian. One either perseveres in divine truth, and receives a reward, or remains under the thrall of worldly wisdom and experiences God's wrath. This dichotomy is consistently employed in the other areas of his pastoral concern. Whilst Cyprian disciplines his flock with warnings and exhorts them to repent of their sins, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5, he never entertains the possibility that their earthly penance may be insufficient, to be completed posthumously. One either remains faithful to Christ within the church or one does not—an important qualification to the rewards which would otherwise attend martyrdom and almsgiving. How Cyprian uses Paul in constructing and defending his theology of the church is the subject of the following chapter.

3. Christ loved the Church: Unity, ministry and sacraments

*For the apostles have handed down one Church only, and one baptism which is to be found only within that same Church.*¹

The church is where God's truth reigns, and where one is born again into new life in Christ. The duality of heavenly and earthly truth is replicated with regard to the church—you are either inside or outside. The unity of this church is demonstrated by the fact that it was founded on one man, Peter—although the other apostles shared in the same honour and power²—and it is expressed in the cohesion of the successors of those apostles, the bishops. The sacraments are the means of entering and continuing in that communion. There is nothing revolutionary in this doctrine—the similarities with Irenaeus and Tertullian are clear.³ Cyprian's contribution is the thorough-going logic he applies in systematising these beliefs, as the Decian persecution confronted the church with the problem of widespread apostasy and rival communions. As Stanley Greenslade says, "Cyprian's teaching has the merit of clarity and coherence. It holds together Church, Ministry, and Sacraments in an intelligible and salutary fashion."⁴

This increased emphasis on unity is evident in Erik Walters' examination of the term "unitas,"⁵ from its first appearance in Varro to its use by Lactantius on the eve of the Constantinian revolution. According to his study, 101 of its 233 appearances are found in Cyprian.⁶ Cyprian is in continuity with the classical meaning which Tertullian applies to the Trinity, and Cyprian applies to the church.⁷ The opposite of this unity is

¹ "quando apostoli non nisi unam ecclesiam tradiderint et baptismum unum quod non nisi in eadem ecclesia sit constitutum." *Ep.* 73.13.3 (CCSL 3C:544).

² *Unit.* 4 TR (CCSL 3:251-52).

³ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.3 (PG 7.1:848-55); Tertullian, *Praescr.* 20 (CCSL 1:201-2).

⁴ Greenslade, *Early Latin Theology*, 121.

⁵ Walters translates as "oneness/unity" in order to encapsulate both the unity and uniqueness inherent in the term. Erik Thaddeus Walters, *Unitas in Latin Antiquity: Four Centuries of Continuity* (Bern: Lang, 2011), 23.

⁶ Walters, *Unitas*, 17.

⁷ Walters, *Unitas*, 17-18. Note the similarity of Cyprian's metaphor of the church (*Unit.* 5 [CCSL 3:253]), with Tertullian's regarding the Trinity (*Prax.* 8.5-7 [CCSL 2:1167-68]). For the first use of "unitas" likened to "fons" and "riuus", see Varro, *Ling.* 8.2 (LCL 334:372-75).

schism. Whilst Irenaeus and Tertullian are best known for their opposition to heretics, schismatics also receive their condemnation.⁸ Irenaeus says that Christ will judge those who create schism, along with the Gentiles, Jews and heretics of various stripes.⁹ Tertullian, in *De praescriptione haereticorum*, speaks of heresies ruining the “unitas,” just as did the schism and dissensions Paul referred to in 1 Cor 11:18-19.¹⁰ Cyprian’s warnings against schismatics do not have their beginning in the Decian persecution—he uses 1 Cor 1:10 as early as *Ad Quirinum*.¹¹ In the case of schism, it is not unapostolic teaching that will be punished, but the destruction of unity. Cyprian is not, therefore, particularly original in considering both schismatics and heretics to be *outside*,¹² even if in Paul the schisms are within the community.¹³

The rite of initiation into the church is baptism, so it would seem evident that the sacrament can only be carried out within the one church, as Cyprian argues.¹⁴ However, the validity of baptism conducted outside the church was to become a major area of conflict between Cyprian and Stephen of Rome.¹⁵ Despite the strength of Cyprian’s conviction on this point, it is not the critical factor in one’s salvation. Even more

⁸ This is overlooked by Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 57-58.

⁹ The Latin version, which closely follows the Greek, reads: “Judicabit autem et eos, qui schismata operantur, qui sunt inanes, non habentes Dei dilectionem, suamque utilitatem potius considerantes quam unitatem Ecclesiae: et propter modicas et quaslibet causas magnum et gloriosum corpus Christi conscindunt et dividunt, et quantum in ipsis est, interficiunt.” Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.33.7 (PG 7.1:786).

¹⁰ Tertullian, *Praescr.* 5 (CCSL 1:191).

¹¹ As support for the testimony, “Scisma non faciendum, etiamsi in una fide et in eadem traditione permaneat qui recedit.” *Test.* 3.86 (CCSL 3:164-65).

¹² For discussion of these two groups, see Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Heresy and Schism according to Cyprian of Carthage,” *JTS* 55 (2004): 551-74.

¹³ For the emphasis on political rather than theological differences in 1 Corinthians, see L. L. Welborn, “On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Ancient Politics,” *JBL* 106 (1987): 85-111.

¹⁴ For a summary of Cyprian’s views on baptism, see Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 351-61 (general, including sickbed), 370-72 (infant), 388-92 (heretical).

¹⁵ For an examination of how the insights of cultural anthropology might be applied here, particularly with regard to how the boundaries of the Church are defined and negotiated, see J. Patout Burns, “On Rebaptism: Social Organization in the Third Century Church,” *JECS* 1 (1993): 367-403. J. Patout Burns, “Social Context in the Controversy between Cyprian and Stephen,” *StPatr* 24 (1993): 38-44.

important than baptism is the communion of the church.¹⁶ Perhaps influenced by pastoral considerations, Cyprian states that those who were admitted to the Eucharist and have since died are safe, despite not having been validly baptised.¹⁷ However, he consistently asserts that those who have left and joined the schismatics, although validly baptised, are now outside the church and lost.¹⁸

Given that there are many congregations throughout the world, how is the unity of the church expressed? For Cyprian, it is in the college of bishops, united in love.¹⁹ Given the subsequent history of the church, the question of the role of the bishop of Rome in this unity arises. Two terms in chapter 4 of *De unitate* are central to the debate: *cathedra Petri*, which Bévenot demonstrates did not only refer to the see of Rome, but to each see derived in legitimate succession from the apostles and Peter to whom it was first given;²⁰ and *primatus*, which has a more neutral sense of “a certain priority, usually in time”²¹ or a kind of “seniority in office,” than the modern Roman meaning of “the primacy.”²² Examining *De unitate* in the context of Cyprian’s actual dealings with the bishops of Rome, as Dunn does, allows him to conclude that in “practice as well as theory Cyprian of Carthage did not consider that the bishop of Rome had jurisdictional

¹⁶ Adrien Demoustier emphasises the importance of the Eucharistic community for Cyprian: “L’Église n’est pas, pour lui, une entité plus ou moins abstraite, un corps moral, un agrégat qui n’a d’autre figure visible qu’une institution juridique unitaire. Elle est l’unique assemblée eucharistique qui réalise, en l’assemblée sociologique, l’unité trinitaire.” Adrien Demoustier, “L’ontologie de l’Église selon saint Cyprien,” *RSR* 52 (1964): 587. See also J. Patout Burns, “The Eucharist as the Foundation of Christian Unity in North African Theology,” *AugStud* 32 (2001): 18-19.

¹⁷ *Ep.* 73.23.1 (CCSL 3C:557-58).

¹⁸ For example, *Ep.* 69.1.3 (CCSL 3C:471).

¹⁹ Dunn, *Cyprian*, 193. For a recent study of the office of bishop in the early church, see Alistair C. Stewart, *The Original Bishops: Office and Order in the First Christian Communities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014).

²⁰ Bévenot, “‘Primatus Petro Datur’,” 24.

²¹ Bévenot, *De Lapsis*, xiv.

²² Bévenot, “‘Primatus Petro Datur’,” 24. As Bévenot noted, “both Catholics and Protestants were wrong in understanding the ‘interpolations’ in a papalist sense, yet Protestants (ably assisted by Hugo Koch) were right in holding that *in that sense* they were un-Cyprianic, though Catholics happened to be right in regarding them anyhow as genuine.” Bévenot, *De Lapsis*, xiv-xv.

primacy within the church.”²³ To be bishop of Rome is, however, to hold a position of considerable prestige and to be regarded in a special sense as the successor of Peter. Cyprian exploits this identification in a number of interesting ways.

More important than being in communion with the bishop of Rome per se is being in communion with the rightly ordained bishop—Cornelius as opposed to Novatian.²⁴ There can only be one legitimate bishop in a given geographic area. Brent contends that the Roman understanding of sacred space plays a significant role in this aspect of Cyprian’s thought.²⁵ Cyprian’s language is certainly reliant on Roman usage, and Brent correctly points out that Cyprian’s use of Old Testament texts “veils [the] political context rather than illuminates it.”²⁶ Nevertheless, Cyprian’s thought could be best described as putting Roman dress on ideas that had previously been held in the church rather than articulating something new. There is no evidence for the valid appointment of another bishop in the same location prior to Cyprian’s time—the church considered it schism. Cyprian now provides a metaphysical reason for previous practice.

Even with the issue of legitimately elected bishops resolved, maintaining the unity of the church amidst a diversity of places and practices may seem an impossible task, especially in the absence of a final court of appeal. Unity does not equal uniformity, however.²⁷ Dunn argues that, on a practical level, one factor in achieving alignment among bishops of equal *potestas* was Cyprian’s greater *auctoritas*, his leadership providing a unifying force among the churches of North Africa.²⁸ Moreover, on a doctrinal level, as von Campenhausen states, “Cyprian *believes* in the episcopate, just as he believes in the catholic Church ... They are divine, sacred realities.”²⁹ It is therefore

²³ Dunn, *Cyprian*, 200.

²⁴ Contra Walters, *Unitas*, 145-48.

²⁵ On the construction of sacred space, see also Joseph A. Favazza, “Chaos Contained: The Construction of Religion in Cyprian of Carthage,” *QL* 80 (1999): 81-90.

²⁶ Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 67.

²⁷ Contra von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 278. In the same letter von Campenhausen uses to support his contention that unanimity of opinion is taken for granted, Cyprian acknowledges that different opinions are held e.g. regarding the readmittance of adulterers. *Ep.* 55.21.1 (CCSL 3B:280).

²⁸ Dunn, “Cyprian and his *collegae*,” 12.

²⁹ von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 278.

impossible for the college of bishops to corporately fail,³⁰ although individual bishops may separate themselves from the indestructible unity of the whole. It should be noted that the purity required of bishops is not so much in personal holiness, although they should not be wanton sinners, but in adhering to the faith (i.e. not apostates) and in maintaining unity (not schismatics). These individual and corporate responsibilities of bishops are supported by a number of Pauline citations.

But if the unity of the church is constituted in the unity of the bishops, that does not mean that the laity have no significant role to play.³¹ As Frend says, the church in Cyprian's understanding is "at once a brotherhood of the righteous and an institution presided over by bishops."³² In an episcopal election, bishops from the same province gather, and the bishop is elected in the presence of the *plebs* (or congregation) who best know the character of the candidates.³³ In Cyprian's own case, it is the *populus* who push for his election as bishop despite the opposition of the presbyters.³⁴ There has been a tendency to view such elections as exceptions to the general rule.³⁵ It is more likely, however, that the congregation's role is not simply passive, but that the people play an active part in the affairs of the church.³⁶

³⁰ von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 278.

³¹ Salisbury particularly emphasises the power of the congregation, which "both grows out of and points to a belief in the collective salvation of the group." Joyce E. Salisbury, "'The Bond of a Common Mind': A Study of Collective Salvation from Cyprian to Augustine," *JRH* 13 (1985): 239.

³² Frend, *Donatist Church*, 140.

³³ *Ep.* 67.5.1 (CCSL 3C:454). The importance of the people for Cyprian is underlined by his mentioning them every time he discusses a legitimate election. Peter Norton, *Episcopal Elections 250–600: Hierarchy and Popular Will in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 13.

³⁴ *Vit. Cypr.* 5 (CSEL 3.1:xcv-xcvi).

³⁵ For example, Clarke, *Letters*, 2:178-79. The view that only the most influential members of the Christian community had a role is advanced by Stewart-Sykes, "Ordination Rites," 126-27.

³⁶ 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: Peeters, 2010), 177. See also the fuller study, 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: Peeters, 2010).

This participation is, somewhat unexpectedly, demonstrated by Cyprian's appointment of confessors to the clergy in *Epp.* 38 and 39.³⁷ What stands out is not the removal of the traditional right of the confessors to automatic enrolment as presbyters,³⁸ nor the appointment of loyal *clientes* (although Cyprian clearly needs the support).³⁹ What is remarkable is the lengths to which the bishop goes to justify his unilateral action, usurping the prerogatives of the clergy and laity to be involved.⁴⁰ Cyprian both emphasises the extraordinary circumstances that have forced this necessity upon him, and describes the confessors with epithets which demonstrate their suitability for ministry roles. Although they are given the same stipend as presbyters, and that higher honour is envisaged for them, he seeks to reduce the resistance by appointing them only to the lower ranks of the clergy.⁴¹ Clearly, the standard practice in North Africa, whatever the Roman *Apostolic Tradition* might say,⁴² is for the people to have a role in the election of presbyters, even when it is a case of appointing confessors to the position.

The role of the people is not limited to clerical appointments, however.⁴³ Burns has emphasised the important role that the voluntary community plays in the aftermath of

³⁷ CCSL 3B:183-92. The case of Numidicus in *Ep.* 40 (CCSL 3B:193-95) is somewhat different.

³⁸ Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 280-86.

³⁹ Bobertz, "Patronal Letters," 252-59.

⁴⁰ That this was standard practice is noted by Seagraves, *Pascentes*, 146.

⁴¹ *Ep.* 39.5.2 (CCSL 3B:191-92). For a discussion of the roles of the minor clergy see Seagraves, *Pascentes*, 133-41 (subdeacons); 141-55 (lectors); 155-65 (exorcists); 165-73 (acolytes).

⁴² For the omission of the requirement for the imposition of hands in the ordination of confessors, see *Trad. ap.* 9 (Stewart-Sykes, 92). The mention of the office of deacon alongside that of presbyter here is often overlooked. It may indicate that confessors could take different clerical roles in the church, whilst still receiving the stipend allocated to presbyters.

⁴³ As Poirier states: "Pour Cyprien, le laïc n'exerce pas dans l'Eglise de droit actif personnel ... Seuls l'évêque [et ceux] désignés par l'évêque, exercent personnellement une charge dans l'Eglise. Mais le peuple en corps, réuni en assemblée, jouit de droits importants." Michel Poirier, "Charité individuelle et action sociale: Réflexion sur l'emploi du mot *munus* dans le *De opere et eleemosynis* de saint Cyprien," *StPatr* 12 (1975): 260.

the Decian persecution.⁴⁴ The voice of the congregation is also evident in their response to the return of schismatics. Whilst Cyprian has the rhetorical goal of convincing Cornelius that he is conciliatory, emphasising his leniency in the face of opposition from the brethren, the fact remains that the people's views are taken into consideration. In some cases, Cyprian is unable to overcome their objection to admitting notorious sinners to penance.⁴⁵ In others, Cyprian acknowledges the correctness of their judgement when some, who had been accepted due to Cyprian's desire that none should perish, fail in their repentance.⁴⁶ Not only this, but it is incumbent upon the *plebs* to separate themselves from an unworthy bishop—they retain responsibility for their salvation.⁴⁷

Cyprian's context of persecution and schism therefore results in a great deal of reflection on the nature of the church. Although there is much more to his legacy than his ecclesiology, it remains his most significant contribution to doctrine.⁴⁸ Unsurprisingly, he uses the widest range of reading strategies in this area: models, images, maxims, titles, contextual exegesis, direct application and prophetic fulfilment are all ways in which he employs Paul in his attempt to preserve the unity of the church.

3.1 Model

Cyprian uses a number of models in his teaching on the sacraments, and on Rome and her bishop. Two appear in *Ep.* 63, written (in response to divine instruction), to correct those bishops who are not using wine in the Eucharist.⁴⁹ It is particularly significant for an understanding of Cyprian's interpretation of Scripture because he is responding to

⁴⁴ Cyprian "recognized the right and responsibility of the faithful laity to enforce the qualifications of membership and thereby determine their religious identity." J. Patout Burns, "The Role of Social Structures in Cyprian's Response to the Decian Persecution," *StPatr* 31 (1997): 262.

⁴⁵ *Ep.* 59.15.2 (CCSL 3C:364).

⁴⁶ *Ep.* 59.15.4 (CCSL 3C:365).

⁴⁷ *Ep.* 67.3.2 (CCSL 3C:451-52).

⁴⁸ For a study of this aspect of Cyprian's theology, see Anneliese Adolph, *Die Theologie der Einheit der Kirche bei Cyprian* (Bern: Lang, 1993).

⁴⁹ *Ep.* 63.1.1-2 (CCSL 3C:389-90). Although addressed to Bishop Caecilius, it seems to be a circular letter. See, for example, the use of the plural in *Ep.* 63.1.1 (CCSL 3C:390). Clarke, *Letters*, 3:288, 290 n.1.

the exegesis of others.⁵⁰ The first model is Abraham, whose story is, of course, found in Genesis, but whose example in this instance is appropriated by Cyprian through Galatians. Cyprian demonstrates that Melchizedek, who offered bread and wine and blessed Abraham, was a type of Christ, who offered the same sacrifice in his own body and blood.⁵¹ Cyprian then shows how this blessing is relevant to the church through the connection with Abraham.⁵² In introducing Gal 3:6-9, Cyprian uses words from the quotation itself, so that there is frequent repetition of the key terms of blessing, belief, justice (righteousness) and faith:

Abraham believed in God and this belief was credited to him as justice. And so you can recognise 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.⁵³

In the original context of these verses, Abraham is presented as a model of one saved by faith rather than by the law. Cyprian takes Paul's identification of Abraham's heirs as those who imitate him in his faith, and uses it to prove that the blessing of Melchizedek upon Abraham pertains to the church, and that wine should therefore be used in the cup.⁵⁴ The same quotation is used in *Ad Quirinum* for the testimony, "The Jews cannot

⁵⁰ This is, however, primarily centred on the interpretation of the Old Testament rather than Paul's letters. Cyprian draws on types and provides proofs that "water" in Scripture is an allusion to baptism. *Ep.* 63.8.1-9.1 (CCSL 3C:397-400). He believes his opponents have mistakenly applied these passages to the Lord's Supper. Cyprian thus accepts their use of typology, but argues that they are in error with regard to the reference. Cf. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 120-21.

⁵¹ *Ep.* 63.4.1 (CCSL 3C:392-93).

⁵² *Ep.* 63.4.2 (CCSL 3C:393).

⁵³ Gal 3:6-9. "Credidit Abraham deo et deputatum est ei ad iustitiam. Cognoscitis ergo quia qui ex fide sunt hi sunt filii Abrahae. Prouidens autem scriptura quia ex fide iustificat gentes deus, praenuntiauit Abrahae quia benedicentur in illo omnes gentes. Igitur qui ex fide sunt benedicti sunt cum fidei Abraham." Cyprian follows with a reference to Zacchaeus quoting Luke 19:9. *Ep.* 63.4.2 (CCSL 3C:393-94).

⁵⁴ *Ep.* 63.4.2 (CCSL 3C:393).

understand the Scriptures unless they first believe in Christ.”⁵⁵ These verses are used to demonstrate that it is those within the church who constitute the people of God, who understand the Old Testament, and who are the recipients of the blessings promised to Abraham. However, Cyprian is not as interested in how Paul continues his argument regarding faith and works and indeed never quotes those verses.⁵⁶

Later in the letter, Cyprian uses Christ and Paul as models of how to conduct the Eucharist, quoting 1 Cor 11:23-26:

Likewise, the blessed apostle Paul, who was especially chosen by the Lord and sent forth to preach the truths of the gospel,⁵⁷ makes exactly this same assertion in his epistle with these words: “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.”⁵⁸

It is crucial that in remembering the Lord, believers must do exactly what the Lord did since his directions were carefully recorded and transmitted by Paul. Not to mix the cup

⁵⁵ “Nihil posse Iudaeos intellegere de scripturis, nisi prius crediderint in Christo.” *Test.* 1.5 (CCSL 3:10-11).

⁵⁶ Note Cyprian’s similarity to what Bird claims regarding the Epistle to Diognetus: “While ED appropriates the righteousness language of Paul it nonetheless ignores Paul’s primary context for employing it.” Michael F. Bird, “The Reception of Paul in the *Epistle to Diognetus*,” in *Paul and the Second Century*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Joseph R. Dodson (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 87.

⁵⁷ Clarke notes the extended introduction given to Paul here, emphasising his unimpeachable authority. Clarke, *Letters*, 3:295 n. 25.

⁵⁸ “Beatus quoque apostolus Paulus a domino electus et missus et praedicator ueritatis euangelicae constitutus haec eadem in epistula sua ponit dicens: ‘Dominus Iesus in qua nocte tradebatur accepit panem et gratias egit et fregit et dixit: hoc est corpus meum, quod pro uobis est. Hoc facite in meam commemorationem. Simili modo et calicem postquam cenatum est accepit dicens: hic calix nouum testamentum est in meo sanguine, hoc facite quotienscumque biberitis in meam commemorationem. Quotienscumque enim ederitis panem istum et calicem biberitis, mortem domini adnuntiatis quoadusque ueniat.’” *Ep.* 63.10.1-2 (CCSL 3C:401-2).

(that is, to leave out the wine and use only water), is to depart from his divine teaching. Cyprian again alludes to these verses later in the letter: “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.”⁵⁹ Following Christ’s example, here transmitted through Paul, is central to Cyprian’s thought.

The apostles become models for dealing with heretical baptism in *Ep.* 73, Cyprian’s letter to Iubaianus on the subject. Whilst others may claim to be following the apostolic tradition, Cyprian alludes to Eph 4:4-5, along with the absence of scriptural evidence for the claimed tradition, to make his case:

For the apostles have handed down one Church only, and one baptism which is to be found only within that same Church;⁶⁰ nor can we discover one example of a person, originally baptized among heretics, who was afterwards received into the Church and admitted to communion by the apostles in virtue of that baptism. The apostles, we conclude, do not appear to have sanctioned the baptism of heretics.⁶¹

Paul’s words in Ephesians are therefore employed to describe the apostles’ practice. This practice, alongside Jesus’ own teaching and example as discussed above, provides the standard for Christian behaviour. In the same letter, Cyprian uses Paul as an example of the pardon granted to those who sin in ignorance, although it is directed against those who knowingly sin regarding heretical baptism:

If somebody wanders in honest error, then he can certainly be pardoned, just as the blessed apostle Paul says of himself: “I was at first a blasphemer, a persecutor, a wrongdoer, but because I acted in ignorance I obtained

⁵⁹ “Scriptura enim dicit ut quotienscumque calicem in commemorationem domini et passionis eius offerimus, id quod constat dominum fecisse faciamus.” *Ep.* 63.17.1 (CCSL 3C:413).

⁶⁰ Allusion to Eph 4:4-5.

⁶¹ “quando apostoli non nisi unam ecclesiam tradiderint et baptisma unum quod non nisi in eadem ecclesia sit constitutum, et neminem inueniamus ab apostolis, cum apud haereticos baptizatus esset, in eodem baptismo admissum esse et communicasse, ut uideantur apostoli baptisma haereticorum probasse.” *Ep.* 73.13.3 (CCSL 3C:544).

mercy.”⁶² But a man who wittingly and knowingly persists in his former error even after revelation and inspiration have been given, sins without the pardon granted to ignorance.⁶³

The apostles, by their actions, are models of rejecting heretical baptism; the forgiveness received by Paul for his sins in ignorance becomes a warning to those who continue in their error.

Rome and her bishop

When it comes to his relationship with Rome, Cyprian makes use of two very different models. Firstly, he alludes to Rom 1:8 in which Paul expresses his thanks to God for the Romans because their “faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”⁶⁴ This thanksgiving is used by Cyprian as a model for his Roman correspondents in order to praise and subtly direct them. In *Ep.* 59,⁶⁵ with what Clarke calls “a skilful blend of indignant expostulation and knowing flattery,”⁶⁶ Cyprian decries the audacity of heretics in setting up a pseudo-bishop and sending letters

even to the chair of Peter, to the primordial church, the very source of episcopal unity; and they do not stop to consider that they are carrying them to those same Romans whose faith was so praised and proclaimed by the Apostle, into whose company men without faith can, therefore, find no entry.⁶⁷

⁶² 1 Tim 1:13.

⁶³ “Ignosci enim potest simpliciter erranti, sicut de se ipso dicit beatus apostolus Paulus: ‘qui primo,’ inquit, ‘fui blasphemus et persecutor et iniuriosus, sed misericordiam merui, quia ignorans feci.’ Post inspirationem uero et reuelationem factam, qui in eo quod errauerat perseuerat prudens et sciens, sine uenia ignorantiae peccat.” *Ep.* 73.12.1, 13.1-2 (CCSL 3C:542-43).

⁶⁴ The Roman clergy had previously applied this statement to themselves. *Ep.* 30.2 (CCSL 3B:141). Note that the letter is from “the presbyters and deacons dwelling in Rome,” not Cyprian, as attributed in Gerald Bray, ed. *Romans*, ACCS (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998), 17.

⁶⁵ Dated to 252 by Clarke, *Letters*, 3:235.

⁶⁶ Clarke, *Letters*, 3:258 n. 70.

⁶⁷ “post ista adhuc insuper pseudoepiscopo sibi ab haereticis constituto nauigare audent et ad Petri cathedram atque ad ecclesiam principalem unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est a schismaticis et profanis

Cyprian is not here framing a doctrine on the primacy of Rome, and certainly not outlining a practice of appealing to Rome, as the following paragraph makes clear.⁶⁸ He is rather setting a standard for the Roman church—to admit Cyprian’s opponents would be to disown the faith for which their forefathers were praised.

The following year,⁶⁹ Cyprian writes in congratulation to Cornelius on the bishop of Rome’s confession, once more seeing the model of the primitive Roman church lived out in the present, taking on prophetic tones:

Brightly has there shone forth, dearly beloved brother, that faith which the blessed Apostle so extolled in you. Even in those days he could foresee through the Spirit this glorious valour we can see today, this resolute strength; by his heralding of the future he was in fact testifying to your meritorious achievements, by his praising the fathers he was in fact spurring on the sons.⁷⁰

Here Cyprian is set on singing Cornelius’ praises by invoking Paul’s words concerning the Roman church. In both of Cyprian’s uses, the Roman’s faith is not merely widely known, but praiseworthy and exemplary.

Cyprian develops a rather different model for the bishop of Rome in the context of his dispute with Stephen. Cyprian appropriates Paul’s reference to the confrontation between Peter and himself, recounted in Gal 2:11-14, and presents the apostles as models for bishops.⁷¹ The idea that the bishop of Rome was the successor of Peter was well established by Cyprian’s time—Cyprian himself argues in *De unitate* that the founding of the universal church on one man is a demonstration of its inherent unity.⁷²

litteras ferre nec cogitare eos esse Romanos quorum fides apostolo praedicante laudata est, ad quos perfidia habere non possit accessum.” *Ep.* 59.14.1 (CCSL 3C:361-62).

⁶⁸ *Ep.* 59.14.2 (CCSL 3C:362). Contra Bayard, *Correspondence*, 1:xlix.

⁶⁹ Clarke, *Letters*, 3:265.

⁷⁰ “Claruit, frater carissime, fides quam de uobis beatus apostolus praedicauit. Hanc laudem uirtutis et roboris firmitatem iam tunc in spiritu praeuidebat et praeconio futurorum merita uestra contestans dum parentes laudat filios prouocabat.” *Ep.* 60.2.1 (CCSL 3C:375).

⁷¹ Fahey refers to this incident in his section on Peter rather than including it under Acts or Galatians. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 610.

⁷² *Unit. eccl.* 4 (CCSL 3:251-52). This is the case in both versions of chapter 4.

This identification of the bishop of Rome with Peter would appear to be a liability in Cyprian's dispute with Stephen over heretical baptism, which he regards as no baptism at all. The bishop of Carthage turns it to his advantage, however, in his argument in *Ep.* 71.

Cyprian uses the encounter between Peter and Paul to demonstrate that Peter should not be pictured as a model of authority, nor as the proponent of an infallible tradition, but rather as an example of one willing to be persuaded,⁷³ an "object lesson in harmony and forbearance."⁷⁴ The one on whom the Lord built his church,⁷⁵ did not, and by implication Stephen should not, show any "arrogant pretensions" or "assert the rights of seniority."⁷⁶ The one who now sits in his place should follow his example and yield to reason which conforms to truth and justice.⁷⁷ Although he does not explicitly claim it, Cyprian here identifies himself with Paul, the one who brings the necessary correction for the sake of the gospel.⁷⁸

Cyprian therefore uses a variety of models in his discussion of the sacraments, the ministry and Rome. Paul, in quoting the Lord's words of institution, is an unsurprising choice for a discussion of the Eucharist; Cyprian's use of Abraham is part of a more complex typology involving Melchizedek and the people of God. Paul and the apostles are standard exemplars, and here they are employed against heretical baptism and its supporters. The self-understanding of the Romans—as inheritors of the faith of their predecessors, and of the bishop of Rome as the successor of Peter—is used by Cyprian

⁷³ See Haendler, "Cyprians Auslegung zu Gal 2,11ff," 562-64.

⁷⁴ "documentum scilicet nobis et concordiae et patientiae tribuens." *Ep.* 71.3.1 (CCSL 3C:520).

⁷⁵ "Petrus quem primum dominus elegit et super quem aedificauit ecclesiam suam." *Ep.* 71.3.1 (CCSL 3C:519).

⁷⁶ "Nam nec Petrus ... uindicauit sibi aliquid insolenter aut adroganter adsumpsit, ut diceret se primum tenere." *Ep.* 71.3.1 (CCSL 3C:519-20).

⁷⁷ *Ep.* 71.3.1 (CCSL 3C:520).

⁷⁸ Augustine manages to take this discussion of Cyprian's and use it for the opposite purpose, namely, the acceptance of heretical baptism rather than its rejection in *Bapt.* 2.1 (CSEL 51:174-76). See the discussion by Geoffrey D. Dunn, "Augustine's Use of the Pauline Portrayal of Peter in Galatians 2," *AugStud* 46 (2015): 34-39.

both to praise and to direct. Bishops, following Peter, should be prepared to learn, modelling concord and patience.

3.2 Image

Cyprian's use of images drawn from Song of Songs to represent the church is well known.⁷⁹ However, Cyprian's use of Pauline metaphors to assert the unity of the church, and the invalidity of baptism outside it, is equally noteworthy. At times, he is not satisfied with using just one, but creatively combines a number of them to substantiate his argument. Cyprian also applies vivid expressions to describe those who threaten the unity he seeks.

Being clothed with Christ⁸⁰ is used three times by Cyprian in relation to the unity of the church. Firstly, in *De unitate*, Cyprian opens the treatise with a reference to putting on Christ, the Wisdom of God the Father.⁸¹ Christians should therefore be alert to the deceptive wiles of the devil in promoting schism. Later in the text, Cyprian discusses the meaning of the fact that Jesus' coat was not divided on the cross, making a play on words. The garment symbolises "oneness"—you cannot have it if you attempt to divide it.⁸² It demonstrates that "we, who have put on Christ, form a people knit together in harmony. By the sacred symbolism of His garment was proclaimed the oneness of the Church."⁸³

Finally, in his letter to Pompeius rejecting the validity of heretical baptism, Cyprian uses the image of being clothed with Christ in conjunction with that of the temple. He had already used the image of the temple in *Ep.* 69, stating that those who come over from "adversaries and antichrists"⁸⁴ must be baptised in order to "receive the

⁷⁹ See, for example, Tilley, *Bible in Christian North Africa*, 33.

⁸⁰ Gal 3:17.

⁸¹ "ne qui Christum sapientiam Dei Patris induimur minus sapere in tuenda salute uideamur?" *Unit. eccl.* 1 (CCSL 3:249). This allusion is not noted by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 475-76. Likewise, I overlooked it in Murphy, "Divine Ordinances," 87.

⁸² *Unit. eccl.* 7 (CCSL 3:254).

⁸³ "ostendit populi nostri, qui Christum induimus, concordiam cohaerentem; sacramento uestis et signo declarauit ecclesiae unitatem." *Unit. eccl.* 7 (CCSL 3:255).

⁸⁴ "ab aduersariis et antichristis."

forgiveness of sins, to be sanctified, and to become temples of God.”⁸⁵ Likewise, in *Ep.* 73, he makes the point that if baptism among heretics were valid, they would, via the same process, become temples of God. But that is not possible, given that they do not believe in the triune God.⁸⁶ In *Ep.* 74, he combines the two images to make his point that baptism “can be separated neither from the Church nor from the Holy Spirit.”⁸⁷

If it is possible for a man born outside the Church to become a temple of God, why should it not also be possible for the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon that temple? One who, having cast off his sins in baptism, has been sanctified and formed spiritually into a new man, has certainly been made fit for receiving the Holy Spirit. As the Apostle says: “All of you who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ.”⁸⁸ 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.⁸⁹

So here the “putting on of Christ” supports his argument that heretical baptism is invalid as, if it had any efficacy outside the church, the one so baptised would also have received the Holy Spirit.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ “peccatorum remissionem consequi et sanctificari ac templa dei fieri possint.” *Ep.* 69.11.3 (CCSL 3C:486).

⁸⁶ *Ep.* 73.12.1 (CCSL 3C:542-43).

⁸⁷ “baptisma ... separari neque ab ecclesia neque a sancto spiritu potest.” *Ep.* 74.5.2 (CCSL 3C:569-70).

⁸⁸ Gal 3:27.

⁸⁹ “Nam si potest quis extra ecclesiam natus templum dei fieri, cur non possit super templum et spiritus sanctus infundi? Qui enim peccatis in baptismo expositis sanctificatus est et in nouum hominem spiritualiter reformatus, ad accipiendum spiritum sanctum idoneus factus est, quando apostolus dicat: ‘quotquot in Christo baptizati estis, Christum induistis.’ Qui potest apud haereticos baptizatus Christum induere, multo magis potest spiritum sanctum quem Christus misit accipere.” *Ep.* 74.5.2-3 (CCSL 3C:569-70).

⁹⁰ Clarke believes that for Stephen, the laying-on of hands when heretics join the catholic church is a symbol of repentance, whereas for Cyprian it is the means by which they receive the Holy Spirit. Clarke, *Letters*, 4:241 n. 17. Brent claims that there is no “imposition of episcopal hands, as the completion of the penitential rite” before Cyprian. Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 266. However, this does not make sense of Stephen’s practice.

A noteworthy use of this image of the temple, in conjunction with that of believers' bodies as members of Christ, appears in *Ep.* 55. In the immediate context, it could be considered a disciplinary use: "Furthermore, as our bodies are members of Christ⁹¹ and we are, each of us, a temple of God, whoever by adultery violates that temple of God violates God."⁹² But in continuing, "And whoever in committing sin does the will of the devil is being a slave to demons and their idols,"⁹³ Cyprian is not simply emphasising the evil of idolatry, but demonstrating that adulterers are idolators.⁹⁴ Consequently, the Novatianists cannot pride themselves on their purity—they too have idolators amongst them.⁹⁵ There is therefore no reason to withdraw from the unity of the church.

Another important image for Cyprian in this area is the church as the bride of Christ, drawing on Eph 5:31-32: "Now the Apostle Paul says: 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and they will be two in one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.'"⁹⁶ The apostle thereby bears witness to the indissoluble unity of Christ and the church. Anyone who does not dwell within the church, the bride of Christ, cannot dwell with Christ. The image is further developed in *Ep.* 74, where it is combined with those of putting off the old man, the washing of rebirth, and Christians as sons of God, weaving them together into one glorious whole:

⁹¹ 1 Cor 6:15

⁹² Here, the words of 1 Cor 3:16-17 and the words and context of 1 Corinthians 6 are fused. "Nam cum corpora nostra membra sint Christi et singuli simus templum dei, quisque adulterio templum dei uiolat deum uiolat." *Ep.* 55.27.2 (CCSL 3B:290). 1 Cor 6:15-17, 1 Cor 7:39-40 and 2 Cor 6:14 are cited in support of the testimony, "Matrimonium cum gentilibus non iungendum." *Test.* 3.62 (CCSL 3:153-54).

⁹³ "et qui in peccatis committendis uoluntatem diaboli facit daemioniis et idolis seruit." *Ep.* 55.27.2 (CCSL 3B:290).

⁹⁴ For his use of Eph 5:5 and Col 3:5-6 here, see section 3.6 below.

⁹⁵ Clarke notes the rhetorical move here, from demonstrating that adultery is worse than idolatry (being freely chosen, not under compulsion), to claiming that adultery is, in fact, idolatry. Clarke, *Letters*, 3:202 n. 121.

⁹⁶ Eph 5:31-32. "Nam cum Paulus apostolus dicat: 'propter hoc relinquet homo patrem et matrem, et erunt duo in carne una. Sacramentum istud magnum est, ego autem dico in Christum et in ecclesiam.'" *Ep.* 52.1.3 (CCSL 3B:244-45). As Fahey notes, Cyprian omits "and be joined to his wife" (NRSV), as does Tertullian in *Marc.* 5.18.9 (CCSL 1:719). Fahey, *Cyprian*, 491, 665 n. 42.

Moreover, how can they possibly assert and maintain that one may become a son of God⁹⁷ without having been born within the Church? For it is in baptism that the old man dies and the new man is born,⁹⁸ as the blessed Apostle makes manifestly clear and proves when he says: “He has saved us through the washing of rebirth.”⁹⁹ Now if rebirth is in this washing, that is to say, in baptism, how can heresy, which is not the bride of Christ, give birth to sons, through Christ, to God? It is the Church alone, being joined and united to Christ, who spiritually gives birth to sons, as the same Apostle once again says: “Christ loved the Church and He gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, washing and cleansing her by water.”¹⁰⁰ And so, if she is His beloved, the bride who alone is sanctified by Christ and alone is cleansed by His washing, then obviously heresy, being no bride of Christ and incapable of being cleansed or sanctified by His washing, is also incapable of giving birth to sons to God.¹⁰¹

Cyprian therefore concludes that only the church is able to bear sons of God: “If a man is to have God for Father, he must first have the Church for mother.”¹⁰² Cyprian had

⁹⁷ Allusion to Rom 8:14-17, not noted by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 429-30.

⁹⁸ Allusion to Eph 4:22-24 or Rom 6:6. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 429. Eph 4:22-24 is cited in *Test.* 3.11 (CCSL 3:102): “Eum qui fidem consecutus est exposito priore homine caelestia tantum et spiritalia cogitare debere nec adtendere ad saeculum, cui iam renuntiauit.” This testimony occasionally alludes to baptism but does not specifically mention it. The image of the old man is used in a similar way, albeit in a disciplinary context, in *Hab. virg.* 23 (CSEL 3.1:204), discussed in chapter 4.

⁹⁹ Tit 3:5b.

¹⁰⁰ Eph 5:25b-26.

¹⁰¹ “Quale est autem adserere et contendere quod esse possint filii dei qui non sint in ecclesia nati? Baptisma enim esse in quo homo uetus moritur et nouus nascitur manifestat et probat beatus apostolus dicens: ‘seruauit nos per lauacrum regenerationis.’ Si autem in lauacro id est in baptismo est regeneratio, quomodo generare filios deo haeresis per Christum potest quae Christi sponsa non est? Ecclesia est enim sola quae Christo coniuncta et adunata spiritaliter filios generat eodem apostolo rursus dicente: ‘Christus dilexit ecclesiam et se ipsum tradidit pro ea ut eam sanctificaret, purgans eam lauacro aquae.’ Si igitur haec est dilecta et sponsa quae sola a Christo sanctificatur et lauacro eius sola purgatur, manifestum est haeresim, quae sponsa Christi non sit nec purgari nec sanctificari lauacro eius possit, filios deo generare non posse.” *Ep.* 74.6.1-2 (CCSL 3C:570-71).

¹⁰² “Ut habere quis possit deum patrem, habeat ante ecclesiam matrem.” *Ep.* 74.7.2 (CCSL 3C:572).

already quoted Eph 5:25b-26 in *Ep.* 69 to Magnus,¹⁰³ with the same argument and almost identical wording.¹⁰⁴ In both cases, he omits the final words of v 26, “in the word,”¹⁰⁵ as that would distract from his focus on baptism. Rather, he uses the Pauline images of sons, brides and the washing of rebirth to develop the controlling image of the *Mater Ecclesia*.¹⁰⁶

Also in *Ep.* 69, Cyprian responds to those who question the full validity of clinical baptism, as some recipients are still “assaulted by unclean spirits.”¹⁰⁷ Cyprian demonstrates that the devil is in fact overcome in the sacrament, appropriating Paul’s identification of the sea of the Exodus with baptism and extending the imagery. So, although Pharaoh struggled for a long time, he was not just defeated on reaching the water, but destroyed:

Now that sea was the sacred prefigurement of baptism, as the blessed apostle Paul declares when he says: “I would not have you ignorant, my brothers, that all our fathers were under the cloud,¹⁰⁸ and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized in Moses both in the cloud and in the sea.” To which he added the words: “All these things came to pass as symbols for us.”¹⁰⁹... Hence we can plainly see that in baptism the devil is driven out by the faith of the

¹⁰³ In conjunction with Song 6:9, 12 and 1 Pet 3:20-21. *Ep.* 69.2.1-2 (CCSL 3C:471-72).

¹⁰⁴ “Sed et Paulus apostolus hoc idem adhuc apertius et clarius manifestans ad Ephesios scribit et dicit: [cites Eph 5:25b-26]. Quod si una est ecclesia quae a Christo diligitur et lauacro eius sola purgatur, quomodo qui in ecclesia non est aut diligi a Christo aut ablui et purgari lauacro eius potest?” *Ep.* 69.2.3 (CCSL 3C:473).

¹⁰⁵ Greek: ἐν ρήματι; Vulgate: “in uerbo uitae.”

¹⁰⁶ The image of the church as mother is present in Tertullian, *Or.* 2 (CCSL 1:258). For a discussion of the term in Cyprian, see Joseph C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia: An Inquiry into the Concept of the Church as Mother* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1943), 81-106.

¹⁰⁷ “qui aegri baptizantur spiritibus adhuc inmundis temptabantur.” *Ep.* 69.15.1 (CCSL 3C:493).

¹⁰⁸ This use of the cloud differs from that in *Test.* 1.4 where it functioned as a veil that prevented the Jews from understanding the Scriptures. See discussion in chapter 2.2 above.

¹⁰⁹ 1 Cor 10:1-2, 6.

believer and that he comes back again if that faith should subsequently falter.¹¹⁰

The devil is not only imagined as the rebellious Pharaoh, but also as an angel of light. In *De unitate*, Cyprian warns his congregation against the wily devil, who not only attacks openly in persecution, but insidiously, using the name of Christian, seeking to destroy the unity of the church. He uses imagery drawn from 2 Corinthians 11 to make his point:

The Enemy cajoles and deceives them; as the Apostle says, he transforms himself into an angel of light, and primes his servants to act as the servants of justice,¹¹¹ to call the night day, and damnation salvation, to teach recklessness under the pretext of hope, disbelief under colour of the faith, Antichrist under the name of Christ, so that by lies that have all the appearance of truth, they undermine the truth with trickery.¹¹²

This threat to unity is made manifest in the schism of Novatian. In two letters dated to 251,¹¹³ Cyprian employs the image of the vessels of different materials, both times combining it with the wheat and tares of Matt 13:25. In his letter to the returning Roman confessors,¹¹⁴ he introduces the reference to 2 Tim 2:20 with a claim that there is no point leaving the church because there are tares within it, rather one should strive to be wheat:¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ “Mare autem illud sacramentum baptismi fuisse declarat beatus apostolus Paulus dicens: ‘nolo enim uos ignorare, fratres, quia patres nostri omnes sub nube fuerunt, et omnes per mare transierunt, et omnes in Moyse baptizati sunt et in nube et in mari.’ Et addidit dicens: ‘haec autem omnia figurae nostrae fuerunt.’ ... ut manifestum sit diabolus in baptismo fide credentis excludi, si fides postmodum defecerit regredi.” *Ep.* 69.15.1, 16.1 (CCSL 3C:493, 495).

¹¹¹ 2 Cor 11:14-15.

¹¹² “blandiente aduersario adque fallente qui, secundum apostoli uocem, transfigurat se uelut angelum lucis, et ministros subornat suos uelut ministros iustitiae, adserentes noctem pro die, interitum pro salute, desperationem sub obtentu spei, perfidiam sub praetexto fidei, antichristum sub uocabulo Christi; ut dum uerisimilia mentiuntur, ueritatem subtilitate frustrentur.” *Unit. eccl.* 3 (CCSL 3:250-51).

¹¹³ Clarke, *Letters*, 2:295, 3:159-60.

¹¹⁴ Not the African bishops mentioned by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 513.

¹¹⁵ *Ep.* 54.3.1 (CCSL 3B:253-54).

The Apostle declares in his epistle: “In a great household there are not only vessels of gold and silver, there are also vessels of wood and clay: and some are vessels for noble use, others for ignoble.” It is up to us to struggle and strive to become vessels of gold and silver, but it is the prerogative of the Lord alone to smash the vessels of clay. It is into His hands that the rod of iron has been placed.¹¹⁶

Cyprian follows by calling Novatian presumptuous for thinking he can separate the wheat from the tares.¹¹⁷ Again in *Ep.* 55,¹¹⁸ Cyprian begins by criticising him for this arrogance, before citing 2 Tim 2:20. Despite the apostle’s words, Novatian thinks he can “despise, condemn, and cast away the vessels that are of wood and of clay.”¹¹⁹ In fact, it is only on the day of the Lord that the wooden vessels are to be consumed by divine fire, and the vessels of clay smashed by the Lord with his rod of iron. The Lord will judge. Noteworthy in this context is that there is no sense of predestination in Cyprian’s thought—people must strive to be the wheat and the vessels of gold and silver; their fate is not preordained.

In the same letter, Cyprian uses the image of the bond of peace to demonstrate that, because he has separated from the church, Novatian could no longer be a bishop even if he had been appointed first: “For the Apostle does warn us to give support to one another lest we depart from that unity which God has established. To quote his own words: ‘Supporting one another in love, striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the

¹¹⁶ “Apostolus in epistula sua dicit: ‘in domo autem magna non solum uasa sunt aurea et argentea, sed et lignea et fictilia, et quaedam quidem honorata, quaedam inhonorata.’ Nos operam demus et quantum possumus laboremus ut uas aureum uel argenteum simus. Ceterum fictilia uasa confringere domino soli concessum est cui et uirga ferrea data est.” *Ep.* 54.3.1 (CCSL 3B:254).

¹¹⁷ *Ep.* 54.3.2 (CCSL 3B:254).

¹¹⁸ Clarke notes the great number of scriptural references in this letter: “The *biblical* level at which the case is argued in this letter is remarkable; there are nearly thirty direct biblical quotations and some twenty more biblical allusions.” Clarke, *Letters*, 3:163.

¹¹⁹ “lignea uero et fictilia contemnere, abicere, damnare.” *Ep.* 55.25.2 (CCSL 3B:288).

bond of peace.”¹²⁰ To sever the bond, rather than to maintain it, is to relinquish the power and dignity of a bishop.¹²¹

The image had previously appeared in *De unitate* in conjunction with 1 Cor 1:10.¹²² Cyprian demonstrates the importance of unity, asking “Do you think a man can hold his own or survive, when he leaves the Church and sets up a new place and a separate home for himself?”¹²³ Years later, in his letter to the bishops and others condemned to the mine, Cyprian asks for their prayers that both they and the whole church might complete their confession and be rescued from this world: “That we who have here taken our stand side by side facing the assaults of heretics and the persecutions of pagans, united together by the bonds of charity and peace,¹²⁴ may together rejoice in the realms of heaven.”¹²⁵ The battle is not only against pagans, but heretics. Cyprian presents the church as united by those bonds which the schismatics have broken. In *De zelo et livore*, Cyprian also uses the image to warn of the danger of jealousy, for by it “the bond of the Lord’s peace is broken.”¹²⁶

The evil influence of those seeking to destroy unity and peace is depicted by an image from 2 Tim 2:17: “Their speech spreads like a cancer.”¹²⁷ Cyprian first uses it to support the testimony, “We must not speak with heretics,”¹²⁸ and he continues to use it for those

¹²⁰ Eph 4:2b-3.

¹²¹ “Episcopatum autem tenere non posset, etiam si episcopus prius factus a coepiscoporum suorum corpore et ab ecclesiae unitate descisceret, quando apostolus admoneat ut inuicem nosmet ipsos sustineamus, ne ab unitate quam deus constituit recedamus, et dicat: ‘sustinentes inuicem in dilectione, satis agentes seruare unitatem spiritus in coniunctione pacis.’” *Ep.* 55.24.4 (CCSL 3B:286-87).

¹²² Discussed in section 3.6 below.

¹²³ “Stare tu et uiuere putas posse de ecclesia recedentem, sedes sibi alias et diuersa domicilia condentem.” *Unit. eccl.* 8 (CCSL 3:255).

¹²⁴ Allusion to Eph 4:2b-3.

¹²⁵ “petite inpensius et rogate ut confessionem omnium nostrum dignatio diuina consummet, ut de istis tenebris et laqueis mundi nos quoque uobis cum integros et gloriosos deus liberet, ut qui hic caritatis et pacis uinculo copulati contra haeticorum iniurias et pressuras gentilium simul stetimus pariter in regnis caelestibus gaudeamus.” *Ep.* 76.7.3 (CCSL 3C:616-17).

¹²⁶ “dominicae pacis uinculum rumpitur.” *Zel. liv.* 6 (CCSL 3A:78).

¹²⁷ “Sermo eorum ut cancer serpit.”

¹²⁸ “Cum hereticis non loquendum.” *Test.* 3.78 (CCSL 3:161). Also cited are Tit 3:10-11 (attributed to Colossians), and 1 John 2:9.

who would break away from the church. So, in *De lapsis*, he counsels the congregation to avoid unrepentant sinners who are joining the schism, extending the image: “Their talk spreads like a cancer, their conversation is as catching as an infection, their poisonous and pernicious propaganda is more deadly than was the persecution itself.”¹²⁹ Again, in *De unitate*, he applies the term to those who appoint themselves as bishop, once more using the image of contagion and poison:

In the Psalms the Holy Spirit describes these men as sitting in the chair of pestilence;¹³⁰ they are pests and plagues to the faith, snake-tongued deceivers, skilled corruptors of the truth, spewing deadly venom from their poisonous fangs; whose speech spreads like a [cancer]; whose preaching injects a fatal virus in the hearts and breasts of all.¹³¹

The image reappears in *Ep.* 43 when Cyprian warns his congregation regarding Felicissimus, who would gather elsewhere (which is in fact to scatter): “Flee the contagion of such men, shun their words like a [cancer], like the plague.”¹³² Again, Cyprian uses the expression in *Ep.* 59, advising Cornelius’ flock in Rome to avoid conversation with schismatics, particularly Felicissimus and Fortunatus, as their “speech spreads like a cancer.”¹³³

Finally, in *Ep.* 73, Cyprian uses the image to make a point about the apostles’ views on heretics, and the impossibility of such people being able to forgive sins. He joins the image of 2 Tim 2:17 with an allusion to 2 Cor 6:14:

¹²⁹ “Sermo eorum sicut cancer serpit, conloquium uelut contagium transilit, noxia et uenenata persuasio persecutione ipsa peius interficit.” *Laps.* 34 (CCSL 3:240).

¹³⁰ Cf. Ps 1:1. Note the Latin “pestilentialiae,” following the LXX λοιμῶν.

¹³¹ “quos designat in Psalmis Spiritus sanctus: ‘sedentes in pestilentialiae cathedra’: pestes et lues fidei, serpentes ore fallentes et corrumpendae ueritatis artifices, uenena letalia linguis pestiferis euomentes; quorum sermo ut cancer serpit, quorum tractatus pectoribus et cordibus singulorum mortale uirus infundit.” *Unit. eccl.* 10 (CCSL 3:256-57).

¹³² “Procul ab huiusmodi hominum contagione discedite et sermones eorum uelut cancer et pestem fugiendo uitate.” *Ep.* 43.5.2 (CCSL 3B:205-6).

¹³³ *Ep.* 59.20.1 (CCSL 3C:372).

Thus, they say of their words that they spread like a [cancer]; how, then, are such words able to give forgiveness of sins when they spread, like a [cancer], to the ears of those who hear them? Again, they say that there can be no partnership between justice and iniquity, no communion between light and darkness;¹³⁴ how, then, is darkness able to enlighten, iniquity to justify?¹³⁵

In developing this image, Cyprian allies cancerous speech with other images of contagion. The toxic deception of the schismatics and heretics is opposed to the purity of the divine truth, found within the one church.

In only one letter does Cyprian use the image of a soldier, so often employed in exhortations to all Christians, to specifically refer to bishops. *Ep.* 1 concerns the posthumous discipline of Geminius Victor, who had appointed a presbyter as his guardian. The argument is *ad maiorem*:

Everyone honoured with the sacred priesthood and appointed to clerical office ought to dedicate himself exclusively to altar and sacrifices and devote himself entirely to prayer and supplication. For it is written: “No soldier fighting in God’s service entangles himself in the anxieties of this world, thereby enabling himself to be free to please Him who enlisted him.”¹³⁶

Given that all Christians are to be so devoted, this text applies even more so to the clergy. As Cyprian continues his argument, he again refers to ministers not being distracted by worldly affairs and anxieties.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Allusion to 2 Cor 6:14. The text is also used in support of the testimony, “Matrimonium cum gentilibus non iungendum.” *Test.* 3.62 (CCSL 3:153-54).

¹³⁵ “Nam cum dicant sermonem eorum ut cancer serpere, quomodo potest is sermo dare remissam peccatorum qui ut cancer serpit ad aures audientium? Et cum dicant nullam participationem esse iustitiae et iniquitati, nullam communionem lumini et tenebris, quomodo possunt aut tenebrae inluminare aut iniquitas iustificare?” *Ep.* 73.15.1 (CCSL 3C:546).

¹³⁶ 2 Tim 2:4. “quando singuli diuino sacerdotio honorati et in clerico ministerio constituti non nisi altari et sacrificiis deseruire et precibus atque orationibus uacare debeant. Scriptum est enim: ‘nemo militans deo obligat se molestiis saecularibus, ut possit placere ei qui se probauit.’” *Ep.* 1.1.1 (CCSL 3B:1-2).

¹³⁷ “molestiis et laqueis saecularibus obligari,” “molestiis et negotiis saecularibus.” *Ep.* 1.1.2 (CCSL 3B:2, 3). “saeculares molestiis.” *Ep.* 1.2.2 (CCSL 3B:5).

Some of the images Cyprian uses regarding the unity of the church are therefore in common with those used regarding divine truth—the soldier, the temple, vessels of gold and silver, sons of God, and being clothed with Christ—exploiting different aspects of these images. Others are unique to this aspect of his thought: the sea of Exodus as baptism, the bond of peace, the devil as an angel of light, and the speech which spreads like a cancer. Particularly developed is the imagery of the church as the bride of Christ, and that of washing and rebirth.

3.3 Maxim

Cyprian uses two Pauline texts dealing with speech when teaching how to avoid heretics, and outlining a bishop's responsibility in such matters. In *Ep.* 59, following on from the image of the speech which spreads like a cancer, Cyprian employs a maxim to further warn against consorting with heretics: "As the Apostle says: 'Evil talk corrupts good characters.'"¹³⁸ Cyprian had used the same saying in *De unitate*, exhorting the congregation to avoid those who have left the church, and to protect their ears from their "baleful conversation as from some deadly plague."¹³⁹ Combining different reading strategies, in this case image and maxim, is typical of Cyprian's practice.

In *Ep.* 45, Cyprian defends how he handled the recognition of Cornelius as the rightful bishop of Rome.¹⁴⁰ One proof of his proper behaviour is that he only read out to the congregation the letter of Cornelius, not that of his opponents. It is, in fact, the duty of a bishop to repudiate unsubstantiated rumours, rather than to publicise them. This is supported by three quotations on avoiding evil speech,¹⁴¹ the last of which is Eph 4:29: "Let no evil speech proceed out of your mouth but only good, for the building up of

¹³⁸ 1 Cor 15:33. Also cited in support of the testimony, "Bonis conuiuendum, malos autem uitandos." *Test.* 3.95 (CCSL 3:168). "sicut apostolus dicit: 'corrumpunt ingenia bona confabulationes pessimae.'" *Ep.* 59.20.1 (CCSL 3C:372).

¹³⁹ "perniciosa conloquia uelut contagium mortis." *Unit. eccl.* 17 (CCSL 3:262).

¹⁴⁰ He is not, as Fahey claims, encouraging Cornelius not to be led astray. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 488.

¹⁴¹ The first two being Ps 33:14 and Ps 49:19-20.

faith, that it may give grace to those who hear it.”¹⁴² Reading out “such wild and defamatory invectives”¹⁴³ would rather promote evil talk.

Other maxims are used with regard to baptism. In *Ep.* 64, Cyprian and the council of bishops address the withholding of baptism from infants. Bishop Fidus has claimed that the foot of a new-born infant is not clean and that the thought of kissing it is repugnant.¹⁴⁴ But this is no reason to stand in the way of heavenly grace, according to the bishops: “For it is written: ‘To the clean all things are clean.’”¹⁴⁵ Another point in favour of not delaying baptism is the idea, almost a maxim, that God does not show favouritism, as expressed in Rom 2:11, Eph 6:9 and Gal 2:6. Baptism should not be withheld until the eighth day as “the Holy Spirit is not measured out but is conferred equally upon all through the bounty and loving-kindness of the Father.”¹⁴⁶ The concept is reprised in the discussion of clinical baptism in *Ep.* 69, Cyprian’s letter to Magnus.¹⁴⁷ In both cases grace is equally distributed with no regard to age¹⁴⁸—and in the second instance, with no regard to gender either¹⁴⁹—because God is no respecter of persons. Baptism is therefore appropriate for infants.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, those who have only been

¹⁴² Eph 4:29. “omnis sermo malus de ore uestro non procedat, sed bonus ad aedificationem fidei, ut det gratiam audientibus.” *Ep.* 45.2.4 (CCSL 3B:219). This verse is also used, along with Rom 12:14b, “Benedictes et non maledicentes,” in support of the testimony, “Non maledicendum.” *Test.* 3.13 (CCSL 3:104).

¹⁴³ “quando talia quorundam calumniosa temeritate.” *Ep.* 45.2.4 (CCSL 3B:219).

¹⁴⁴ For discussion, see Clarke, *Letters*, 3:303-5, 309-11 n. 12.

¹⁴⁵ Titus 1:15a. “Scriptum est enim: ‘omnia munda sunt mundis.’” *Ep.* 64.4.1 (CCSL 3C:421-22).

¹⁴⁶ “cum spiritus sanctus non de mensura sed de pietate atque indulgentia paterna aequalis omnibus praebeatur.” *Ep.* 64.3.2 (CCSL 3C:421). This allusion is not mentioned by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 425.

¹⁴⁷ *Ep.* 69.14.2 (CCSL 3C:492).

¹⁴⁸ “Nam deus ut personam non accipit, sic nec aetatem, cum se omnibus ad caelestis gratiae consecutionem aequalitate librata praebeat patrem.” *Ep.* 64.3.2 (CCSL 3C:421).

¹⁴⁹ “Vnde apparebat Christi indulgentiam et caelestem gratiam postmodum secuturam aequaliter omnibus diuidi sine sexus uarietate, sine annorum discrimine, sine acceptione personae, super omnem dei populum spiritalis gratiae munus infundi.” *Ep.* 69.14.2 (CCSL 3C:492).

¹⁵⁰ This letter also contains a possible allusion to Eph 1:7, “the remission of sins,” which is granted even to those who have frequently sinned prior to becoming believers. Therefore, it should not be withheld from infants who have not sinned, “nisi quod secundum Adam carnaliter natus contagium mortis antiquae prima natiuitate contraxit, qui ad remissam peccatorum accipiendam hoc ipso facilius accedit quod illi remittuntur non propria sed aliena peccata.” *Ep.* 64.5.2 (CCSL 3C:424-25).

baptised by sprinkling rather than immersion still have the full measure of Christ's mercy. In the letter on infant baptism, God is twice designated as Father; in *Ep.* 69, continuing the image of Israel in the desert, grace, like manna, is given to all God's people.

3.4 Title

Twice in *De unitate*, Cyprian refers to Christ using the title from 1 Cor 1:24.¹⁵¹ In the opening of the letter, he warns the congregation that they must be on guard against the wiles of the devil, especially in times of peace when his snares are not so apparent as in times of persecution: "Otherwise, after putting on Christ¹⁵² who is the Wisdom of God the Father, we may be found to have failed in wisdom for the care of our souls."¹⁵³ Later in the letter, Cyprian enjoins humility on the confessors by emphasising the humility of Christ despite his majesty as "the Word and the power and the wisdom of God His Father."¹⁵⁴

A title used not to refer to Christ, but rather to heretics, is drawn from Tit 3:11: perverse and self-condemned. Cyprian first uses it in *De unitate*: "Whoever is separated from the Church must be avoided and fled from; such a man is [perverse], he is a sinner and self-condemned."¹⁵⁵ It then frequently appears in letters in the debate over heretical baptism. In *Ep.* 59, Cyprian quotes Titus 3:10-11 directly: "After you have admonished the heretic once, avoid him, recognising that a man of that sort has a perverted mind and that he has condemned himself in his sin."¹⁵⁶ The title is repeated in *Ep.* 69: "And the

¹⁵¹ The title "Wisdom of God" is also in the heading of *Test.* 2.1 (CCSL 3:28), Cyprian citing 1 Cor 1:22-24 as support, and in the heading of *Test.* 2.2 (CCSL 3:30).

¹⁵² Allusion to Gal 3:27, discussed in section 3.2 above.

¹⁵³ "ne qui Christum sapientiam Dei Patris induimur minus sapere in tuenda salute uideamur?" *Unit. eccl.* 1 (CCSL 3:249).

¹⁵⁴ "sermo et uirtus et sapientia Dei Patris." *Unit. eccl.* 21 (CCSL 3:264).

¹⁵⁵ "Auersandus est talis adque fugiendus quisque fuerit ab ecclesia separatus: peruersus est huiusmodi et peccat, et est a semetipso damnatus." *Unit. eccl.* 17 (CCSL 3:262).

¹⁵⁶ Tit 3:10-11. "haereticum hominem post unam correptionem euita, sciens quia peruersus est huiusmodi et peccat et est a semet ipso damnatus." *Ep.* 59.20.1 (CCSL 3C:372). Tit 3:10-11 is also cited (wrongly, "ad Colosenses") in *Test.* 3.78 (CCSL 3:161). Both citations omit "or twice," as do Augustine and Ambrosiaster. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 518. The Vulgate, however, reads: "post unam et secundam correptionem

apostle Paul explains all this clearly by directing us to shun heretics as perverted, sinful, and self-condemned.”¹⁵⁷ Cyprian combines it with an allusion to the Church as Paradise, and its rivers as baptism,¹⁵⁸ in *Ep.* 73: “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?”¹⁵⁹ It appears again in *Ep.* 74, where the idea of condemnation is particularly prominent:

If, on the other hand, heretics are everywhere in those works termed nothing but adversaries and antichrists, if it is there declared that they are to be shunned as perverted and self-condemned, how is it that they should be thought as not meriting condemnation by us when it is clear from the testimony of the Apostle that they already stand condemned by themselves?¹⁶⁰

Christians must therefore choose between embracing the salvation offered by the one who is the wisdom of God, or going astray by listening to those who are perverted and self-condemned.

devita.” Tertullian also omits “or twice,” further emphasising that the means of dealing with heretics is “admonition” not “discussion”: “fides nostra obsequium apostolo debeat prohibenti quaestiones inire, nouis uocibus aures accommodare, haereticum post unam correptionem conuenire, non post disputationem.” *Praescr.* 16.1 (CCSL 1:199-200).

¹⁵⁷ “Quod apostolus Paulus explanat docens et praecipiens haereticum uitandum esse ut peruersum et peccatorem et a semet ipso damnatum.” *Ep.* 69.4.2 (CCSL 3C:475).

¹⁵⁸ The four rivers are at the same time identified as the four Gospels. *Ep.* 73.10.3 (CCSL 3C:540).

¹⁵⁹ “Numquid paradisi potus salubres et salutare inperire cuiquam potest qui peruersus et a semet ipso damnatus et extra paradisi fontes relegatus aruit et aeternae sitis siccitate defecit?” *Ep.* 73.10.3 (CCSL 3C:541).

¹⁶⁰ “Si uero ubique haeretici nihil aliud quam aduersarii et antichristi nominantur, si uitandi et peruersi et a semet ipsis damnati pronuntiantur, quale est ut uideantur damnandi a nobis non esse quos constet apostolica contestatione a semet ipsis damnatos esse?” *Ep.* 74.2.3 (CCSL 3C:566). Firmilian’s letter also alludes to Tit 3:11. *Ep.* 75.5-6 (CCSL 3C:586-87).

3.5 Contextual exegesis

In *Ep.* 73, Cyprian responds to a request from Jubaianus to outline his thoughts on heretical baptism. After providing a number of proofs to support his position that there is no baptism outside the church, he addresses those who make use of Phil 1:8:¹⁶¹

Some also repeat the words of the apostle Paul as if they were relevant support for heretics: “Nevertheless, in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, let Christ be proclaimed.” But in these words, too, we can find nothing that can assist the advocacy of those who are supporters and partisans of heretics. In this epistle of his, Paul was not speaking of heretics nor of the baptism of heretics; it cannot be shown that his remarks are in any way relevant to that topic. He was, as a matter of fact, speaking about brethren who either were going about in disorderly fashion, contrary to the discipline of the Church, or who, on the other hand, were observing the truth of the gospel in the fear of God.... Accordingly, in the case of those who espouse the cause of heretics, there is no point in their producing this statement of Paul’s, which concerned his brethren; rather, they need to demonstrate whether Paul thought it right to make any concession to the heretics, whether he ruled that unbelievers and blasphemers could receive forgiveness of sins outside of the Church.¹⁶²

In his detailed treatment of this passage, Cyprian questions the relevance of the text quoted to the situation at hand, and puts the onus back onto his opponents to

¹⁶¹ In *Bapt.* 4.7-10 (CSEL 51:232-41), Augustine extensively quotes Cyprian’s discussion of the text here but juxtaposes it with citations from *De zelo et livore* to demonstrate that the church does not only include the righteous.

¹⁶² “Quod enim quidam dicunt, quasi ad haereticorum suffragium pertineat quod dixerit apostolus Paulus: ‘uerumtamen omni modo, siue per occasionem siue per ueritatem Christus adnuntiatur,’ inuenimus hoc quoque ad eorum patrocinium qui haereticis suffragantur et plaudunt nihil posse proficere. Neque enim de haereticis aut de eorum baptismo loquebatur in epistula sua Paulus, ut aliquid quod ad hanc rem pertineat posuisse ostendatur. Loquebatur de fratribus siue inordinate et contra ecclesiasticam disciplinam ambulantiibus siue euangelicam ueritatem de dei timore seruantiibus ... Quare qui haereticis patrocinatur non id proferat quod Paulus de fratribus posuit, sed ostendat, si haeretico aliquid concedendum putauit aut si fidem et baptismum eorum probauit aut si perfidos et blasphemos remissionem peccatorum accipere extra ecclesiam posse constituit.” *Ep.* 73.14.1-3 (CCSL 3C:544-46).

demonstrate that Paul accepted heretics. In doing so, he uses rhetorical techniques from the law court regarding “ambiguity in the document” to make his case.¹⁶³ In his consideration of the context, he appeals to what is written in the letter itself, and to the circumstances in which it was written. He then emphasises the need for his opponents to prove that Paul did indeed approve of heretics, and in the section following the above quote (15.1), he applies the principle of considering all aspects of the writer’s life. In this, he includes not only the evidence of Paul, but of all the apostles, united in being steadfastly opposed to heretics. Finally, he appeals to honour and necessity:

We have only to cast aside the errors of human disputations and with sincere and devout faith return to the authority of the gospel and the teaching handed down by the apostles, and we realise that those who scatter and assail the Church of Christ cannot possibly have access to the saving grace of the Church; they are called His adversaries by Christ himself, antichrists by His apostles.¹⁶⁴

Cyprian’s extended examination of this verse is rather unusual.¹⁶⁵ As Clarke and Fahey have noted, he is not so careful in preserving the context of his

¹⁶³ “Ex ambiguo autem nascitur controversia cum quid senserit scriptor obscurum est, quod scriptum duas pluresve res significat.” Cicero, *Inv.* 2.40 (LCL 386:284). Sider summarises the most important of these techniques from *Inv.* 2.40-41 (LCL 386:284-89). “1. Consideration of the context... 2. Consideration of all aspects of the past life of the writer... 3. Consideration of the circumstances in which the document was written... 4. Consideration of the principles of expediency, honour, and necessity... 5. Consideration of the disputed words themselves.” Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric*, 86-87. For Tertullian’s application of these strategies, see Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric*, 85-100. Cyprian employs the fifth of these techniques in *Ep.* 55.28 (CCSL 3B:291-3), where he writes what would have been said if his opponents were correct, composing “a sort of heretical ‘Scripture.’” Fahey, *Cyprian*, 55.

¹⁶⁴ “Quare si relictis humanae contentione erroribus ad euangelicam auctoritatem atque ad apostolicam traditionem sincera et religiosa fide reuertamur, intellegimus nihil eis ad gratiam ecclesiasticam et salutarem licere qui spargentes atque impugnantes ecclesiam Christi a Christo ipso aduersarii, ab apostolis eius antichristi nominentur.” *Ep.* 73.15.2 (CCSL 3C:546-47).

¹⁶⁵ Tilley uses this letter as an example of his standard procedure in noting the original audience and intent behind the verses, but it is the exception rather than the rule. She does, however, demonstrate another rhetorical strategy frequently used by Cyprian: first describing the situation by the use of Scripture, then issuing directives using quotations from or echoes of Scripture. Tilley, *Bible in Christian North Africa*, 34-35.

quotations elsewhere.¹⁶⁶ In fact, it is only when a text has been employed by his opponents that he gives such attention to the background.¹⁶⁷ He finds it necessary to apply the technique several times in this letter—testimony to how seriously he takes the challenge to his interpretation.¹⁶⁸ In the hands of his opponents, Phil 1:8 has become a maxim used to support their position.¹⁶⁹ It is not that Cyprian rejects this method of reading Scripture; rather, its use by supporters of heretical baptism contravenes Cyprian’s theological understanding of the church, one which he is at pains to demonstrate is inherited from Christ and the apostles, even if it also owes something to Roman ideas of sacred space.¹⁷⁰ He therefore responds with a detailed exegesis of the passage, shaped by rhetorical techniques for dealing with disputed texts.

3.6 Direct application

The most common reading of Paul in this area of Cyprian’s pastoral concern is direct application. A wide variety of texts are pressed into service as he demonstrates the unity of the church and the implications for its sacraments and ministry. Central to this endeavour is Ephesians 4. Cyprian first appeals to it in the context of schism in *Ep.* 43 and *De unitate* (it does not appear in *Ad Quirinum*),¹⁷¹ but it comes to the fore in the baptismal dispute. The longest citation is in *Unit. eccl.* 4 (TR), one of a number of verses added to the PT version:

¹⁶⁶ Clarke, *Letters*, 4:230. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 496. Note that Cyprian is not so much opposing “the exegesis of the heretics” themselves (as Fahey states), but rather those within the church who are willing to accept heretical baptism.

¹⁶⁷ For example, his discussion of Matt 18:20 in *Unit. eccl.* 12 (CCSL 3:257-59).

¹⁶⁸ See his treatment of Acts 8:14-17 (CCSL 3C:538-39), Acts 2:38-39 (CCSL 3C:549-50), and John 3:5 (CCSL 3C:555-57).

¹⁶⁹ It remained popular, particularly in anti-Donatist polemic. For a full list of references to the verse by Augustine and others, see Tilley, *Bible in Christian North Africa*, 125, 206 n. 120.

¹⁷⁰ Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 55-68.

¹⁷¹ Tertullian refers to the text in *Bapt.* 15 (CCSL 1:290), with similar, if briefer, conclusions to those of Cyprian—heretics do not participate in the one baptism.

If a man does not hold fast to this oneness of the Church, does he imagine that he still holds the faith? If he resists and withstands the Church, has he still confidence that he is in the Church, when the blessed Apostle Paul gives us this very teaching and points to the mystery of Oneness saying: “One body and one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God”?¹⁷²

Later in the same work (in both versions of the text), Cyprian criticises those who have abandoned the fountain of life—the one baptism—yet promise life and grace.¹⁷³ He further elaborates on the theme of unity: “God is one, and Christ is one, and His Church is one; one is the faith, and one the people cemented together by harmony into the strong unity of a body.”¹⁷⁴ Just as a member torn from a body cannot survive, “nothing that is separated from the parent stock can ever live or breathe apart; all hope of its salvation is lost.”¹⁷⁵

Cyprian had used a very similar expression in *Ep.* 43, although concluding with a reference to the chair of Peter:

God is one and Christ is one: there is one Church and one chair founded, by the Lord’s authority, upon Peter. It is not possible that another altar can be set up, or that a new priesthood can be appointed, over and above this one altar and this one priesthood. Whoever gathers elsewhere, scatters.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Eph 4:4-6a. “Hanc ecclesiae unitatem qui non tenet, tenere se fidem credit? Qui ecclesiae renitur et resistit, in ecclesia se esse confidit, quando et beatus apostolus Paulus hoc idem doceat et sacramentum unitatis ostendat dicens: ‘Vnum corpus et unus Spiritus, una spes uocationis uestrae, unus Dominus, una fides, unum baptisma, unus Deus’?” *Unit. eccl.* 4 TR (CCSL 3:252).

¹⁷³ *Unit. eccl.* 11 (CCSL 3:257).

¹⁷⁴ Allusion to Eph 4:4-5. “Vnus Deus est et Christus unus, et una ecclesia eius et fides una, et plebs in solidam corporis unitatem concordiae glutino copulata.” *Unit. eccl.* 23 (CCSL 3:266).

¹⁷⁵ “quicquid a matrice discesserit, seorsum uiuere et spirare non poterit: substantiam salutis amittit.” *Unit. eccl.* 23 (CCSL 3:266).

¹⁷⁶ “Deus unus est et Christus unus et una ecclesia et cathedra una super Petrum domini uoce fundata. Aliud altare constitui aut sacerdotium nouum fieri praeter unum altare et unum sacerdotium non potest. Quisque alibi collegerit spargit.” *Ep.* 43.5.2 (CCSL 3B:205).

So the schism of Felicissimus first leads Cyprian to employ this text on unity, but the aspect of one baptism is particularly emphasised in the baptismal dispute. In *Ep.* 70, Cyprian and the other bishops in council advise that no one can be baptised outside the church—there is only one baptism, and that is within the holy church.¹⁷⁷ This is linked later in the letter to the power to grant the Holy Spirit. If a “bishop” cannot grant the Holy Spirit, being outside the church and therefore separated from the Holy Spirit, then neither can he baptise: “There is but one baptism, and one Holy Spirit, and one Church founded by Christ our Lord upon Peter to be the source and ground of its oneness.”¹⁷⁸

This one baptism is central to both sides of the re-baptism debate. In *Ep.* 71, Cyprian calls foolhardy those of his colleagues who accept heretical baptism on the basis that there is only one baptism. He responds: “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. There cannot be two baptisms: hence, if heretics genuinely baptize, they must be the ones who have the power of baptism.”¹⁷⁹

In *Ep.* 73, to Jubaianus, there are a number of references to Ephesians 4. The seventy-one African and Numidian bishops in council have affirmed that there is indeed one baptism—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.”¹⁸⁰ In fact, Novatian knows that there is only one baptism; that is why he is trying to claim it for himself, and assert that the church is with him. But Cyprian has full confidence that “being outside the Church, he has power to do nothing and that baptism—and there is only the one—is

¹⁷⁷ “censentes scilicet et pro certo tenentes neminem baptizari foris extra ecclesiam posse, cum sit baptismum unum in sancta ecclesia constitutum.” *Ep.* 70.1.2 (CCSL 3C:503).

¹⁷⁸ “Si baptizare potuit, potuit et sanctum spiritum dare. Si autem sanctum spiritum dare non potest, quia foris constitutus cum sancto spiritu non est, nec baptizare uenientem potest, quando et baptismum unum sit et spiritus sanctus unus et una ecclesia a Christo domino nostro super Petrum origine unitatis et ratione fundata.” *Ep.* 70.3.1 (CCSL 3C:511).

¹⁷⁹ “quod unum scilicet in ecclesia catholica est, quia ecclesia una est et esse baptismum praeter ecclesiam non potest. Nam cum duo baptismata esse non possint, si haeretici uere baptizant, ipsi habent baptismum.” *Ep.* 71.1.2 (CCSL 3C:516-17).

¹⁸⁰ “ac per hoc non rebaptizari sed baptizari a nobis quicumque ab adultera et profana aqua uenientes abluendi sint et sanctificandi salutaris aquae ueritate.” *Ep.* 73.1.2 (CCSL 3C:530).

with us.”¹⁸¹ Even Novatian himself received baptism from the true church. Cyprian further makes the point that if those outside the church—heretics of every stripe—can share in the one baptism, then they must have the same faith, the same grace as well.¹⁸²

In his response to Pompeius, who has requested information on Stephen’s reply to a previous letter,¹⁸³ Cyprian makes an extended allusion to Eph 4:4-5: “And the tradition handed down to us is that there is one God and one Christ, one hope and one faith, one Church and one baptism appointed only in that one Church.”¹⁸⁴ To depart from that unity is to be found with heretics; defending heretics is “attacking the sacred mystery of this divine tradition.”¹⁸⁵ This is in contrast to the so-called tradition of Stephen, who has directed that there is to be “no innovation beyond what has been handed down. It’s as if to say that he is an innovator who upholds the oneness of the Church and stoutly defends the claims of that one Church to the one baptism!”¹⁸⁶ There is one baptism, granted by God to the church alone. To think otherwise is to “place human tradition before divine ordinance.”¹⁸⁷ Tradition is the ground on which the battle is fought.

A different allusion to Eph 4:4 is found in *Ep.* 68, concerning Marcianus of Arles who has aligned himself with Novatian. In it, Cyprian tells Stephen that he should write to the bishops in Gaul, supporting Marcianus’ excommunication,¹⁸⁸ because

throughout the world without exception we all made the same declaration on the matter [of reconciliation]. For it was not possible that there should be

¹⁸¹ “nihil illi extra ecclesiam licere et baptisma quod est unum apud nos esse.” *Ep.* 73.2 (CCSL 3C:531).

¹⁸² *Ep.* 73.4.2 (CCSL 3C:533-34).

¹⁸³ Probably *Ep.* 72. Clarke, *Letters*, 4:236 n. 3.

¹⁸⁴ Allusion to Eph 4:4-5. “Traditum est enim nobis quod sit unus deus et Christus unus et una spes et fides una et una ecclesia et baptisma unum non nisi in una ecclesia constitutum.” *Ep.* 74.11.1 (CCSL 3C:578). Note Augustine’s modification: “sic est autem unum baptisma et una ecclesia quemadmodum est una spes. sicut ergo boni et mali non habentes unam spem possunt tamen habere unum baptisma, ita quibus non est communis ecclesia potest baptisma esse commune.” *Bapt.* 7.19 (CSEL 51:355).

¹⁸⁵ “sacramentum diuinae traditionis in pugnat.” *Ep.* 74.11.1 (CCSL 3C:578).

¹⁸⁶ “nihil aliud innouari nisi quod traditum est, quasi is innouet qui unitatem tenens unum baptisma uni ecclesiae uindicat.” *Ep.* 74.2.2 (CCSL 3C:565).

¹⁸⁷ “humanam traditionem diuinae dispositioni antepone.” *Ep.* 74.3.1 (CCSL 3C:567).

¹⁸⁸ See Clarke, *Letters*, 4:167-68 n. 13.

divergence of opinion among us, seeing that there was in us but one and the same Spirit. Hence it is plainly evident that a man does not hold the truth of the Holy Spirit with the rest of his colleagues when we find that his opinions are different from theirs.¹⁸⁹

Elsewhere, of course, Cyprian allows that differences might be held without breaking unity, each bishop giving an account to God, as discussed below.

Unity

Cyprian also advocates a unity of thought and harmony in *De unitate*, where he uses 1 Cor 1:10: “I beseech you brethren by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no schisms among you; but that you be knit together, having the same mind and the same judgement.”¹⁹⁰ He follows by citing Eph 4:2b-3 on the bond of peace, asking, “Do you think a man can hold his own or survive, when he leaves the Church and sets up a new place and a separate home for himself?”¹⁹¹

Cyprian is keen to reassure those within the church that they should not be troubled that some have left. One of the ways he does this is by quoting Rom 3:3-4a. He first uses the text in *De unitate*, after demonstrating that the faith and loyalty of the apostles was not destroyed because Judas betrayed Christ and departed:

So too now, the holiness and good name of the confessors is not straightway impaired because some of their number have broken faith. The blessed Apostle says in one of his epistles: “For what if some of them have fallen

¹⁸⁹ “Quam rem omnes omnino ubique censuimus. Neque enim poterat esse apud nos sensus diuersus, in quibus unus est spiritus; et ideo manifestum est eum spiritus sancti ueritatem cum ceteris non tenere quem uidemus diuersa sentire.” *Ep.* 68.5.2 (CCSL 3C:468).

¹⁹⁰ 1 Cor 1:10. “Obsecro uos, fratres, per nomen Domini nostri Iesu Christi, ut id ipsum dicatis omnes, et non sint in uobis schismata, sitis autem compositi in eodem sensu et in eadem sentential.” *Unit. eccl.* 8 (CCSL 3:255). As noted above, this text also appears as support for the testimony, “Scisma non faciendum, etiamsi in una fide et in eadem traditione permaneat qui recedit.” *Test.* 3.86 (CCSL 3:164-65).

¹⁹¹ “et iterum dicit: ‘Sustinentes inuicem in dilectione, satis agentes seruare unitatem Spiritus in coniunctione pacis.’ Stare tu et uiuere putas posse de ecclesia recedentem, sedes sibi alias et diuersa domicilia condentem.” *Unit. eccl.* 8 (CCSL 3:255).

away from the faith? Has their unfaithfulness made the faith of God without effect? God forbid! For God is true, but every man a liar.”¹⁹²

In *Ep.* 59, Cyprian’s letter to Cornelius in the wake of the voyage of Felicissimus to Rome, the church, like Peter,¹⁹³ can never depart from Christ. On the other hand, those who leave him have only themselves to blame: “Likewise, Paul counsels us not to be distressed when the wicked perish away from the Church nor to be weakened in our own faith when the faithless withdraw from the Church. As he says: [cites Rom 3:3-4a].”¹⁹⁴ In *Ep.* 66, Cyprian responds to Puppianus’ claim that he himself is the cause of part of the Church being scattered. In fact, the bishop retorts, the faithful have been gathered together in unity: “For the Lord, who is the protector and guardian of his own people, does not allow his wheat to be plundered from his threshing floor; it is only the chaff that can be separated off from the Church. As the Apostle says: [cites Rom 3:3-4a].”¹⁹⁵

The passage is again cited in the letter of the African bishops to the Spanish churches. If God alone is true, then the servants of God must reject the errors and lies of men.¹⁹⁶ Even though there are some “rash enough to be in communion with Basilides and Martialis, yet that ought not to trouble our faith.”¹⁹⁷ The bishops continue by citing Rom 1:29b-30, 32:

¹⁹² Rom 3:3-4a. “Sic et hic: non statim confessorum sanctitas et dignitas conminuta est quia quorundam fides fracta est. Beatus apostolus loquitur in epistula sua, dicens: ‘Quid enim si exciderunt a fide quidam illorum? Numquid infidelitas illorum fidem Dei euacuabit? Absit: est enim Deus uerax, omnis autem homo mendax.’” *Unit. eccl.* 22 (CCSL 3:265).

¹⁹³ Citing John 6:68-69, with 1 John 2:19 in further support. *Ep.* 59.7.3 (CCSL 3C:348-49).

¹⁹⁴ “Item Paulus monet nos cum mali de ecclesia pereunt non moueri nec recedentibus perfidis fidem minui. [Cites Rom 3:3-4a].” *Ep.* 59.7.4 (CCSL 3C:349).

¹⁹⁵ “omnis ecclesiae populus et collectus sit et adunatus et indiuidua concordia sibi iunctus, soli illi foris remanserint qui etsi intus essent eiciendi fuerant, nec patiaturs dominus populi sui protector et tutor triticum de area sua diripi, sed solae possint paleae de ecclesia separari, quando et apostolus dicat: [cites Rom 3:3-4a].” *Ep.* 66.8.1-2 (CCSL 3C:442).

¹⁹⁶ *Ep.* 67.8.3 (CCSL 3C:460).

¹⁹⁷ “cum Basilide et Martiale temere communicent, conturbare fidem uestram res ista non debet.” *Ep.* 67.9.1 (CCSL 3C:460).

Moreover, the apostle Paul says precisely the same thing when he writes: “Whisperers, scandalmongers, hateful to God, insulting, arrogant, boastful, creators of evil: they knew well enough God’s strict justice, yet they failed to understand that those who act like that are deserving of death—not just those who practise such evil themselves but also those who lend their approval to such evildoers.”¹⁹⁸

Here, words referring to pagans are employed to describe Basilides and Martialis, and those who support them are equated with those who approve of evildoers; both courses of action lead to death and punishment.

Cyprian uses a number of Pauline passages to assert that Christians should follow divine commands rather than human tradition. Paul’s words are not always directly related to the topic at hand, however. This is evident in his citation of 1 Tim 6:3-4, an injunction which was originally positioned between directions on household relationships and the dangers of wealth. In *Ep.* 74, it follows verses from Isaiah and Mark.¹⁹⁹

Being mindful of this precept, the blessed apostle Paul in turn gives us these words of admonition and instruction: “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.”²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Rom 1:29b-30, 32. “Sed et hoc idem Paulus apostolus scribit et dicit: ‘susurratores, detractores, abhorrentes deo, iniuriosi, superbi, iactantes sui, adinuentores malorum: qui cum iustitiam dei cognouissent, non intellexerunt, quoniam qui talia agunt morte sunt digni, non tantum qui faciunt ea, sed et qui consentiunt his qui haec agunt.’” *Ep.* 67.9.2 (CCSL 3C:461).

¹⁹⁹ Isa 29:13: “populus iste labiis honorificant me, cor uero eorum longe separatum est a me. Sine causa autem colunt me mandata et doctrinas hominum docentes.” Mark 7:9: “reicitis mandatum dei ut traditionem uestram statuatis.” These verses are also combined in *Epp.* 63.14.2 and 67.2.1 (CCSL 3C:410, 449).

²⁰⁰ 1 Tim 6:3-4. “Cuius praecepti memor beatus apostolus Paulus commonet ipse quoque et instruit dicens: ‘si quis aliter docet et non acquiescit sanis uerbis domini nostri Iesu Christi et doctrinae eius, stupore elatus et nihil sciens, discede ab huiusmodi.’” *Ep.* 74.3.2 (CCSL 3C:567-68). Neither the Greek nor the Vulgate have “discede ab huiusmodi.”

Cyprian had previously used this verse in writing against the schism of Felicissimus, where once again the context is of rejecting those who initiate their own tradition rather than following what God has laid down. Cyprian combines it with another useful text, Eph 5:6-7:

Furthermore, we are given instruction by the Apostle with these words: [cites 1 Tim 6:3-4].²⁰¹ And he also says: “Let no man deceive you with empty words; for these things the wrath of God visits the children who are stubborn and disobedient. Do not therefore be partners with them.”²⁰² There is no reason why you should start now to be partners in their wickedness, being deceived by their empty words.²⁰³

Ephesians 5 is used again in *Ep.* 65: “Let [the lapsed] give no heed to those who would deceive them with their fatally seductive lies, for it is written: [cites Eph 5:6-7]. And so let no man associate himself with these rebels who are without fear of God and who abandon his Church entirely.”²⁰⁴ In *De unitate*, Cyprian encourages his flock to depart from schismatic error and return to the straight and narrow, preceding the quotation from Ephesians with 2 Thess 3:6: “Hear the Apostle’s message: ‘We bid you in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ to withdraw from all the brethren who walk disorderly and not according to the tradition which they have received from us.’”²⁰⁵ This verse originally formed part of a direction for people to work rather than be idle, but it is easy to see the appeal it held for Cyprian as he applied it more broadly. He cites it again in *Ep.* 59 to warn against fellowship with those who have separated themselves from the church: “And the blessed Apostle not merely advises us, he expressly orders us to keep

²⁰¹ “et nihil sciens” is missing from this citation. (CCSL 3B:207).

²⁰² Eph 5:6-7.

²⁰³ “Instruit apostolus dicens: [cites 1 Tim 6:3-4]. Et iterum dicit ipse: ‘Nemo uos decipiat inanibus uerbis. Propterea enim uenit ira dei super filios contumaciae. Nolite ergo esse participes eorum.’ Non est quod decepti inanibus uerbis prauitatis eorum incipiat esse participes.” *Ep.* 43.6.1-2 (CCSL 3B:207-8).

²⁰⁴ “Nec audiant eos qui se falsa et mortali seductione decipiunt, cum scriptum sit: [cites Eph 5:6-7]. Ergo contumaces et deum non timentes et ab ecclesia in totum recedentes nemo comitetur. *Ep.* 65.5.1 (CCSL 3C:432).

²⁰⁵ “Contestantis apostoli uox est: ‘Praecipimus nobis,’ inquit, ‘in nomine Domini Iesu Christi ut recedatis ab omnibus fratribus ambulantes inordinate et non secundum traditionem quam acceperunt a nobis’; et iterum dicit: [cites Eph 5:6-7].” *Unit. eccl.* 23 (CCSL 3:266).

aloof from men of this kind: [cites 2 Thess 3:6].²⁰⁶ There can be no fellowship between the faithful and the faithless.”²⁰⁷ Separating from those who follow a tradition other than that of the Lord and the apostles is the theme uniting these citations of Paul.

The danger of divergence from the one church is made clear in Cyprian’s use of 1 Cor 6:18. As a text on the sin of adultery, it could be considered disciplinary, but Cyprian uses it to develop his argument in *Ep.* 55 that Novatian, by including adulterers in his congregation, is not consistent in his claims to purity. Cyprian shows that, in fact, adultery can be considered a more serious offence than obtaining a certificate of sacrifice. The one who does the latter sins under compulsion and error, mistakenly believing that it is enough simply to avoid sacrifice, whereas the former has freely defiled his own sanctified body, God’s temple:²⁰⁸ “To quote the Apostle: ‘Every sin that man commits is outside the body, but he who commits adultery sins against his own body.’²⁰⁹ Yet even to these sinners penitence is allowed.”²¹⁰

Cyprian continues his argument by demonstrating that, since the Novatianists accept both defrauders and adulterers, they are in communion with idolators, as Paul so defines them:

“Know this well and understand that no adulterer or fornicator or defrauder (for that is idolatry) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”²¹¹ And again he says: “Mortify, therefore, your members which are on

²⁰⁶ This verse also appears, along with Ps 49:18, as the only support for the testimony, “Recendum ab eo qui inordinate et contra disciplinam uiuat.” *Test.* 3.68 (CCSL 3:157). Here discipline is equated with tradition. Valentin Morel, “Disciplina,” in *RAC*, ed. Theodor Klauser (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1957), 3:1229.

²⁰⁷ “Et beatus apostolus non monet tantum, sed et iubet a talibus ut recedatur: [cites 2 Thess 3:6]. Nulla societas fidei et perfidiae potest esse.” *Ep.* 59.20 (CCSL 3C:373).

²⁰⁸ 1 Cor 3:17/1 Cor 6:19. This imagery of the temple is continued in *Ep.* 55.27.2 (CCSL 3C:290), as discussed in section 3.2 above.

²⁰⁹ 1 Cor 6:18. This verse is also included as the sole support for testimony, “Grauius delictum esse fornicationis.” *Test.* 3.63 (CCSL 3:154).

²¹⁰ “sicut apostolus dicit: ‘omne peccatum quodcumque fecerit homo, extra corpus est: qui autem moechatur, in corpus suum peccat.’ Quibus tamen et ipsis paenitentia conceditur.” *Ep.* 55.26.1-2 (CCSL 3B:288-89).

²¹¹ Eph 5:5-6.

earth, laying aside fornication and impurity and evil desire and lust, which are all slavery to idols. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming.”²¹²

Novatian therefore has no grounds for separating himself from the unity of the church. His congregation is not free from pollution; it includes adulterers who are more culpable than those who have obtained certificates, as there were no mitigating circumstances of compulsion or ignorance. Furthermore, the apostle Paul identifies adulterers and defrauders as idolators. Given their communion with such idolators, the schismatics cannot pride themselves on avoiding contagion, and have no grounds for separating themselves from the church.

The dispute with the confessors over readmitting the lapsed to the communion of the church is the occasion for a lengthy quotation of Gal 1:6-9.²¹³ In his letter to the clergy in Rome, Cyprian directs his argument against Lucian, who has been issuing certificates in the name of Paulus. Cyprian’s difficulty with confessors is well known. Given the esteem in which a confessor is held, he has to walk a careful line, acknowledging Lucian’s faith, but critiquing his practice. This shortcoming he attributes to a lack of knowledge of the Scriptures.²¹⁴ Cyprian contrasts the forgiveness of sins in baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit²¹⁵ with Lucian’s granting of peace in the name of Paulus.²¹⁶ He continues:

He has paid scant regard to the fact that it is not martyrs who make the gospel but that martyrs are made through the gospel. As Paul the Apostle, whom the Lord called a vessel of His election,²¹⁷ put it in his epistle: “I am astonished that in this way you are so quickly turning away to another gospel from Him

²¹² Col 3:5-6. “‘hoc enim scitote intellegentes quia omnis fornicator aut immundus aut fraudator, quod est idolatria, non habet hereditatem in regno Christi et dei.’ Et iterum: ‘mortificate itaque membra uestra quae in terra sunt, exponentes fornicationem, immunditiam et concupiscentiam malam et cupiditatem, quae sunt idolorum seruitus, propter quae uenit ira dei.’” *Ep.* 55.27.1 (CCSL 3B:289-90).

²¹³ Both uses of this text are discussed under “Discipline and Repentance,” in Murphy, “Divine Ordinances,” 95-96.

²¹⁴ *Ep.* 27.1.1 (CCSL 3B:127). See also *Ep.* 27.3.2 (CCSL 3B:130).

²¹⁵ Allusion to Matt 28:19.

²¹⁶ *Ep.* 27.3.3 (CCSL 3B:130-31).

²¹⁷ Allusion to Acts 9:15.

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.”²¹⁸

The substantial quotation (the only one in the letter), is left to speak for itself and forms the climax of Cyprian’s argument.²¹⁹ Lucian, who lacks an adequate knowledge of the Scriptures, is admonished by the Scriptures; his practice identified with following another gospel.

Eucharist

Cyprian also uses Gal 1:6-9 in his letter to Caecilius, which demonstrates the necessity of using wine in the cup. He makes his case by presenting Christ and Paul as models of conducting the Eucharist,²²⁰ before continuing:

And in another passage the Apostle teaches us in even stronger and more urgent terms that we must never depart from the precepts of the gospel and

²¹⁸ “quibus minus considerauit quod non martyres euangelium faciant, sed per euangelium martyres fiant, quando et Paulus apostolus quem dominus uas electionis suae dixit posuerit in epistula sua dicens: ‘miror quod sic tam cito demutamini ab eo qui uos vocauit in gratiam ad aliud euangelium, quod non est aliud: nisi si sunt aliqui qui uos turbant et uolunt conuertere euangelium Christi. Sed licet nos aut angelus de caelo aliter adnuntiet praeterquam quod adnuntiauius uobis, anathema sit. Sicut praediximus, et nunc iterum dico: si quis uobis adnuntiauerit praeterquam quod accepistis, anathema sit.’” *Ep.* 27.3.3 (CCSL 3B:131). In *Christ (Christi)* is missing from this quotation.

²¹⁹ The final paragraph simply acknowledges their letter, which demonstrates their unity in the law of the gospel, and conveys farewell greetings. *Ep.* 27.4 (CCSL 3B:131-32).

²²⁰ See the discussion in section 3.1 above.

that the disciples must observe and do exactly what their Master taught and did. Here are His words: [cites Gal 1:6-9].²²¹

To depart in any way from what Jesus taught and did—even in what some might regard as minor details—is to follow another gospel. Here Cyprian rejects a practice which does not conform to explicit instructions of Christ and the apostles, even if the error was the result of “ignorance and naïveté.”²²² Once more, he rules out any appeal to custom if what has been handed down conflicts with the words and actions of Christ, the one whom believers must follow.

It is not the composition of the Eucharist, but the question of who may participate in it, which comes to the fore in *De lapsis*. Cyprian denounces an overly hasty readmission to communion for the lapsed which denies true healing through repentance. He cites 1 Corinthians to demonstrate that participating in the sacrament after having sacrificed is to desecrate the body of the Lord:²²³

So the Apostle also testifies when he says: “You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils; you cannot have communion at the table of the Lord and at the table of devils”;²²⁴ and he threatens and denounces the obstinate and the unrighteous, saying: “Whosoever shall eat the bread and drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.”²²⁵

²²¹ “Ab euangelicis autem praeceptis omnino non recedendum esse et eadem quae magister docuit et fecit discipulos quoque obseruare et facere debere constantius et fortius alio in loco beatus apostolus docet dicens: [cites Gal 1:6-9].” *Ep.* 63.10.3 (CCSL 3C:402-3).

²²² “uel ignoranter uel simpliciter.” *Ep.* 63.1.1 (CCSL 3C:389). The strictness of the application here is not always maintained, however. When the unity of the church is threatened, Cyprian is willing to accept diversity of opinion among bishops who will have to account for their actions at the judgement. See, for example, his reference to the differing treatment of adulterers in *Ep.* 55.21.1 (CCSL 3B:280).

²²³ Also citing Lev 7:19b-20.

²²⁴ 1 Cor 10:20-21.

²²⁵ 1 Cor 11:27. “apostolus item testetur et dicat: ‘Non potestis calicem Domini bibere et calicem daemoniorum, non potestis mensae Domini communicare et mensae daemoniorum’; idem contumacibus et peruiacibus comminetur et denuntiet dicens: ‘Quicumque ederit panem aut biberit calicem Domini indigne, reus erit corporis et sanguinis Domini.’” *Laps.* 15 (CCSL 3:229). 1 Cor 11:27 is also used as

The two passages had already been used in *Ep.* 16 to deride the clergy who re-admit the lapsed to communion: they are stumbling blocks to the fallen. Cyprian quotes the words of the Apostle on the impossibility of drinking the cup and sharing the table of both the Lord and demons.²²⁶ He then continues his argument against the premature admission of the fallen to communion. Despite the fact that peace has not yet been restored to the church, and the lapsed have not done penance, made confession, or had hands laid on them, “they are being given the Eucharist, even though it is written: [cites 1 Cor 11:27].”²²⁷

Cyprian uses 1 Cor 11:27 in a very similar way in *Ep.* 15, replying to a letter from the confessors. He characterises their missive as a petition that their “requests might be examined and that peace be granted to certain of the fallen as soon as the persecution is over and we can meet together with the clergy and reassemble.”²²⁸ This he contrasts with the behaviour of certain presbyters who are brazenly admitting the lapsed to the Eucharist contrary to both the gospel and the confessors’ own “respectful petition”.²²⁹ “That is to say, to profane the sacred body of the Lord. And this in spite of the words of Scripture: [cites 1 Cor 11:27].”²³⁰ In all these instances, Paul’s words provide essential support for Cyprian’s argument against pre-emptive reconciliation of the lapsed.

Bishops

The ministry of the bishops plays a significant role in Cyprian’s understanding of the church. Here I focus on those citations which outline the criteria for being a member of the college and how bishops are to relate to one another; those which are concerned with the role of bishops in discipline and repentance are discussed in the following

support for the testimony, “Cum timore et honore eucharistiam accipiendam.” *Test.* 3.94 (CCSL 3:167). This is one of a series of testimonies drawn predominantly from 1 Corinthians 7-11, as noted by Alexis-Baker, “*Ad Quirinum*,” 376. The testimony also includes Lev 7:20.

²²⁶ 1 Cor 10:20-21, preceded by Matt 10:32-33 and Mark 3:28-29. *Ep.* 16.2.1-2 (CCSL 3B:91).

²²⁷ “eucharistia illis datur, cum scriptum sit: [cites 1 Cor 11:27].” *Ep.* 16.2.3 (CCSL 3B:92-93).

²²⁸ “quibus examinari desideria uestra et quibusdam lapsis pacem dari postulastis, cum persecutione finita conuenire in unum cum clero et recolligi coeperimus.” *Ep.* 15.1.2 (CCSL 3B:86).

²²⁹ “honorificam petitionem.” *Ep.* 15.1.2 (CCSL 3B:86).

²³⁰ “id est sanctum domini corpus profanare audeant, cum scriptum sit: [cites 1 Cor 11:27].” *Ep.* 15.1.2 (CCSL 3B:86-87). This is the only scriptural citation in the letter.

chapter. Firstly, in *Ep.* 67, discussed above, Martialis has no right to be restored to the bishopric because of the severity of his sins. “In the words of admonition uttered by the Apostle: ‘The bishop must be blameless, being the steward of God.’”²³¹

Cyprian also takes a number of citations which are of a general nature and applies them specifically to the behaviour of bishops. A favourite is Rom 14:12-13, which concludes his letter to Magnus on baptism:

But 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, as the blessed apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Romans: “each one of us will give an account for himself. Let us, therefore, not judge one another.”²³²

This theme is revisited a number of times by Cyprian, as Bévenot points out.²³³ It is taken up again in *Ep.* 73, where Cyprian claims not to be prescriptive, as each bishop is “free to exercise his own discretion.”²³⁴ In addition, he emphasises his desire not to quarrel over heretics:

We keep with [our fellow bishops] the harmony God has ordained and the peace the Lord has given us, remembering especially the words of the Apostle: “Should anyone have a mind to quarrel, we have no such custom,

²³¹ Titus 1:7a. “quando et apostolus moneat et dicat: ‘episcopum oportet esse sine crimine quasi dei dispensatorem.’” *Ep.* 67.5.4 (CCSL 3C:456).

²³² “nemini praescribentes quo minus statuat quod putat unusquisque praepositus actus sui rationem domino redditurus, secundum quod beatus apostolus Paulus in epistula sua ad Romanos scribit et dicit: ‘unusquisque nostrum pro se rationem dabit, non ergo nos inuicem iudicemus.’” *Ep.* 69.17 (CCSL 3C:496).

²³³ Maurice Bévenot, “A Bishop is Responsible to God Alone (St. Cyprian),” *RSR* 39 (1951): 397-415. For example, Cyprian alludes to this verse in *Ep.* 72.3.2 (CCSL 3C:528): “Qua in re nec nos uim cuiquam facimus aut legem damus, quando habeat in ecclesiae administratione uoluntatis suae arbitrium liberum unusquisque praepositus, rationem actus sui domino redditurus.” I agree with von Campenhausen that it is unlikely that its importance stems from a casual reference by Novatian (*Ep.* 30.1 [CCSL 3B:139]), as Bévenot suggests. von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 277 n. 59.

²³⁴ “habens arbitrii sui liberam potestatem.” *Ep.* 73.26.1 (CCSL 3C:561).

neither does the Church of God.”²³⁵ Charity of spirit, the honour of our episcopal college, the bond of faith, the harmony of the episcopate, these we preserve in patience and gentleness.²³⁶

This use of 1 Cor 11:16 once again reveals the importance of key words in Cyprian’s use of Scripture. The verse ends a section on propriety in worship in its original context, but the prohibition against quarrelling fits well with Cyprian’s theme here.

Again in the baptismal dispute, Cyprian alludes to Timothy in holding bishops to a certain standard, although Paul’s letter to Timothy does not contain everything Cyprian includes here. Cyprian is attacking the presumption of those who defend their own errors instead of submitting to the truth presented by another:

The blessed apostle foresaw this when he wrote to Timothy with the admonition that a bishop should not be wrangling or quarrelsome but gentle and teachable. Now, a man is teachable if he is meek and gentle and patient in learning.²³⁷ It is thus a bishop’s duty not only to teach; he must also learn. For he becomes a better teacher if he makes daily progress and advancement in learning what is better. This lesson the same apostle Paul also teaches us, forewarning that should anything better be revealed to another who is seated, then the earlier speaker should fall silent.²³⁸

The letters to Timothy include admonitions to be gentle and to refrain from being quarrelsome, but they do not direct him to be teachable. Cyprian stretches the direction

²³⁵ 1 Cor 11:16.

²³⁶ “cum quibus diuinam concordiam et dominicam pacem tenemus, maxime cum et apostolus dicat: ‘si quis autem putauerit contentiosus esse, nos talem consuetudinem non habemus neque ecclesia dei.’ Seruatur a nobis patienter et leniter caritas animi, collegii honor, uinculum fidei, concordia sacerdotii.” *Ep.* 73.26.2 (CCSL 3C:561).

²³⁷ Allusion to 1 Tim 3:2-3, 2 Tim 2:24.

²³⁸ 1 Cor 14:30. “Cui rei prospiciens beatus apostolus Paulus ad Timotheum scribit et monet episcopum non litigiosum nec contentiosum, sed mitem et docibilem esse debere. Docibilis autem ille est qui est ad discendi patientiam lenis et mitis. Oportet enim episcopos non tantum docere, sed et discere, quia et ille melius docet qui cotidie crescit et proficit discendo meliora. Quod ipsum quoque idem apostolus Paulus docet praemonens, ut si alii sedenti melius reuelatum fuerit prior taceat.” *Ep.* 74.10.1-2 (CCSL 3C:576-77).

to teach others into a requirement for the bishop himself to be willing to learn. He further demonstrates this with a partial citation of 1 Cor 14:30 which, unusually for Cyprian, he incorporates into his own sentence.²³⁹ He had previously used 1 Cor 14:29-30 in *Ep.* 71 to seal his argument that Stephen should be open to correction, just as Peter had accepted Paul's counsel. Cyprian extends Paul's directions on prophecy in the context of worship into a general principle: "Paul also had this in view, as well as a loyal concern for peace and harmony, when he declared in his epistle: 'Let two or three speak in prophecy while the rest weigh what they say. If revelation comes to another who is seated, then let the first speaker be silent.'"²⁴⁰ So, Cyprian claims, Paul is teaching that bishops should be willing to listen to the revelation given to another, and to adopt new opinions if they are an improvement on those previously held, just as Peter did. In this earlier letter, Cyprian's argument focuses on the validity of the African tradition.²⁴¹ He uses Scripture to demonstrate the necessity of abandoning customs which do not align with truth and reason, whereas in *Epp.* 73 and 74, Cyprian uses Scripture to attack the basis of heretical baptism.

3.7 Prophetic fulfilment

Cyprian draws on Paul's interpretation of Old Testament texts in two successive testimonies, making his case for the place of the church in God's economy. The testimony, "That two people were foretold, an older and a younger, that is the old (race) of the Jews and the new, which would be of us,"²⁴² is supported by two verses from Hosea, mediated through Rom 9:25-26: "Also in Hosea: 'I will call them my people who are not my people, and beloved who was not beloved. For it will be in that place it was said not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God.'"²⁴³

²³⁹ Clarke, *Letters*, 4:245 n. 34.

²⁴⁰ 1 Cor 14:29-30. "Cui rei Paulus quoque prospiciens et concordiae et paci fideliter consulens in epistula sua posuit dicens: 'prophetae autem duo aut tres loquantur et ceteri examinent. Si autem alii reuelatum sedenti fuerit, ille prior taceat.'" *Ep.* 71.3.2 (CCSL 3C:520-21).

²⁴¹ For an outline of his argument, see Clarke, *Letters*, 4:208-9 n. 7.

²⁴² "Quod duo populi praediciti sint, maior et minor, id est uetus Iudaeorum et nouus, qui esset ex nobis futurus." *Test.* 1.19 (CCSL 3:19).

²⁴³ "Item apud Oseae: 'Vocabo non populum meum populum meum et non dilectam dilectam. Erit enim, quo loco dicetur non populus meus, illo loco uocabuntur filii Dei uiui.'" *Test.* 1.19 (CCSL 3:19). Citing

The following testimony, “That the Church which before had been barren should have more children from among the Gentiles than what the synagogue had had before,”²⁴⁴ draws on Paul’s identification in Gal 4:21-31 and includes the paraphrase: “So also to Abraham, when his former son was born of a maidservant, Sarah remained long barren; and late in old age bore her son Isaac, of promise, who was a type of Christ.”²⁴⁵

The fulfilment of Old Testament texts in Paul gives way to the fulfilment of Paul’s words in *De unitate*, as Cyprian demonstrates that the heresies and schisms now experienced were predicted. The Lord permits the disgruntled and trouble-makers to quarrel and separate themselves from the church because the faith of others is thereby highlighted: “This is foretold by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle when he says: ‘There must also be heresies, that those approved may be manifest among you.’”²⁴⁶ Even before the day of judgement, the wheat is being separated from the chaff.²⁴⁷

In the same treatise, Cyprian again uses Paul—in a lengthy quote from 2 Timothy—to demonstrate that the present increase of evil and multiplication of heresies was predicted:

For so it was to be in the decline of the world, as the Holy Spirit foretold and warned us through the Apostle: “In the last days,” he says, “shall there be troublous times. Men shall be self-centred, proud, haughty, covetous, blasphemers; heedless of their parents’ word, ungrateful, wicked, without

Hosea 2:23 and 1:10 through Rom 9:25-26. See Fahey, *Cyprian*, 433-34, 662 n. 19. This use is not referred to by Schelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter*, 359. For a discussion of Paul’s use of these verses, see David I. Starling, *Not My People: Gentiles as Exiles in Pauline Hermeneutics* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 107-65.

²⁴⁴ “Quod ecclesia quae prius sterilis fuerit plures filios habitura esset ex gentibus, quam quod synagoga ante habuisset.” *Test.* 1.20 (CCSL 3:19).

²⁴⁵ “Sic et Abrahae cum de ancilla natus esset prior filius, Sarra sterilis diu mansit et sero in senecta de pollicitatione peperit filium Isaac, qui fuit typus Christi.” *Test.* 1.20 (CCSL 3:20). Paul’s verses may reflect Gen 21:2-3 (CCSL 3:20) or, more likely, Gen 17:15-22. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 474, 567-68.

²⁴⁶ 1 Cor 11:19. “Per apostolum praemonet Spiritus sanctus et dicit: ‘Oportet haeresis esse ut probati manifesti sint in uobis.’” *Unit. eccl.* 10 (CCSL 3:256). This verse also appears as support for the testimony, “Item praedictum quod heresis [sic] futurae essent.” *Test.* 3.92 (CCSL 3:167).

²⁴⁷ *Unit. eccl.* 10 (CCSL 3:256). Cf. Matt 3:12. Later, Cyprian uses the text against Novatian whom he accuses of prematurely discriminating, as discussed in section 3.2 above.

affection, covenant-breakers, informers, incontinent, unmerciful, no lovers of good, traitors, insolent, puffed up with conceit, lovers of pleasures more than of God, presenting a façade of religion, but denying the power thereof.²⁴⁸ Of this sort are those who creep into houses and ravish silly women laden with sins, who are led away with divers desires, ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth. And as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth,²⁴⁹ but they shall not proceed any further. For their ineptitude shall be manifest to all men, as theirs also was.”²⁵⁰

The fulfilment of prophecy demonstrates that the end is nigh. Some have succumbed in the battle against the adversary, but this should not cause others to stumble. Rather, they should be confirmed in their faith because what has been foretold is coming to pass.

3.8 Conclusion

The church is established in *Ad Quirinum* as the new people of God which succeeds the synagogue, drawing on Pauline typology. Warnings against heresy and schism are also present, as are texts relating to baptism and the Eucharist, reflecting the perspective of the North African church. Subsequently, Cyprian’s use of Paul regarding the church is

²⁴⁸ Cyprian omits: “Et hos devita.” Vulgate.

²⁴⁹ Cyprian omits: “homines corrupti mente, reprobi circa fidem.” Vulgate.

²⁵⁰ 2 Tim 3:1-9. “quia et sic in occasu mundi oportebat, praenuntiante per apostolum nobis et praemonente Spiritu sancto: ‘In nouissimis,’ inquit, ‘diebus aderunt tempora molesta; erunt homines sibi placentes, superbi, tumidi, cupidi, blasphemi, parentibus indictoaudientes, ingrati, impii, sine adfectu, sine foedere, delatores, incontinentes, inmites, bonum non amantes, proditores, procaces, stupore inflati, uoluptates magis quam deum diligentes, habentes deformationem religionis, uirtutem autem eius abnegantes. Ex his sunt qui repunt in domos et praedantur mulierculas oneratas peccatis, quae ducuntur uariis desideriis, semper discentes et numquam ad scientiam ueritatis peruenientes. Et quomodo Iannes et Mambres restiterunt Mosi, sic et hi resistunt ueritati; sed non proficient plurimum, imperitia enim eorum manifesta erit omnibus, sicut et illorum fuit.’” *Unit. eccl.* 16 (CCSL 3:261). The variations between this text and the Vulgate are listed by Bévenot, *Lapsed, Unity*, 117-118 n. 128. Cyprian makes two possible allusions to 2 Tim 3:2 elsewhere in his writings, here rendered, “erunt homines sibi placentes,” rather than the Vulgate reading, “erunt homines seipsos amantes.” The first is in *Ep.* 3.3.2 (CCSL 3B:15), where “ut sibi placeant” is the beginning of heresy and schism; the second is in *Ep.* 11.1.2 (CCSL 3B:57), where “unusquisque sibi placentes” results in the community suffering for their sins.

limited to *De unitate*, *De lapsis*, and the letters, particularly those connected with the baptismal dispute.

In endorsing unity, Cyprian uses the image of being clothed with Christ to encourage his flock to put on Christ, the Wisdom of God, in order to guard against the enemy who would destroy them. Cyprian also associates the image with the unrent garment of Christ on the cross, demonstrating the unity of his people. It is further combined with the image of the temple, demonstrating that putting on Christ also means receiving the Holy Spirit, which can only happen within the church. This temple imagery becomes particularly important for Cyprian in his polemic against Novatian's congregation, discussed below. The image of the bride of Christ, revealing the indissoluble unity of Christ and the church, is further combined with others to prove that it is only within the church that children of God are born. The removal of the old man in baptism, the birth of the new, and Christ's cleansing of his bride by water all point to the church as mother. Once birthed within the church, the bond of peace must be maintained, both by individual Christians and by bishops, since to break that bond places one *outside*.

Although it does not appear in *Ad Quirinum*, Ephesians 4 is used heavily, first with regard to the schism of Felicissimus, and then frequently in the baptismal dispute. There is a strong emphasis on the one baptism: Cyprian argues that it belongs only to the one church; his opponents maintain that because there is only one baptism, it should not be repeated. An allusion to Eph 4:4 has a different focus in *Ep.* 68, where the focus is on sharing in the one spirit—one who does not hold the same opinion cannot have the Holy Spirit. Cyprian also appeals to 1 Cor 1:10 that there be no schisms.

In addition to the positive statements regarding unity are a large number of texts directed against heretics. Some of these appear in *Ad Quirinum*, warning against schism. Others, which provided support for testimonies on disciplinary issues such as marriage with gentiles, adultery, and avoiding evil talk, are reappropriated in the fight to maintain unity. The apostles are models for dealing with heretical baptism, their position summarised by an allusion to Eph 4:4-5. Paul was forgiven for sins committed in ignorance, but those who continue in their error will receive no such pardon.

In his attack on the schism of Novatian, the image of the temple is combined with that of believers' bodies as members of Christ. Adultery violates the temple, thus adulterers

are idolators. Cyprian also uses texts from Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 to identify adultery as idolatry, and fornication as slavery to idols—by accepting adulterers, Novatian is in communion with idolators. His logic in separating from the church in protest against the reconciliation of the lapsed will therefore not hold. The image of different kinds of vessels is used to demonstrate that Novatian is arrogating to himself the privilege that belongs to Christ alone—it is not for him to judge and separate himself from the church.

The image of speech that spreads like a cancer is employed multiple times, often in conjunction with other references to contagion. The contagion is not the spreading of sin from the sinner to the rest of the congregation, however; the danger is the claim that there is no need for repentance. Christians must beware lest they are deceived by the devil who masquerades as an angel of light—there is to be no communion between light and darkness. The maxims, “Evil talk corrupts good characters,” and, “Let no evil speech proceed out of your mouth,” are both directed against schismatics; heretics are given the title, “perverse and self-condemned.”

The only time Cyprian engages in contextual exegesis of a Pauline text is when he discusses Phil 1:8 in *Ep.* 73. He does this not so much to prove his own case, as to discredit those who claim the verse as warrant for heretical baptism. In doing so, he draws on rhetorical techniques of the law court to defend his interpretation.

Cyprian reassures those who have remained within the church by referring to Romans 3:3-4a on several occasions—only those who were not really part of the church could leave. He also discredits Basilides, Martialis and their supporters by applying Paul’s words describing pagans to them. Furthermore, partnership with those who depart from the sound teachings of Christ is warned against: Christians must not be deceived by their empty words, but rather withdraw from those who do not follow the apostolic tradition. Neither should the faithful be troubled by the current increase in evil and heresies, as Paul foretold this of the last days. In instructing his congregation with regard to heretics and schismatics, then, Cyprian combines warning with reassurance.

Cyprian also uses Paul in a number of instances related to the sacraments. With regard to baptism, Cyprian employs the image of Pharaoh to demonstrate that the devil is defeated in its waters. He uses maxims to support baptism of infants before the eighth

day: “To the clean, all things are clean,” and furthermore, “God does not show favouritism.” This later maxim also supports the full validity of clinical baptism. In his teaching on the Eucharist, Cyprian uses Pauline texts to address two issues. The first is the necessity of using wine in the cup, for which Abraham, Christ and Paul provide models, reinforced with Paul’s words in Galatians about following another gospel. The second area of concern is the premature admission of the lapsed to communion. Lucian’s granting of peace in the name of Paulus receives the same condemnation from Galatians. Verses from 1 Corinthians on the impossibility of drinking both the cup of the Lord and the cup of idols, as well as on the dangers of disregarding the Lord’s body, are used against presbyters who permit such a practice.

Cyprian elevates the Roman church, praised by Paul, as a model for its successors. The Roman clergy claimed this honour for themselves, and Cyprian exploits it to encourage Cornelius to reject Cyprian’s opponents. He also uses it to handsomely praise the Roman bishop. However, if Stephen wants to model himself on Peter, then he should likewise imitate his attitude and be willing to be corrected and submit to better instruction.

Bishops, like soldiers, should not be caught up in the anxieties of this world. Furthermore, the bishop must be blameless. Somewhat surprisingly, this verse from Titus 1:7a is only used once. In this respect, Cyprian draws predominantly on Old Testament texts for support, being more concerned with avoiding apostasy and protecting unity than with individual sins. One strategy for maintaining cohesion is insisting that each bishop will render an account to the Lord—agreement does not need to be reached on every issue for unity to be upheld. Cyprian also reappropriates verses related to worship to speak against quarrelling and thereby encourage harmony. He extends the direction that bishops be good teachers to them being teachable; instructions regarding the conduct of worship are applied to the need for bishops to accept correction.

The common form of life that Cyprian shares with his contemporaries is demonstrated in a very detailed way by Brent who argues, in particular, for the impact of that

framework on his understanding of the church.²⁵¹ But Cyprian's perspective is also shaped by the Scriptures and by the practice of previous generations of Christians. In opposing schism, Cyprian inherits his stance and the use of a number of supporting texts from his predecessors; however, the pressure of circumstances forces him to articulate traditional beliefs in a new way.

Whereas Cyprian drew strongly on Paul's uncontested writings in his teaching on divine truth and eternal glory, the disputed Paulines are far more prominent in Cyprian's teaching on the unity of the church. This is not surprising as Ephesians 4 plays such a significant role. Yet it would be wrong to deduce that a concern for harmony (or for right leadership, or for the integrity of the sacraments), is foreign to Paul's thought. Rather, Cyprian, through his creative use of reading strategies, transforms those concerns into a cohesive doctrine of the church's unity, ministry and sacraments.

²⁵¹ Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 55-68.

4. Be imitators of me: Discipline and repentance

*Discipline—the guardian of hope, the support of faith, the guide of the way of salvation, the stimulus and nourishment of good character, the teacher of virtue—causes us to abide always in Christ, and to live continually for God, and to achieve the heavenly promises and divine rewards.*¹

If discipline is of the greatest importance for salvation, then the reverse is also true: the undisciplined lose grace and perish.² The challenge of persecution makes such laxity a constant threat, and therefore brings discipline to the forefront of Cyprian's pastoral care.³ This discipline encompasses a much wider range of activities than simply the moral direction inherent in the rule of faith.⁴ As Siegfried Hübner puts it, church order and organisation, the order of the sacraments, even duties towards God can be included in this category.⁵ However, as I have already examined the church and sacraments in the previous chapter, this one will focus on how, according to Paul via Cyprian, one is to live as a faithful Christian: the attitudes and actions which are to be embraced, and those which are to be repudiated.

The bishop is widely regarded as responsible for ensuring that this discipline is maintained in the congregation.⁶ His role may be understood as encompassing the aspects of pastor, priest, teacher and judge.⁷ For Seagraves, Cyprian carries out these

¹ “Disciplina custos spei, retinaculum fidei, dux itineris salutaris, fomes ac nutrimentum bonae indolis, magistra uirtutis, facit in Christo manere semper ac iugiter Deo uiuere, ad promissa caelestia et diuina praemia peruenire.” *Hab. virg.* 1 (CSEL 3.1:187).

² Siegfried Hübner, “Kirchenbuße und Exkommunikation bei Cyprian,” *ZKT* 84 (1962): 60.

³ Dunn, “Cyprian and Women,” 207.

⁴ Although this is the main use of the term. Seagraves, *Pascentes*, 221. For a study of the broad range of meanings of *disciplina* in Tertullian, see Valentin Morel, “Disciplina: Le mot et l'idée représentée par lui dans les œuvres de Tertullien,” *RHE* 40 (1944-45): 5-46.

⁵ “Auch wenn der Begriff in einer engeren Bedeutung erscheint und der Nachdruck auf dem Leben nach der christlichen Lehre liegt, wobei die *disciplina* als Sittenlehre der *fides*, der Glaubensregel gegenübersteht.” Hübner, “Kirchenbuße,” 59.

⁶ As Dürig notes, Cyprian finds it necessary to render an account to the Roman clergy of his maintenance of discipline and his diligence. Walter Dürig, “Disciplina,” *SacEr* 4 (1952): 275-76.

⁷ “*pastor, sacerdos, doctor and iudex.*” Seagraves, *Pascentes*, 277.

responsibilities in the context of his “favourite themes of *disciplina* and *diligentia*. These two terms express not only the goal of Cyprian, but also the means to achieve this goal.”⁸ Cyprian seeks to diligently enforce discipline in his own congregation, while also directing other bishops to do likewise. The role of the bishops in maintaining discipline, as supported by Pauline texts, will be considered in this chapter.

Correlated with discipline is repentance, since, “the highest degree of blessedness is not to sin at all, the second is to recognise one’s sins.”⁹ As Burns notes, Cyprian is not particularly concerned with the contagion that may result from the presence of sinners in the congregation.¹⁰ However, just as a wound will not heal unless it is thoroughly treated, no matter how painful such treatment may be, so too sin must be fully dealt with in order to attain spiritual health.¹¹ In the case of sin, the treatment is penance,¹² carried out before the congregation and therefore reinforcing the boundaries of the community and its standards.¹³ Here again, Cyprian directs bishops in their responsibilities.

Cyprian appropriates a large amount of Pauline material in this crucial aspect of his pastoral care, using models, images, maxims, direct application, and prophetic fulfilment as reading strategies.

⁸ Seagraves, *Pascentes*, 277.

⁹ “Primus felicitatis gradus est non delinquere, secundus delicta cognoscere.” *Ep.* 59.13.4 (CCSL 3C:359).

¹⁰ Burns refers to *Laps.* 22-26 (CCSL 3:233-36) in noting that, on the contrary, sinners were in danger when receiving the Eucharist unworthily. J. Patout Burns, “Confessing the Church: Cyprian on Penance,” *StPatr* 36 (2001): 346.

¹¹ *Laps.* 14 (CCSL 3:228).

¹² *Laps.* 15-17 (CCSL 3:228-30).

¹³ Burns, “Social Structures,” 266-67. For an account of the penitential process, see Deléani, *Lettres 1-20*, 438-39.

4.1 Model

Given Cyprian's consistent emphasis on imitating Christ, as Deléani has demonstrated,¹⁴ it is unsurprising that he makes extensive use of models in advocating discipline and repentance. Firstly, he alludes to Phil 2:9 in *De unitate* where it forms part of his attempt to direct the behaviour of the confessors. The words of Christ are reinforced with the example of Christ:

He is a confessor: let him be humble and peaceful, let his actions show modesty and self-control, so that, as he is named a confessor of Christ, he may imitate the Christ whom he confesses.... If [Christ] Himself, the Word and the power and the wisdom of God His Father,¹⁵ was exalted by the Father because He humbled Himself on earth, how can ostentation appeal to Him who not only enjoined on us humility in His law, but was Himself rewarded for His humility by His Father with the most glorious of all names?¹⁶

The initial phrase, “confessor est,” is used four times in this chapter.¹⁷ Perhaps Cyprian is re-appropriating a phrase that had been deployed to highlight the prerogatives of a confessor to instead demonstrate a confessor's responsibilities? One who confesses Christ should be like Christ in being “humilis et quietus.” Similar combinations of words are frequently found in Cyprian's letters, often accompanied by the example of Christ or Paul.¹⁸ For example, *Ep.* 14 directs confessors to imitate the Lord, who did not

¹⁴ For a detailed account, see Simone Deléani, *Christum sequi: Étude d'un thème dans l'œuvre de saint Cyprien* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1979).

¹⁵ Cf. 1 Cor 1:24. Discussed in chapter 3.4 above.

¹⁶ Allusion to Phil 2:9. “confessor est: sit humilis et quietus, sit in actu suo cum disciplina modestus ut, qui Christi confessor dicitur, Christum quem confitetur imitetur ... et ipse a Patre exaltatus sit quia se in terris sermo et uirtus et sapientia Dei Patris humiliavit, quomodo potest extollentiam diligere qui et nobis humilitatem sua lege mandavit, et ipse a Patre amplissimum nomen praemio humilitatis accepit?” *Unit. eccl.* 21 (CCSL 3:264-65).

¹⁷ Cyprian uses a similar rhetorical technique in *De habitu virginum* with the repetition of, “You say you are wealthy and rich” (Locupletem te dicis et diuitem). *Hab. virg.* 8-11 (CSEL 3.1:193-95). Again in *De mortalitate*, the phrase, “Let him fear to die” (mori timeat), is repeated four times after an initial, “mori plane timeat.” *Mort.* 14 (CCSL 3A:24).

¹⁸ *Ep.* 5.2.2 (CCSL 3B:28) also uses “mites et humiles,” of which Deléani says, “Dépendance scripturaire (Mt. 11, 29) chère à l'auteur et visiblement passée dans sa langue.” Deléani, *Lettres 1-20*, 144. There is

become proud but rather more humble at the time of his passion,¹⁹ and gives further weight to the instruction by combining three separate Pauline texts:

Likewise, they should follow the teachings of the Apostle Paul. Having been imprisoned many times, scourged and exposed to the beasts,²⁰ he continued to be in all things meek and humble; not even after the third heaven and paradise did he make any arrogant claims for himself.²¹ As he said himself: “We have not eaten bread from another without payment; instead, in labour and weariness we have toiled by day and by night lest we become a burden to any of you.”²²

Paul, like Christ, is presented as a model to be imitated by the confessors. It would be a mistake, however, to think that *only* confessors are commended for being humble. Bishops, if they are to imitate Christ, must also share in his humility. Cyprian’s defence of Cornelius’ position as bishop of Rome in *Ep.* 55 refers to him as “quietus,” “modestus” and as one with “humilitate ingentiae.”²³ Cyprian himself, in response to Puppianus’ challenge—“bishops ought to be humble because both the Lord and His apostles were humble”—must, rather ironically, assert his own humility.²⁴ When

also an allusion here to Rom 12:11, “serving the times,” as Cyprian directs the presbyters and deacons in caring for the confessors without stirring up trouble: “Circa omnia enim mites et humiles, ut seruis dei congruit, temporibus seruire et quieti prospicere et plebi prouidere debemus.” *Ep.* 5.2.2 (CCSL 3B:28). As Fahey notes, Cyprian’s text was based on the reading καίρω δουλεύοντες (serving the times) instead of κυρίω δουλεύοντες (serving the Lord). Fahey, *Cyprian*, 435.

¹⁹ “Imitentur dominum qui sub ipso tempore passionis non superbius sed humilior fuit.” This is supported by a quotation from John 13:14-15. *Ep.* 14.2 (CCSL 3B:81-82).

²⁰ Allusion to 2 Cor 11:23. Paul’s “exposed to death” becomes Cyprian’s “exposed to beasts,” perhaps extrapolated from 2 Cor 11:26, which fits the threat faced by his congregation. Clarke, *Letters*, 1:266 n. 25.

²¹ Allusion to 2 Cor 12:2-4.

²² 2 Thess 3:8. “Item Pauli apostoli documenta sectentur, qui post carcerem saepe repetitum, post flagella, post bestias, circa omnia mitis et humilis perseueravit, nec post tertium caelum et paradysum quicquam sibi insolenter adsumpsit dicens: ‘neque gratis panem manducauimus ab aliquo, sed in labore et fatigatione nocte et die operantes, ne quem uestrum grauaremus.’” *Ep.* 14.2.3 (CCSL 3B:82).

²³ *Ep.* 55.8 (CCSL 3B:264-65).

²⁴ “quia et dominus et apostoli eius humiles fuerunt.” *Ep.* 66.3 (CCSL 3C:436). See also *Ep.* 74.10 (CCSL 3C:576), on bishops being meek and gentle.

Cyprian employs similar terms in commending the confessors Celerinus and Aurelius,²⁵ he is therefore more likely to be emphasising their identification with Christ than, as Bobertz expresses it, the “virtues of clientship ... perhaps to be interpreted as the proper sense of deference to their patron in the service of his interests.”²⁶ Imitation of Christ in this manner does not deny that confessors may be exalted; in fact, as the passage from Philippians shows, humility is the precursor to glory. But humility, as seen in the models of Christ and Paul, is integral to Christian identity.

If the above texts emphasise the humility that comes from the imitation of Christ, a second group of texts is used to demonstrate that identification with Christ necessitates the destruction of vices and the removal of the old man.²⁷ In *De zelo et livore*, three Pauline passages are linked together to make this point:

Even as the apostle, with foresight and wholesomeness, forewarned us of this very thing, and said: “Therefore, brothers, let us not live after the flesh; for if you live after the flesh, you will begin to die; but if you, through the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”²⁸

²⁵ “in quantum gloria sublimis, in tantum uerecundia humiles, quantum diuina dignatione promoti, tantum sua quiete et tranquillitate summissi.” *Ep.* 39.4.3 (CCSL 3B:190-91). In *Ep.* 40, Cyprian exhorts the congregation to receive the presbyter Numidicus with thanksgiving as a gift from God (*cum gratiarum actione suscipiamus hoc dei munus*—allusion to 1 Tim 4:4), “trusting that there might flourish in the ranks of our clerical assembly men of like meekness and humility” (*tam mites et humiles faciat in consessus nostri honore florere*). *Ep.* 40.1.3 (CCSL 3B:194-95). “Consessus” implies Cyprian is talking about the presbyters and bishop rather than clerics generally. Clarke, *Letters*, 2:199 n. 9.

²⁶ Bobertz, “Patronal Letters,” 257. In an earlier paper, Bobertz does acknowledge that these terms have a biblical basis, but believes Cyprian uses them to “define the proper characteristics of loyal ‘client’ clergy—a particularly tendentious reading.” Charles Arnold Bobertz, “Patronage Networks and the Study of Ancient Christianity,” *StPatr* 24 (1993): 27.

²⁷ The image of the “old man” is also used in *Hab. virg.* 23 (CSEL 3.1:204), discussed below; in *Ep.* 11.7.2 (CCSL 3B:64), exhorting the congregation not to fall away; and as part of a demonstration of the use of wine in the communion cup in *Ep.* 63.11.3 (CCSL 3C:404). This is seen as an allusion to Eph 4:22 by Clarke, *Letters*, 3:295 n. 28. Rom 6:6 by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 429.

²⁸ Rom 8:12-14. “apostolo hoc idem prouidenter et salubriter praemonente. ‘Itaque,’ inquit, ‘fratres, non secundum carnem uiuamus. Si enim secundum carnem uiuitis, incipietis mori: si autem spiritu opera

As sons of God and temples of the Holy Spirit,²⁹ Christians must live worthily of Christ:

Even as the apostle arouses and exhorts us, saying: “If you are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; occupy your minds with things that are above, not with things which are on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ, who is your life, appears, then you will also appear with him in glory.”³⁰

In baptism, Christians have died to sin and are now identified with the risen Christ:

Even as the same apostle again teaches and warns, saying: “The first man is of the dust of the earth; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthly man, so also are those who are from the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are heavenly. As we have borne the image of him who is of the earth, let us also bear the image of him who is from heaven.”³¹

carnis mortificatis, uiuetis. Quotquot enim spiritu Dei aguntur hi sunt filii dei.” *Zel. liv. 14* (CCSL 3A:82).

²⁹ Discussed in section 4.2 below.

³⁰ Col 3:1-4. “sicut apostolus excitat et hortatur. ‘Si consurrexistis,’ inquit, ‘Christo, quae sursum sunt quaerite, ubi Christus est in dextera Dei sedens: quae sursum sunt sapite, non quae terrena sunt. Mortui enim estis, et uita uestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo. Cum autem Christus apparuerit uita uestra, tunc et uos apparebitis cum eo in gloria.” *Zel. liv. 14* (CCSL 3A:83). These verses also appear, along with Col 2:20 (the only time that verse is cited), as support for the testimony, “Eum qui fidem consecutus est exposito priore homine caelestia tantum et spiritalia cogitare debere nec adtendere ad saeculum, cui iam renuntiavit.” *Test. 3.11* (CCSL 3:99-102).

³¹ 1 Cor 15:47-49. “sicut idem apostolus docet rursus et monet dicens: ‘Primus homo de terrae limo, secundus homo de caelo. Qualis ille e limo, tales et qui de limo: et qualis caelestis, tales et caelestes. Quomodo portauimus imaginem eius qui de limo est, portemus et imaginem eius qui de caelo est.” *Zel. liv. 14* (CCSL 3A:83). These verses are also used in support of the testimony, “Quod et homo et Deus Christus ex utroque genere concretus, ut mediator esse inter nos et Patrem posset.” *Test. 2.10* (CCSL 3:42-43). They are again quoted under, “Eum qui fidem consecutus est exposito priore homine caelestia tantum et spiritalia cogitare debere nec adtendere ad saeculum, cui iam renuntiavit.” *Test. 3.11* (CCSL 3:99, 101).

Christians must now be concerned with the spiritual and heavenly, as they have died to the flesh. They must bear the image of Christ with whom they are identified in their baptism and whose glory they will one day share.

The passage from 1 Corinthians is used again in *De habitu virginum*. The common participation in the new birth of baptism expressed above is affirmed and reiterated, but then applied in a particular way to the virgins:

But the greater holiness and truth of that repeated birth belongs to you, who have no longer any desires of the flesh and of the body. Only the things which belong to virtue and the Spirit have remained in you to glory. It is the apostle's word whom the Lord called a vessel of his election,³² whom God sent to proclaim the heavenly command: [cites 1 Cor 15:47-49].³³

This emphasis on virgins being especially free of the flesh is also present in *Hab. virg.* 6, discussed below under direct application.

A final allusion to these verses forms part of Cyprian's instruction on the clause, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," in *De dominica oratione*. Christians, following Christ's commands, should pray for those who are yet earthly, that God's will might be done in them, and that they might participate in what Christ has achieved:

For since the disciples are not now called by him earth, but the salt of the earth, and the apostle designates the first man as being from the dust of the earth, but the second from heaven,³⁴ we reasonably, who ought to be like God our Father, who makes his sun rise upon the good and bad, and sends rain

³² Allusion to Acts 9:15.

³³ "sed natiuitatis iteratae uobis maior sanctitas et ueritas conpetit, quibus desideria iam carnis et corporis nulla sunt. sola in uobis quae sunt uirtutis et spiritus ad gloriam remanserunt. apostoli uox est quem Dominus uas electionis suae dixit, quem ad promenda mandata caelestia Deus misit: [cites 1 Cor 15:47-49]." *Hab. virg.* 23 (CSEL 3.1:204).

³⁴ Allusion to 1 Cor 15:47.

upon the just and the unjust,³⁵ so pray and ask by the admonition of Christ as to make our prayer for the salvation of all men.³⁶

Cyprian therefore employs the words of 1 Corinthians to reinforce the earth/heaven dichotomy that appears in the Lord's Prayer. Now joined with Christ and having become heavenly in nature by faith, Christians imitate the Father in his benevolence to all and pray for the same transformation in those not yet born again. The contrast between the earthly and divine which was examined in chapter 2 is again apparent here. Also noteworthy is that prayer is an integral part of the discipline of the Christian life.

A further example of Christ being used as a model for believers is in *Test.* 3.11. Philippians 2:21 and Phil 3:19-21 are joined together, appearing as part of a lengthy catena of verses demonstrating: "The one who has received faith and put aside the old man ought to think only about heavenly and spiritual realities and not pay attention to the world which has already been renounced":³⁷

All seek their own, and not those things that are Christ's;³⁸ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and their glory is to their confusion, who mind earthly things. But our life is in heaven, from where we look for the Lord Jesus Christ who will transfigure the body belonging to our lowly state and give it a form like that of his own radiant body.³⁹

Philippians 2:21, which originally described the contrast between Timothy and others, is reappropriated here and combined with the verses from Philippians 3, resulting in a

³⁵ Allusion to Matt 5:45.

³⁶ "Nam cum discipuli ab eo iam non terra appellentur sed sal terrae et apostolus primum hominem uocet de terrae limo, secundum uero de caelo, merito et nos qui esse debemus patri Deo similes, qui solem suum oriri facit super bonos et malos et pluit super iustos et iniustos, sic Christo monente oramus et petimus, ut precem pro omnium salute faciamus." *Dom. or.* 17 (CCSL 3A:100-101).

³⁷ "Eum qui fidem consecutus est exposito priore homine caelestia tantum et spiritalia cogitare debere nec adtendere ad saeculum, cui iam renuntiauit." *Test.* 3.11 (CCSL 3:99).

³⁸ Phil 2:21.

³⁹ Phil 3:19-21. "omnes sua quaerunt et non quae sunt Christi: Quorum finis est interitus, quorum Deus est uenter, et gloria in confusione eorum qui terrena sapiunt, Nostra autem conuersatio in caelis est: unde et saluatorem expectamus Dominum Iesum Christum qui transformauit corpus humilitatis nostrae conformatum corpori claritatis suae." *Test.* 3.11 (CCSL 3:101-2).

typical paraenetic emphasis—don’t do that, do this.⁴⁰ The combination of the two passages in this way highlights the disciplinary intent of the testimony. Christ is the image of what Christians will one day be, so they should live in accordance with their heavenly destiny, putting earthly things behind them. This use of the text also displays the close connection between present action and future reward in Cyprian’s thought.

An example to be avoided is provided by an allusion to Rom 2:24 in *Ep.* 13, encouraging the confessors to persevere: “The Jews have become alienated from God, for it is due to them that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles;⁴¹ whereas, by the same token, they are dear to God whose obedience and noble witness bring praise upon the name of the Lord.”⁴² Once more, Cyprian shows no interest in the intricacies of Paul’s argument here, but rather uses the reference to encourage right behaviour.

Another description of those whose example should be repudiated is taken from Rom 3:13b-18, and cited in *De zelo et livore*:

The blessed Apostle Paul designates and points out these [jealous people] when he says, “The poison of asps is under their lips, and their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their ways, who have not known the way of peace; neither is the fear of God before their eyes.”⁴³

This series of Old Testament quotes is used by Paul to demonstrate that both Jew and Gentile are under the power of sin. For Cyprian, however, it is a useful description of

⁴⁰ See, for example, the ‘Lund account’. James M. Starr and Troels Engberg-Pedersen, “Introduction,” in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, ed. James M. Starr and Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 3.

⁴¹ Allusion to Rom 2:24.

⁴² “Nam sicut Iudaei a deo alienati sunt, propter quos nomen dei blasphematur in gentibus, ita contra deo cari sunt, per quorum disciplinam nomen domini laudabili testimonio praedicatur.” *Ep.* 13.3.2 (CCSL 3B:74).

⁴³ “Hos beatus apostolus Paulus designat et denotat dicens: ‘Venenum aspidum sub labiis eorum et os eorum maledicto et amaritudine plenum est. Veloces ad effundendum sanguinem pedes eorum, contribulatio et calamitas in uis eorum, qui uiam pacis non agnouerunt, nec est timor Dei ante oculos eorum.’” *Zel. liv.* 8 (CCSL 3A:79).

the kind of people who must not be imitated by those who wish to be free from the dangers of jealousy and envy.

All Christians are to imitate Christ and Paul, but Cyprian enjoins bishops to model themselves on Paul in a particular way. *Ep.* 4 is Cyprian's letter to his fellow bishop Pomponius regarding virgins who were sharing their beds with men.⁴⁴ Whilst a significant portion of the letter deals with the matter at hand, there is a clear concern that bishops fulfil their role of maintaining discipline in the church—the letter opens and closes with admonitions to this effect.⁴⁵ Cyprian encourages Pomponius to continue leading his flock on the path to salvation, even if his instruction is poorly received, by quoting Gal 4:16: “Have I then become your enemy by declaring the truth to you?”⁴⁶ The Apostle Paul himself faced a similar situation and is therefore a model to be emulated—criticism and opposition must not deter a bishop from giving the requisite admonitions.⁴⁷

There is, however, another dimension to being a bishop. As an imitator of Paul, the bishop not only corrects his flock but also suffers with them. A series of passages present Paul as a model, drawing on themes of weakness, mourning and suffering. In two of these instances, Cyprian alludes to the words of Rom 12:15. In the first, he appropriates Scripture as a model for his own response to the situation of the lapsed. Given the circumstances, he omits, “rejoice with those who rejoice,” and instead reinforces the mourning in a rhetorical triplet: “I mourn with those that mourn, I weep with those that weep, with the fallen I feel that I have fallen myself.”⁴⁸ In *Ep.* 55, he again uses his paraphrase of the text to direct bishops to allow the possibility of repentance. Rather than being harsh and callous, they should “mourn with those that

⁴⁴ Dated after the Decian persecution, somewhere between mid-251 and mid-253, by Dunn, “Infected Sheep,” 12-13.

⁴⁵ *Ep.* 4.1.2 (CCSL 3B:18), *Ep.* 4.5.1-2 (CCSL 3B:25-26).

⁴⁶ “ergo ego inimicus uobis factus sum uerum dicens uobis?” *Ep.* 4.5.2 (CCSL 3B:26). Deléani notes that not only is this the only time this verse is quoted in Cyprian's work, it is rare in earlier tradition, citing Clement of Alexandria (*Paed.* 1.55 [PG 8:349-50]) as an exception. Deléani, *Lettres 1-20*, 120.

⁴⁷ *Ep.* 4.5.2 (CCSL 3B:25-26).

⁴⁸ “Cum plangentibus plango, cum deflentibus defleo, cum iacentibus iacere me credo.” *Laps.* 4 (CCSL 3:223).

mourn and weep with those who weep; in so far as we can, we should set them on their feet again with the help and comfort of our love.”⁴⁹

Earlier in *Ep.* 55, Cyprian uses a series of Paul’s descriptions of his own practice to advocate for the acceptance of the repentant sinner. After references to shepherds and lost sheep,⁵⁰ he holds up Paul as a model, himself an imitator of Christ.

And so, my dearly beloved brother, what will we have done about the words of the Apostle: “I please all men in all things, seeking not what is profitable to myself but profitable to the many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ?”⁵¹ And again he says: “To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak.”⁵² As also he says: “If one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it, and if one member rejoices, all the other members rejoice with it.”⁵³

A similar emphasis on weakness and suffering appears in *Ep.* 17. Cyprian quotes 2 Cor 11:29, in conjunction with 1 Cor 12:26, to describe the distress that he and the laity share over the lapsed:

⁴⁹ “sed dolere cum dolentibus et cum flentibus flere, et eos quantum possumus auxilio et solacio nostrae dilectionis erigere.” *Ep.* 55.19.1 (CCSL 3B:278). Not noted by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 435-436. Noted by Clarke, *Letters*, 3:194 n. 84.

⁵⁰ Ezek 34:4 and Luke 15:4-5. Fattorini and Picenardi note that the theological reflection in this letter is organised on both a biblical and ecclesiological level. “Sul piano *biblico*: Cristo, buon pastore, è andato in cerca della pecorella smarrita; Egli è il medico venuto per soccorrere chi è malato; Dio è un padre buono che non vuole la morte del peccatore ma che si converta e viva.” V. Fattorini and G. Picenardi, “La riconciliazione in Cipriano di Cartagine (*ep.* 55) e Ambrogio di Milano (*De paenitentia*),” *Aug* 27 (1987): 386.

⁵¹ 1 Cor 10:33-11:1.

⁵² 1 Cor 9:22.

⁵³ 1 Cor 12:26, discussed in section 4.2 below. “Et ubi erit, frater carissime, quod apostolus dicit: ‘omnibus per omnia placeo, non quaerens quod mihi est utile, sed quod multis, ut saluentur. Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi.’ Et iterum: ‘factus sum infirmus infirmis ut infirmos lucrarem.’ Et iterum: ‘si patitur membrum unum, conpatiuntur et cetera membra: et si laetatur membrum unum, conlaetantur cetera membra.’” *Ep.* 55.15.1-2 (CCSL 3B:273-74).

I too, like you, am pained and distressed for each one of them, and am suffering and feeling what the blessed Apostle describes: “Who is weak and am I not weak? Who is made to stumble and do I not burn with indignation?”⁵⁴ And again he has claimed in his epistle: [cites 1 Cor 12:26].⁵⁵

That Paul not only permitted, but expected repentance, and that bishops should therefore do likewise, is demonstrated by a citation from 2 Corinthians 12. After condemning adultery as sin against one’s own body,⁵⁶ Cyprian shows that if they are penitent, hope still remains, “just as the Apostle himself indicates: ‘I fear lest perchance when I come to you I may mourn over many of those who sinned before and have not repented of the foul deeds they have practised, of their acts of fornication and lust.’”⁵⁷

Bishops should not, however, model themselves on philosophers. In *Ep.* 55, in between the positive role models of Paul and Moses, Cyprian places the example of the Stoics who claim that all sins are equal and who scorn pity:

But the fact is that a vast difference separates Christians and philosophers, and we are warned by the Apostle: “Beware lest you fall prey to the empty wiles of philosophy.”⁵⁸ We ought, therefore, to shun any notions which do not issue from the clemency of God but which are rather begotten of the arrogance and rigidity of philosophy.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ 2 Cor 11:29.

⁵⁵ “qui et ipse uobiscum pro singulis ingemisco pariter et doleo et patior ac sentio quod beatus apostolus dicit: ‘quis infirmatur,’ inquit, ‘et non ego infirmor? Quis scandalizatur, et non ego uror?’ Et iterum posuit in epistula sua dicens: [cites 1 Cor 12:26].” *Ep.* 17.1.1 (CCSL 3B:96).

⁵⁶ 1 Cor 6:18.

⁵⁷ 2 Cor 12:20a, 21. “ipsum apostolum dicentem: ‘timeo ne forte ueniens ad uos lugeam multos ex his qui ante peccauerunt et non egerunt paenitentiam in inmunditiis quas fecerunt et fornicationibus et libidinibus.’” *Ep.* 55.26.2 (CCSL 3B:289).

⁵⁸ Col 2:8a.

⁵⁹ “Inter Christianos autem et philosophos plurimum distat. Et cum apostolus dicat: ‘uidete ne quis uos depraedetur per philosophiam et inanem fallaciam,’ uitanda sunt quae non de dei clementia ueniunt, sed de philosophiae durioris praesumptione descendunt.” *Ep.* 55.16.1 (CCSL 3B:274).

Philosophy, presented as false wisdom as discussed in chapter 2, leads here to false practice as it is separated from God and his mercy.⁶⁰

Cyprian presents Jesus and Paul, despite their glory, as models of humility. Since Christians are no longer earthly, but are in the likeness of the one from heaven, they must put off vices and worldly cares, and set their minds on things above. Like Christ, and in imitation of the Father's benevolence, Christians must pray for those who are not yet saved. They are also to live in a way that brings glory to God, unlike the Jews who have brought God's name into disrepute. Jealous people are likewise unworthy of imitation. Paul is a model for bishops, who must speak difficult, but necessary, words in enforcing discipline. But bishops must also imitate Paul in his willingness to suffer with those who suffer and receive their repentance—they must not be hard-hearted like philosophers.

4.2 Image

Cyprian employs a range of Pauline images in his exhortations to maintain discipline and demonstrate repentance. His favoured image of putting on Christ⁶¹ is alluded to four times. Firstly, in *De bono patientiae*, he uses the identification with Christ to exhort believers to follow Christ, uniting image and model: "But if we also, beloved brethren, are in Christ, if we put him on, if he is the way of our salvation, who follow Christ in the footsteps of salvation, let us walk by the example of Christ."⁶² The other three uses are corrective, however. In *De lapsis*, he questions whether women who have sacrificed can truly be mourning their actions when they are happily wearing expensive clothes and jewellery. He contrasts this with the loss of being clothed with Christ, without

⁶⁰ As Gerard Ellspermann notes, Cyprian only mentions philosophy in connection with "moral problems." Gerard L. Ellspermann, *The Attitude of the Early Christian Latin Writers toward Pagan Literature and Learning* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1949), 46-48.

⁶¹ Gal 3:27. "quotquot in Christo baptizati estis, Christum induistis."

⁶² "Quodsi et nos, fratres dilectissimi, in Christo sumus, si ipsum induimus, si ipse est salutis nostrae uia, qui Christum uestigiis salutaribus sequimur per Christi exempla gradiamur." *Pat.* 9 (CCSL 3A:123). This allusion is not included by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 475-76. The sentence may also allude to 2 Cor 5:17, "being in Christ." See Fahey, *Cyprian*, 466.

whom they remain naked and unsightly.⁶³ Later in the same work, he uses the image to demonstrate the repentance that is required of those who have lapsed: “having once been clothed with Christ, refuse all other raiment now.”⁶⁴ In *De habitu virginum*, after quoting Isa 3:16 on how the daughters of Zion would be humbled, he turns to the virgins and asserts: “Having put on silks and purple, they cannot put on Christ.”⁶⁵ Cyprian therefore plays with the image in a number of ways. In *De lapsis*, extravagant dress demonstrates a lack of mourning over sins committed, and so those repenting of their sins must be prepared to go without clothing, whereas in *De habitu virginum*, the dress itself is an impediment to being identified with Christ.

Another image that Cyprian uses to direct the conduct of his flock is Phil 2:15b: “Shine like beacons in the world.”⁶⁶ It first appears in *Ad Quirinum*, where it provides support for the instruction, “It is not enough to be baptized and to receive the Eucharist unless one progresses in deeds and good works.”⁶⁷ Cyprian then employs the verse in *Ep.* 13 to Rogantian, encouraging the confessors to maintain gospel discipline. All Christians are to “persevere along the straight and narrow road of honour and glory”⁶⁸ by being “humble and peaceable,”⁶⁹ but this is even more crucial for confessors as they are examples for other believers. Three separate verses are used to support this direction, the citation from Paul situated between the words of Christ⁷⁰ and those of Peter.⁷¹ “And

⁶³ “An illa ingemescit et plangit cui uacat cultum pretiosae uestis induere, nec indumentum Christi quod perdidit cogitare.” *Laps.* 30 (CCSL 3:238).

⁶⁴ “post indumentum Christi perditum, nullum iam uelle uestitum.” *Laps.* 35 (CCSL 3:240).

⁶⁵ “sericum et purpuram indutae Christum induere non possunt.” *Hab. virg.* 13 (CSEL 3.1:197).

⁶⁶ “Lucete sicut luminaria in mundo.”

⁶⁷ “Parum esse baptizari et eucharistiam accipere, nisi quis factis et opere proficiat.” *Test.* 3.26 (CCSL 3:121).

⁶⁸ Allusion to Matt 7:14. “Perseuerandum nobis et in arto et in angusto itinere laudis et gloriae.” *Ep.* 13.3.1 (CCSL 3B:73).

⁶⁹ “quies et humilitas.” *Ep.* 13.3.1 (CCSL 3B:73).

⁷⁰ Matt 5:16. “sicut scriptum est domino praemonente et dicente: ‘luceat lumen uestrum coram hominibus, ut uideant bona opera uestra et clarificent patrem uestrum qui in caelis est.’” *Ep.* 13.3.2 (CCSL 3B:74).

⁷¹ 1 Pet 2:11-12. “Et Petrus similiter hortatur: ‘sicut hospites, inquit, et peregrini abstinete uos a carnalibus desideriis, quae militant aduersus animam, conuersationem habentes inter gentiles bonam, ut

the Apostle Paul says: ‘Shine like beacons in the world.’”⁷² Once again, the paradoxical link between humility and glory frames the discussion. The image of a beacon is a positive one, but the form of citation for the quotation from Matthew makes the tone clear—Jesus speaks in warning. Here also we see Cyprian’s “instinctive rhetorical habits,” using three texts to demonstrate his point.⁷³

The image of light and darkness is also used in *De zelo et livore* through an extended quotation of Rom 13:12-13. As is Cyprian’s custom, he frames the biblical text with key phrases from the citation. Those who have been illuminated by Christ and escaped the darkness should walk in the light:

“The night has passed over, and the day is approaching: let us therefore cast away the works of darkness, and let us put upon us the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in lusts and wantonness, not in strifes and jealousy.”⁷⁴ If the darkness has departed from your breast ... if you have begun to be a man of light, do those things which are Christ’s, because Christ is the Light and the Day.⁷⁵

The image of temples is another which appears frequently in Cyprian’s work. A quotation of 1 Cor 3:16-17a supports the testimony, “That even a baptized person loses the grace that he has attained, unless he keeps his innocence”:⁷⁶ “Paul to the Corinthians: ‘Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God

dum retractant de uobis quasi de malignis, bona opera uestra aspicientes magnificent dominum.” *Ep.* 13.3.2 (CCSL 3B:74).

⁷² Phil 2:15b. “Et Paulus apostolus dicit: ‘lucete sicut luminaria in mundo.’” *Ep.* 13.3.2 (CCSL 3B:74).

⁷³ Clarke, *Letters*, 1:256-57.

⁷⁴ Rom 13:12-13. Note that Cyprian has replaced “aemulatione” with “zelo.” Fahey, *Cyprian*, 437.

⁷⁵ “Nox transiuit, dies autem adpropinquauit. Abiciamus ergo opera tenebrarum et induamus arma lucis. Tamquam in die decenter ambulemus, non in comensationibus et in ebrietatibus, non in concupiscentiis et impudiciis, non in certaminibus et zelo.’ Si recesserunt de pectore tuo tenebrae ... si homo lucis esse coepisti, quae sunt Christi gere, quia lux et dies Christus est.” *Zel. liv.* 10 (CCSL 3A:80).

⁷⁶ “Baptizatum quoque gratiam perdere quam consecutus sit, nisi innocentiam seruet.” *Test.* 3.27 (CCSL 3:122).

lives in you? If anyone violates the temple of God, God will destroy him.”⁷⁷ The use of the verse seems to focus on the individual Christian as a temple of God, rather than the community of believers corporately. The one who is in danger of violating the temple is the believer who does not remain pure; equally, the temples of the confessors’ bodies are polluted by sharing their beds with women, even if they do not have sex.⁷⁸

Cyprian also alludes to the Christian as a temple of God in *Ad Donatum*. Cyprian encourages his friend to continue in prayer and the reading of Scripture, valuing not houses adorned with gold and marble, but rather the perfecting of the self as the home “in which God has settled in as a temple, in which the Holy Spirit has begun to dwell.”⁷⁹ The image of Christians as individual temples is also found in *De zelo et livore*, to exhort God’s children to live in accordance with Christ:

If we are the sons of God,⁸⁰ if we are already beginning to be his temples,⁸¹ if, having received the Holy Spirit, we are living holily and spiritually, if we have raised our eyes from earth to heaven, if we have lifted our hearts, filled with God and Christ, to things above and divine, let us do nothing but what is worthy of God and Christ.⁸²

The image of temples is twice combined with the image of being purchased, drawing on 1 Cor 6:19-20, although the use of “God’s temples” rather than “temples of the Holy Spirit” suggests an assimilation to 1 Cor 3:16-17.⁸³ In a lengthy discussion in *De habitu*

⁷⁷ 1 Cor 3:16-17a. “In epistula Pauli ad Corinthios: ‘Nescitis quia templum Dei estis et spiritus Dei habitat in uobis? Si qui templum Dei uiolauerit, uiolabit illum Deus.’” *Test.* 3.27 (CCSL 3:122).

⁷⁸ *Ep.* 13.5.1 (CCSL 3B:76-77). This allusion is not noted by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 444-45.

⁷⁹ “quam Dominus insedit templi uice, in qua Spiritus sanctus coepit habitare.” *Don.* 15 (CCSL 3A:12). This allusion is not noted by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 444-45.

⁸⁰ Allusion to Rom 8:16b.

⁸¹ Allusion to 1 Cor 3:16.

⁸² “Si filii Dei sumus, si templa eius esse iam coepimus, si accepto Spiritu sancto sancte et spiritaliter uiuimus, si de terris oculos ad caelum sustulimus, si ad superna et diuina plenum Deo et Christo pectus ereximus, non nisi quae sunt Deo et Christo digna faciamus.” *Zel. liv.* 14 (CCSL 3A:82)

⁸³ Watson further suggests that in here in *De habitu virginum*, the phrase “quando qui uiolat et ipse uiolatur” may be a reworking of the phrase from 1 Cor 3:17. E. W. Watson, “The *De Habitu Virginum* of St Cyprian,” *JTS* 22 (1921): 362-63 n. 1.

virginum, Cyprian identifies the members of a Christian's body with God's temple which must not be polluted:

We are the worshippers and priests of those temples; let us obey him whose we have already begun to be. Paul tells us in his epistles, in which he has formed us to a course of living by divine teaching, "You are not your own, you were bought at a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body."⁸⁴

Since Christians have been redeemed by the blood of Christ,⁸⁵ they must obey and serve him so that God's temple remains undefiled. To do otherwise is to risk offending God, and having him depart from the temple.

Cyprian uses the same verses in his treatise on the Lord's Prayer, as he reflects on the privilege of calling God, "Father," and of being his children, which means imitating him:

Let us live as temples of God,⁸⁶ that it may be plain that God dwells in us. Let not our doings be degenerate from the Spirit; so that we who have begun to be heavenly and spiritual, may consider and do nothing but spiritual and heavenly things ... The blessed apostle also has laid down in his epistle: [cites 1 Cor 6:19b-20].⁸⁷

⁸⁴ 1 Cor 6:19-20. "eorum nos templorum cultores et antistites sumus: seruamus illi, cuius esse iam coepimus. Paulus in epistulis suis dicit, quibus nos ad curricula uiuendi per diuina magisteria formauit: 'non estis uestri: empti enim estis magno [pretio]. clarificate et portate Deum in corpore uestro.'" *Hab. virg.* 2 (CSEL 3.1:188). 1 Cor 6:19-20 is also used as support for the testimony, "Eum qui fidem consecutus est exposito priore homine caelestia tantum et spiritalia cogitare debere nec adtendere ad saeculum, cui iam renuntiauit." *Test.* 3.11 (CCSL 3:99-101). It appears again under the heading, "Quod redempti et uiuificati Christi sanguine nihil Christo praeponere debeamus." *Fort.* 6 (CCSL 3:193-94).

⁸⁵ Allusion to Eph 1:7.

⁸⁶ Allusion to 1 Cor 3:17/1 Cor 6:19.

⁸⁷ "Conuersemur quasi Dei templa, ut Deum in nobis constet habitare, nec sit degener actus noster ab spiritu, ut qui spiritales et caelestes esse coepimus non nisi spiritalia et caelestia cogitemus et agamus ... Beatus quoque apostolus in epistula sua posuit: [cites 1 Cor 6:19b-20]." *Dom. or.* 11 (CCSL 3A:96). An echo is also found in *Eleem.* 2: "Misericors monet misericordiam fieri, et quia seruare quaerit quos magno redemit post gratiam baptismi sordidatos docet denuo posse purgari." (CCSL 3A:56).

As seen here, the image of the temple, the Christian as child of God, and life in the Spirit are closely connected in Cyprian's thought.

Cyprian twice uses the phrase, "eyes of your heart," an image found in Eph 1:18. In *De lapsis*, he calls on the lapsed to recognise their sins, and to open the eyes of their heart⁸⁸ "to the realization of [their] crime, neither despairing of God's mercy nor yet claiming instant pardon."⁸⁹ In *De zelo et livore*, Old Testament examples of the dangers of envy are followed by a statement that the Jews chose to envy Christ rather than believe him: "Disparaging those great works which he did, they were deceived by blinding jealousy, and could not open the eyes of their heart to the knowledge of divine things."⁹⁰ Cyprian concludes by exhorting the brethren to be vigilant and courageous, and to arm their hearts against such a destructive evil.

In *De habitu virginum*, Cyprian faces the challenge that although he is addressing women, the scriptural texts on virginity are addressed to men. He resolves the problem by recourse to the image of the two being one flesh, found in Gen 2:24 and Eph 5:31:

For not only thus does the Lord promise the grace of continency to men, and pass over women; but since the woman is a portion of the man, and is taken and formed from him, God in Scripture almost always speaks to the first formed, because they are two in one flesh, and in the male is at the same time signified the woman also.⁹¹

To be clothed with Christ is to follow him and imitate his example. If Christians fail to do so, particularly by sacrificing to the gods, then their clothing should represent their mourning and repentance. In fact, as he informs the virgins, adorning oneself with

⁸⁸ Bévenot translates, "open your soul," obscuring the reference. Bévenot, *Lapsed, Unity*, 40.

⁸⁹ "ad intellegentiam delicti uestri oculos cordis aperite, nec desperantes misericordiam domini nec tamen iam ueniam uindicantes." *Laps.* 35 (CCSL 3:240).

⁹⁰ "Obtrecentes magnalibus quae ille faciebat zelo excaecante decepti sunt nec ad diuina noscenda cordis oculos aperire potuerunt." *Zel. liv.* 5 (CCSL 3A:77).

⁹¹ "neque enim tantum masculis continentiae gratiam Dominus repromittit et feminas praeterit, sed quoniam uiri portio est femina et ex eo sumpta adque formata est, in scripturis fere omnibus ad protoplastum Deus loquitur, quia sunt duo in carne una et in masculo simul significatur et femina." *Hab. virg.* 4 (CSEL 3.1:190).

expensive clothes prevents identification with Christ. Imitating Christ means maintaining gospel discipline, which all Christians, especially confessors, are to do. In this way, they will be beacons to the world. This connection of light with behaviour is likewise found in a quotation from Romans, where Cyprian appropriates Paul's language, exhorting the community to put off the works of darkness and live according to the light of day.

Maintaining purity is a key aspect of Cyprian's use of temple imagery, but it is not the only one. God's dwelling in the believer is reason to continue in the spiritual disciplines of Scripture reading and prayer, and to focus on the heavenly, bringing to fulfilment what has been promised. The image of the temple is combined with that of being purchased—the one who has been bought by the blood of Christ should obey him, and not fall away from the life of the Spirit. Lapsed Christians must open the eyes of their heart to recognise their sins; Christians in general must be wary of the evil of jealousy which prevented the Jews from recognising divine things. The image of the two becoming one flesh is not used for teaching on marriage, but rather as confirmation that texts on virginity addressed to men are equally applicable to women.

4.3 Maxim

Maxims are another fruitful reading strategy for Cyprian in this area. The first is drawn from Gal 1:10, "If I pleased people, I would not be a servant of Christ."⁹² This is not surprising for, as Deléani attests, the opposition between the two had become a commonplace in the early church.⁹³ Cyprian uses the quotation twice to encourage bishops to maintain discipline, despite the unpopularity of such a stance. The first use is in conjunction with Gal 4:16 in *Ep.* 4 to Pomponius,⁹⁴ and the second is in *Ep.* 59, Cyprian's letter to Cornelius on Felicissimus and others who have separated themselves from the church.⁹⁵ In both cases, the verse is used to exhort bishops to please God rather than people—they must not be dissuaded from their divine mission of proclaiming life-

⁹² "si hominibus placerem, Christi seruus non essem." *Ep.* 4.5.2 (CCSL 3B:26), *Ep.* 59.8.2 (CCSL 3C:350).

⁹³ Deléani, *Lettres 1-20*, 121.

⁹⁴ *Ep.* 4.5.2 (CCSL 3B:26).

⁹⁵ *Ep.* 59.8.2 (CCSL 3C:350).

giving truth by the threat of abuse. Even if they are unsuccessful in persuading recalcitrant members of their flock to please Christ, they can at least ensure that they themselves please him.⁹⁶

The verse is used again in *Ep.* 63 to overcome the objections of those who hesitate to drink wine in the morning.⁹⁷ Cyprian accuses them of being ashamed of the blood that Christ has shed, which, he predicts, will lead to unwillingness to shed their own blood for him in times of persecution.⁹⁸

Whereas we have to remember the words of the Lord in the Gospel: “If any man is ashamed of me, the Son of man will be ashamed of him.”⁹⁹ And the Apostle likewise says: “If I were wanting to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”¹⁰⁰

Pairing of the words of the Lord with the words of Paul is a feature of Cyprian’s technique in this letter, as he seeks to counter the tradition of his opponents with the directions of Christ and the apostles. A final quotation of this useful verse is found in *De habitu virginum* in conjunction with Ps 52:6,¹⁰¹ a combination also present in *Ad Quirinum*.¹⁰² The virgins’ dress and ornamentation demonstrate that they are striving to

⁹⁶ *Ep.* 4.5.2 (CCSL 3B:26).

⁹⁷ Clarke thinks it is because the smell of wine on their breath in the morning may give them away as Christians. Clarke, *Letters*, 3:297 n. 36. McGowan, however, believes it may be because “there is here at least a remnant of a conscientious objection of sorts: a refusal to participate in what seems to be a sacrificial ritual, or to share in a cup that is identified as the blood of Christ and thus also in guilt for Christ’s death.” Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 206. But see also his comment on the correct time for drinking. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists*, 208-9.

⁹⁸ *Ep.* 63.15.2-3 (CCSL 3C:411).

⁹⁹ Mark 8:38 or Luke 9:26 with omissions. See Fahey, *Cyprian*, 343-44.

¹⁰⁰ “Porro autem dominus in euangelio dicit: ‘qui confusus me fuerit, confundetur eum filius hominis.’ Et apostolus quoque loquitur dicens: ‘si hominibus placerem, Christi seruus non essem.’” *Ep.* 63.15.3 (CCSL 3C:411-12). Clarke’s translation here follows Hartel’s text. CCSL notes the variant reading of “placere uellem.” (CCSL 3C:412).

¹⁰¹ *Hab. virg.* 5 (CSEL 3.1:190).

¹⁰² As the only verses in support of the testimony, “Non hominibus sed Deo placendum.” *Test.* 3.55 (CCSL 3:142).

please men (in a gender-specific application of the verse), with the result that they offend God. This is at odds with their heavenly calling.¹⁰³

The second maxim that Cyprian employs a number of times in the area of discipline and repentance is the brief quotation of Galatians 6:7a, “God is not mocked.” In *De lapsis*, Cyprian emphasises the importance of proper confession in the wake of the Decian persecution. He uses as an example those who confess to the priests the fact that they even *thought* of sacrificing or gaining a certificate, “knowing that it is written: ‘God is not mocked.’”¹⁰⁴ He contrasts this attitude with that of those who, having acquired a certificate, are attempting to avoid penance and deceive God. In *Ep.* 67, the quotation has the same force. Cyprian, with the support of the African bishops, condemns Basilides, who had been removed as bishop because he had obtained a certificate in the persecution. Despite this, he had gone to Rome and managed to gain Stephen’s support to be reinstated. Cyprian declares: “But even if Basilides may have succeeded in imposing upon men, upon God he cannot so succeed, inasmuch as it is written: ‘God is not mocked.’”¹⁰⁵

A third use of this verse has a different rhetorical use. In *Ep.* 55, a letter replete with biblical quotations and allusions, Cyprian is defending the decision allowing those who had obtained certificates to be readmitted to the church, and those who had sacrificed to be admitted on their deathbed. He addresses a potential objection—the bishops may be deceived by someone’s “sham repentance.”¹⁰⁶ In this case, “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 emend the sentence of His servants.”¹⁰⁷ Having dealt with this concern, he continues with a number of texts which support his argument on being kind and merciful towards sinners.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ *Hab. virg.* 5 (CSEL 3.1:190).

¹⁰⁴ “scientes scriptum esse: ‘Deus non deridetur.’” *Laps.* 28 (CCSL 3:236-37).

¹⁰⁵ “Obrepere autem si hominibus Basilides potuit, deo non potest, cum scriptum sit: ‘deus non deridetur.’” *Ep.* 67.5.4 (CCSL 3C:455-56).

¹⁰⁶ “paenitentiae simulatione.” *Ep.* 55.18.1 (CCSL 3B:276).

¹⁰⁷ “deus, qui non deridetur et qui cor hominis intuetur de his quae nos minus perspeximus iudicet et seruorem sententiam dominus emendet.” *Ep.* 55.18.1 (CCSL 3B:276-77).

¹⁰⁸ *Ep.* 55.18.1-19.1 (CCSL 3B:277-78).

Another text used as a maxim in the area of discipline is an abbreviation of Col 4:2, omitting the direction to be thankful. In *Ep.* 11, Cyprian has received a vision reproaching the community for their lack of prayer: “We must, therefore, cast off and burst the bonds of sleep and pray with urgency and watchfulness, as the Apostle Paul enjoins us: ‘Be urgent and watchful in prayer.’”¹⁰⁹ Unsurprisingly, the text is also used as support for the testimony, “We must be urgent in prayer,”¹¹⁰ and in the treatise on the Lord’s Prayer. In the latter, the Christian ought to imitate the church in the Song of Songs:

“I sleep but my heart is awake.”¹¹¹ Therefore the apostle anxiously and carefully admonishes us, saying: “Be urgent and watchful in prayer,”¹¹² teaching, that is, and showing that those are able to obtain from God what they ask, whom God sees to be watchful in their prayer.¹¹³

A further maxim related to discipline is in a joint letter from Cyprian and his colleagues responding to a case of virgins sharing the same bed with men. Not only should they not sleep with men, they should not even live with them due to the weakness of their sex and their vulnerable age. They should therefore be under the direction of the bishops: “Otherwise the devil may be given an opportunity to do them harm as he lies in ambush, on the watch to wreak havoc amongst us. As the Apostle also says: ‘Give no opportunity to the devil.’”¹¹⁴ It is surprising that this is the only use of this maxim in Cyprian’s extant writings, given its utility and the frequent references elsewhere to the wiles of the devil.

¹⁰⁹ “Excutiamus itaque et abrumparamus somni uincula et instanter ac uigilanter oremus, sicut Paulus apostolus praecipit dicens: ‘instare orationi uigilantes in ea.’” *Ep.* 11.5.1 (CCSL 3B:61-62).

¹¹⁰ “Orationibus insistendum.” *Test.* 3.120 (CCSL 3:179). Ps 1:2 is also cited.

¹¹¹ Song 5:2a. Note the standard identification of the female speaker in Song of Songs with the church.

¹¹² Col 4:2.

¹¹³ “‘Ego dormio et cor meum uigilat.’ Quapropter sollicite et caute apostolus admonet dicens: ‘Instare orationi uigilantes in ea,’ docens scilicet et ostendens eos impetrare quod postulant de Deo posse, quos Deus uideat in oratione uigilare.” *Dom. or.* 31 (CCSL 3A:109).

¹¹⁴ Eph 4:27. “ne diabolo insidianti et saeuire cupienti ad nocendum detur occasio, quando et apostolus dicat: ‘nolite locum dare diabolo.’” *Ep.* 4.2.1 (CCSL 3B:19).

A final maxim that Cyprian uses, and rewrites, is in advising bishop Rogatianus how to deal with a disobedient deacon. If the deacon persists in his insolent behaviour, Rogatianus should depose or excommunicate him, in line with the powers of the bishop's office: "The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, said: 'Let no man despise you for your youth.'¹¹⁵ Your colleagues have, accordingly, all the more reason for saying to you: 'Let no man despise you for your age.'¹¹⁶

Paul's words on the necessity of pleasing Christ, rather than people, are useful in a range of situations. If it is incumbent upon all Christians to seek divine rather than human approval, it is particularly so for bishops, whose role it is to maintain discipline. Virgins also receive specific direction: they must seek to please Christ rather than dressing to attract men. The brief maxim, "God is not mocked," demonstrates that attempting to deceive God will not succeed, as he can see into people's hearts. The potential for bishops to be misled is, however, no reason for repentance to be denied to the lapsed; God will correct any decision by a bishop granted under false pretences. The spiritual discipline of prayer is central to the life of faith. Christians are exhorted to be urgent and watchful (although not thankful), in prayer, thereby obtaining what they request. Of course, the devil is always on the lookout to do harm, so it is important that virgins do not live with men, lest they provide the adversary with an opportunity to wreak havoc. Finally, Cyprian rewrites a maxim in favour of the aged bishop Rogatianus, which becomes: "Let no man despise you for your age."

4.4 Direct application

Direct application of Pauline texts to matters of discipline is Cyprian's most frequently used strategy. This is due to the great importance of this area for Cyprian, but also points to the large number of texts in the Pauline corpus which address this issue. The majority of the verses used by Cyprian here are from the undisputed letters, although Ephesians and the Pastorals are used to support a number of testimonies in *Ad Quirinum*.

¹¹⁵ 1 Tim 4:12.

¹¹⁶ "Nam si apostolus Paulus ad Timotheum scribens dixit: 'iuuentutem tuam nemo despiciat,' quanto magis tibi a collegis tuis dicendum est: 'senectutem tuam nemo despiciat'?" *Ep.* 3.3.3 (CCSL 3B:15).

In *Ep.* 13, Cyprian attempts to discipline recalcitrant confessors. He warns them against being inflated with pride by emphasising the humility of Christ, in conjunction with a quote from Rom 11:20b-21: “Be not high-minded but fear. For if the Lord spared not the natural branches, it may be He will not spare you either.”¹¹⁷ It seems that, because of their confession of Christ, the confessors no longer feel constrained to observe gospel precepts, resulting in instances of drunkenness and debauchery, returning from banishment, pride and sharing beds with women.¹¹⁸ Along with these is the issue of quarrelling and rivalry, which Cyprian addresses with a quotation from Gal 5:14b-15, followed by an allusion to 1 Cor 6:10: “‘You should love your neighbour as yourself. But if you carp at and find fault with each other, you run the risk of destroying each other.’ You, too, I beg you should refrain from wrangling and back-biting, for those who back-bite will not obtain the kingdom of God.”¹¹⁹ Deléani notes in this section the frequent allusions to the fruits of the spirit, as opposed to the desires of the flesh, which are found in Gal 5:16-26.¹²⁰ Being victorious in this struggle is central to Cyprian’s view of the Christian life.¹²¹

In his treatise on the Lord’s Prayer, Cyprian quotes extensively from Gal 5:17, 19-23 while commenting on the phrase, “Your will be done”:

¹¹⁷ “noli altum sapere, sed time. Si enim dominus naturalibus ramis non pepercit, ne forte nec tibi parcat.” *Ep.* 13.4.2 (CCSL 3B:75). Rom 11:20b-21 is also cited, along with Rom 13:7-8a for the testimony, “Humilitatem et quietem in omnibus tenendam.” *Test.* 3.5 (CCSL 3:92-93).

¹¹⁸ *Ep.* 13.5.1 (CCSL 3B:76-77).

¹¹⁹ “‘diliges proximum tuum tamquam te. Si autem mordetis et incusatis inuicem, uidete ne consumamini ab inuicem.’ Conuiciis etiam et maledictis quaeso uos abstinete, quia neque maledici regnum dei consequuntur.” *Ep.* 13.5.2 (CCSL 3B:77). Gal 5:14b-15 is also used in *Ad Quirinum* as one of a large number of texts supporting the heading, “Agapem et dilectionem fraternam religiose et firmiter exercendam.” *Test.* 3.3 (CCSL 3:89-90). 1 Cor 6:10b also appears, along with a citation from Matt 5:22, in *Ep.* 59 in which Cyprian writes to Cornelius against the schismatics: “Nam cum scriptum sit: ‘neque maledici regnum dei consequuntur,’ et iterum dominus in euangelio suo dicat: ‘qui dixerit fratri suo fatue et qui dixerit racha, reus erit in gehenna ignis.’” *Ep.* 59.4.1 (CCSL 3C:342-43). Cyprian argues that if this is God’s judgement on those who abuse their brethren, how much more will those who abuse their bishop be condemned?

¹²⁰ Deléani, *Lettres 1-20*, 191.

¹²¹ *Zel. liv.* 16 (CCSL 3A:84-85).

This is what the Apostle Paul openly and manifestly declares by his words: “The flesh,” he says, “lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: for these are contrary to one another, so that you cannot do the things that you want. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adulteries, fornications, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, murders, hatred, discord, jealousy, wrath, strife, seditions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, revellings, and the like. Those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, generosity, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control, chastity.”¹²²

Here Cyprian is at his most comfortable, exhorting his flock to petition God so that “earthly things should give place to heavenly, and that spiritual and divine things should prevail.”¹²³

Besides this indication of Cyprian’s focus on a new reality available to those in Christ, his use of Galatians here is noteworthy for another reason. Despite the lengthy quotation, Cyprian omits Gal 5:18, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law.”¹²⁴ He also finishes the quote before the end of v 23, omitting, “There is no law against such things.” Although verse 24 is included when the same passage appears in *Ad Quirinum*,¹²⁵ this clause is still omitted.¹²⁶ Similarly, in another testimony in *Ad Quirinum* utilising Gal 4:4 (mistakenly identified as being from 2 Thessalonians):

¹²² “Quod aperte atque manifeste apostolus Paulus sua uoce declarant: ‘Caro, inquit, concupiscit aduersus spiritum et spiritus aduersus carnem. Haec enim inuicem aduersantur sibi, ut non quae uultis ipsa faciatis. Manifesta autem sunt facta carnis, quae sunt adulteria, fornicationes, inmunditiae, spurcitiae, idolatriae, ueneficia, homicidia, inimicitiae, contentiones, aemulationes, animositates, prouocationes, simultates, dissensiones, haereses, inuidiae, ebrietates, comisationes et his similia: qui talia agunt regnum Dei non possidebunt. Fructus autem spiritus est caritas, gaudium, pax, magnanimitas, bonitas, fides, mansuetudo, continentia, castita.’” *Dom. or.* 16 (CCSL 3A:100).

¹²³ “ut terrena caelestibus cedant, spiritalia et diuina praeualeant.” *Dom. or.* 16 (CCSL 3A:100).

¹²⁴ NRSV. Tertullian likewise omits this verse in his writings. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 477.

¹²⁵ *Test.* 3.64 (CCSL 3:154-55). As the only passage quoted in support of the heading, “Quae sint carnalia quae mortem pariant et quae spiritalia quae ad uitam ducant.” Some manuscripts have *agape* rather than *caritas* in the list of the fruits of the spirit. CCSL 3:155.

¹²⁶ This is not noted by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 477.

“When the fullness of time had come, God sent his son, born of a woman,”¹²⁷ the final phrase, “born under the law,” is not present.¹²⁸ I will consider why this may be the case in the conclusion to this chapter.

In *De zelo et livore*, Cyprian emphasises the need to be free from envy, alluding to Paul’s words in 1 Cor 13:2-3 that not even faith, alms or martyrdom will avail those without love. He then cites verse 4, and continues by quoting 1 Cor 3:1-3 in full:

“Love is magnanimous, love is kind, love does not envy,”¹²⁹ teaching, doubtless, and showing that whoever is magnanimous, and kind, and averse from jealousy and envy, such a one can maintain love. Moreover, in another place, when he was advising that the person who has already become filled with the Holy Spirit, and a child of God by heavenly birth, should observe nothing but spiritual and divine things, he lays it down, and says: “Indeed, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but as fleshly—mere babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not meat, for you were not yet ready. In fact, you are still not ready, you are still fleshly. While there is still jealousy, and contention, and strifes among you, are you not fleshly, walking according to human ways?”¹³⁰

¹²⁷ “Item Paulus ad Thessalonicenses II: ‘Ad ubi uenit adinpletio temporis, misit Deus filium suum natum de muliere.’” *Test.* 2.8 (CCSL 3:40).

¹²⁸ In common with Tertullian’s usage. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 476.

¹²⁹ 1 Cor 13:4.

¹³⁰ 1 Cor 3:1-3. “‘caritas magnanima est, caritas benigna est, caritas non zelat,’ docens scilicet et ostendens eum posse caritatem tenere quisque magnanimus fuerit et benignus et zeli ac liuoris alienus. Item alio loco cum moneret ut homo iam sancto spiritu plenus et natiuitate caelesti dei filius factus non nisi spiritalia et diuina sectetur, ponit et dicit: ‘et ego quidem, fratres, non potui uobis loqui quasi spiritalibus sed quasi carnalibus, quasi infantibus in christo. Lacte uos potaui, non cibo. Nondum enim poteratis, sed neque nunc potestis. Adhuc enim estis carnales. Vbi enim in uobis zelus et contentio et dissensiones, nonne carnales estis et secundum hominem ambulatis?’” *Zel. liv.* 13 (CCSL 3A:82). 1 Cor 3:1-3 and 1 Cor 13:2-8 are also cited as support for the testimony, “Agapem et dilectionem fraternam religiose et firmiter exercendam.” *Test.* 3.3 (CCSL 3:89).

Jealousy and envy have no part in the spiritual life which should be defined by love. In *De bono patientiae*, Cyprian shows that this love, the basis of peace and unity, greater than hope and faith,¹³¹ good works and martyrdom, cannot endure without patience:

The apostle, finally, when speaking of love, joined to it endurance and patience. “Love,” he says, “is magnanimous, love is kind, love does not envy, is not puffed up, is not provoked, thinks no evil, loves all things, believes all things, hopes all things, bears all things.”¹³² There he shows that it can tenaciously persevere, because it knows how to bear all things. And in another place: “Bearing one another,” he says, “in love, using every effort to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”¹³³

So patience is necessary to maintaining unity and peace. He continues by demonstrating that a patient heart has no room for anger and strife, citing Eph 4:30-31: “Finally, the apostle admonishes and teaches, saying: ‘Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you are sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and anger, and wrath, and clamour, and blasphemy be put away from you.’”¹³⁴

Since Christians have exchanged the stormy seas of the flesh for the tranquil harbour of Christ, anger and discord have no place in their hearts—they are forbidden to return evil for evil.¹³⁵ The patient heart is, of course, a reflection of God’s patience which benefits

¹³¹ Allusion to 1 Cor 13:13.

¹³² 1 Cor 13:4-5, 7.

¹³³ Eph 4:2b-3. “Apostolus denique cum de caritate loqueretur, tolerantiam illi et patientiam iunxit. ‘Caritas,’ inquit, ‘magnanima est, caritas benigna est, caritas non aemulatur, non inflator, non irritator, non cogitat malum, omnia diligit, omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet.’ Ostendit inde illa perseuerare tenaciter posse quod nouerit omnia sustinere. Et alio loco, ‘sustinentes,’ inquit, ‘inuicem in dilectione, satis agentes seruare unitatem spiritus in coniunctione pacis.’” *Pat.* 15 (CCSL 3A:127).

¹³⁴ Eph 4:30-31. “Admonet denique apostolus et docet docens: ‘Nolite contristare Spiritum sanctum Dei in quo signati estis in diem redemptionis. Omnis amaritudo et ira et indignatio et clamor et blasphemia auferantur a uobis.’” *Pat.* 16 (CCSL 3A:127-28). This is also the only verse given in support of the testimony, “Non contristandum Spiritum sanctum quem accepimus.” *Test.* 3.7 (CCSL 3:96).

¹³⁵ Allusion to Rom 12:17a. *Pat.* 16 (CCSL 3A:128). The verse is also cited, along with Rom 12:21, as support for the testimony, “Vicem malis non reddendam.” *Test.* 3.23 (CCSL 3:120).

humanity, as Cyprian explains earlier in the treatise. He introduces a quote from Romans with citations from Ezekiel¹³⁶ and Joel¹³⁷ on God's desire for repentance:

Which, moreover, the blessed apostle referring to, and recalling the sinner to, repentance, sets forward and says: "Or do you despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the patience and goodness of God leads you to repentance? But according to your hard and impenitent heart you store up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and of revelation of the righteous judgement of God, who will render to each according to his works."¹³⁸

God's patience results in eternal life for those who repent; those who refuse God's mercy receive the punishment they deserve. In *De lapsis*, Cyprian emphasises that it is not the confessors, but only Christ that can grant mercy: "Sins committed against Him can be cancelled by Him alone who bore our sins and suffered for us, by Him whom God delivered up for our sins."¹³⁹ The bishops must be confident that the requests of the martyrs are in accordance with the will of the one who will judge.¹⁴⁰

Cyprian twice demonstrates the unwillingness of some to repent, using 2 Thess 2:10-12: "They have not the love of truth so as to find salvation. God shall, therefore, put them

¹³⁶ "Nolo mortem morientis, quantum ut reuertatur et uiuat." Ezek 18:32. *Pat.* 4 (CCSL 3A:120).

¹³⁷ "Reuertimini ad Dominum Deum uestrum, quoniam misericors et pius est et patiens et multae miserationis et qui sententiam flectat aduersus malitias irrogatas." Joel 2:13. *Pat.* 4 (CCSL 3A:120).

¹³⁸ Rom 2:4-6. "Quod beatus apostolus Paulus commemorans et peccatorem ad paenitentiam reuocans proponit et dicit: 'An numquid opulentiam bonitatis eius et sustinentiam et patientiam contemnis ignorans quoniam patientia et bonitas Dei ad paenitentiam te adducit? Tu autem secundum duritiam tuam et cor impaenitens thesaurizas tibi iram in diem irae et reuelationis iusti iudicii Dei, qui reddet unicuique secundum opera sua.'" *Pat.* 4 (CCSL 3A:120). This passage is also cited as evidence for the testimony, "Deum ad hoc patientem esse ut nos paeniteat peccati nostri et reformemur." *Test.* 3.35 (CCSL 3:129-30).

¹³⁹ Allusion to Rom 4:25/8:32. "Veniam peccatis quae in ipsum commissa sunt solus potest ille largiri qui peccata nostra portauit, qui pro nobis doluit, quem Deus tradidit pro peccatis nostris." *Laps.* 17 (CCSL 3:230). Although, as Bévenot clarifies, this statement is directed against the wholesale remission of sins without penance. It is not intended to "deprive bishops and priests of the power to forgive sins under proper conditions." Maurice Bévenot, "The Sacrament of Penance and St. Cyprian's *De lapsis*," *TS* 16 (1955): 187.

¹⁴⁰ *Laps.* 18 (CCSL 3:231).

under a delusion, so that they believe falsehood, so that they may all be brought to justice, all who have not believed the truth but take delight in wickedness.”¹⁴¹ In *De lapsis*, Cyprian warns his flock not to be influenced by the foolishness of those who do not even recognise their sins, let alone repent of them. Citing 2 Thess 2:10-12, he continues: “Thus, self-contented without justice, their minds stricken with a foolish madness, they despise the commands of God, they leave their wounds untended, they refuse to do penance.”¹⁴² Similarly, in *Ep.* 59, he cites the verses to demonstrate that God’s wrath has prevented such people from repenting and “coming back to be healed, from finding in adequate deeds of reparation and prayers of entreaty the cure for the sins they have committed.”¹⁴³

However, to those who do repent, mercy must be shown, as Cyprian urges in *Ep.* 55, using a string of Pauline quotes:

Yet, for our part, my brother, we ought all the while to keep in mind the words of Scripture: “A brother who helps a brother will be exalted,”¹⁴⁴ and that the Apostle has likewise said: “Each one of you keep watch over yourselves lest you, too, fall into temptation; bear one another’s burdens, and so you will fulfil the law of Christ.”¹⁴⁵ We should further recall that he also warns in his epistle, by way of reproof to the proud and to break their arrogance: “And he

¹⁴¹ “dilectum ueritatis non habuerunt ut salui fierent: ac propterea mittet illis deus operationem erroris, ut credant mendacio, ut iudicentur omnes qui non crediderunt ueritati, sed sibi placent in iniustitia.” *Ep.* 59.13.4 (CCSL 3C:358-59). In both cases, Cyprian connects 2 Thess 2:10-12 with Isa 29:10a: “Et dedit illis Deus spiritum transpunctionis.”

¹⁴² “Iniuste sibi placentes et transpunctae mentis alienatione dementes Domini praecepta contempnunt, medellam uulneris neglegunt, agere paenitentiam nolunt.” *Laps.* 33 (CCSL 3:239).

¹⁴³ “ne reuertantur scilicet et curentur et deprecationibus ac satisfactionibus iustis post peccata sanentur.” *Ep.* 59.13.4 (CCSL 3C:359).

¹⁴⁴ Prov 18:19.

¹⁴⁵ Gal 6:1-2. Note the retention of the positive reference to “the law of Christ.” These verses are also the sole support for the testimony, “Inuicem se fratres sustinere debere.” *Test.* 3.9 (CCSL 3:97). When classifying the testimony as one in a series on economic sharing, Alexis-Baker states: “Cyprian uses this verse in a few places to show that Christians should care for one another’s physical and spiritual needs.” Alexis-Baker, “*Ad Quirinum*,” 369. In fact, it appears only here, relating to spiritual needs. Alexis-Baker conflates the care for those who have fallen, supported by these verses, with the economic sharing enjoined upon the lapsed. Alexis-Baker, “*Ad Quirinum*,” 369 n. 56.

who thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall,”¹⁴⁶ as elsewhere he also says: “Who are you that pass judgement on another man’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. But stand he shall, for God has the power to keep him upright.”¹⁴⁷ We should remember, too, the word of John when he demonstrates that Jesus Christ the Lord is our advocate and propitiator for our sins: [cites 1 John 2:1-2a]. And the apostle Paul has similarly declared in his epistle: “If Christ died for us when we were still sinners, how much more surely, being now justified in his blood, shall we be rescued through Him from the divine wrath.”¹⁴⁸

This collection of texts combines commands to support brothers and sisters in Christ with warnings against the pride which may lead to a fall. The final verses from 1 John and Romans emphasise Christ as the advocate with the Father, whose death appeases divine wrath and whose blood justifies even, as the context dictates, after the sin of idolatry. The ongoing nature of the cleansing work of Christ is also evident in Cyprian’s discussion of the clause, “Hallowed be your name,” in the Lord’s Prayer. He teaches that Christians daily pray for sanctification since they daily fall:

And what the sanctification is which is conferred upon us by the condescension of God, the apostle declares, when he says, “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in

¹⁴⁶ 1 Cor 10:12.

¹⁴⁷ Rom 14:4. Also cited, along with Rom 2:1, 3, 1 Cor 10:12 and 1 Cor 8:2, in the testimony, “Non temere de altero iudicandum.” *Test.* 3.21 (CCSL 3:118-19).

¹⁴⁸ Rom 5:8-9. “dum tamen nos meminisse, frater, debemus scriptum esse: ‘frater fratrem adiuuans exaltabitur,’ et apostolum quoque dixisse: ‘in contemplatione habentes unusquisque, ne et uos temptemini, alterutrum onera sustinete, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi,’ item quod superbos redarguens et adrogantiam frangens in epistula sua ponat: ‘et qui se putat stare, uideat ne cadat,’ et alio in loco dicat: ‘tu quis es qui iudicas alienum seruum? Domino suo stat aut cadit. Stabit autem: potens est enim deus stabilire eum,’ Iohannes quoque Iesum Christum dominum nostrum aduocatum et deprecatorem pro peccatis nostris probet dicens: ‘filioli mei, ista scribo uobis ne delinquatis: et si qui deliquerit, aduocatum habemus apud patrem Iesum Christum iustum, et ipse est deprecatio pro delictis nostris.’ Et Paulus quoque apostolus in epistula sua posuit: ‘si cum adhuc peccatores essemus, Christus pro nobis mortuus est, multo magis nunc iustificati in sanguine illius eliberabimur per illum ab ira.’” *Ep.* 55.18.1-2 (CCSL 3B:277-78).

homosexual acts, nor thieves, nor deceivers, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such indeed were you. But you are washed, but you are justified, but you are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.”¹⁴⁹

Cyprian reiterates the source of sanctification in Jesus and the Spirit, and the necessity of it remaining in the believer. He then alludes to the man that Jesus healed and warned to sin no more, lest something worse happen to him.¹⁵⁰ This demonstrates the need for constant prayer, “that the sanctification and life which is received from the grace of God may be preserved by his protection.”¹⁵¹ This focus on God’s grace and sanctification in *De dominica oratione*, evident throughout the treatise, will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Virgins

Cooper has highlighted the symbolic importance of the virgin in the Roman world.¹⁵² Cyprian likewise attributes a special status to virgins in the church, with consequent responsibilities, although other women are sometimes included in his directions as well. Firstly, in *Ep.* 4, Cyprian addresses the case of virgins who have been found sharing their beds with men. Two Pauline passages are combined to provide direction:

If, on the other hand, they are unwilling or unable to persevere [in their virginity], then it is better that they should marry than fall into the fire by their

¹⁴⁹ 1 Cor 6:9b-11. This verse is also provided as sole support for the testimony, “Omnia delicta in baptismo deponi.” *Test.* 3.65 (CCSL 3:155). “Quae autem sit sanctificatio quae nobis de Dei dignatione confertur apostolus praedicat dicens: ‘Neque fornicarii neque idolis seruientes neque adulteri neque molles neque masculorum appetitores neque fures neque fraudulentum neque ebriosi neque maledici neque raptores regnum Dei consequentur. Et haec quidem fuistis, sed abluti estis, sed iustificati estis, sed sanctificati estis in nomine Domini Iesu Christi et in spiritu Dei nostri.’” *Dom. or.* 12 (CCSL 3A:96-97).

¹⁵⁰ John 5:14.

¹⁵¹ “ut sanctificatio et uiuificatio quae de Dei gratia sumitur ipsius protectione seruetur.” *Dom. or.* 12 (CCSL 3A:97).

¹⁵² “Married, a daughter stood for a family’s compromise with the dynastic needs of other families, its concession to them of heirs. Unmarried, the virgin stood as a symbol of all that was uncompromised and unmixed in affiliation, and thus by extension of all that was true.” Cooper, *Virgin and the Bride*, 76.

sins.¹⁵³ Clearly they must avoid causing any scandal for their brothers and sisters, since it is written: “If the food scandalizes my brother, I will not eat meat while this world lasts, for fear I may cause him scandal.”¹⁵⁴

As Clarke says, this indicates that virgins did not take perpetual vows,¹⁵⁵ although they were formally recognised as a distinct group.¹⁵⁶ Interestingly, there is no suggestion here that marrying would be adultery against Christ, although being found in bed with a man is presented in that way. Cyprian is happy to appropriate Paul’s words here—marriage is preferable to sin and scandal.

The emphasis on not only doing the right thing, but being seen to do so, is also present in *Hab. virg.* 5. Cyprian teaches that it is not only purity of the flesh, but also appropriate dress and behaviour, which constitute true continence and modesty:

So that, according to the apostle, she who is unmarried may be holy both in body and in spirit. Paul instructs and teaches us, saying, “The unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, how to please God: but the one who is married cares for the things of this world, how to please his wife. So with the woman [wife] and the virgin: the unmarried considers those things which are the Lord’s, that they may be holy both in body and spirit.”¹⁵⁷ A virgin should not

¹⁵³ 1 Cor 7:9b.

¹⁵⁴ 1 Cor 8:13. “si autem perseuerare nolunt uel non possunt, melius est nubant quam in ignem delictis suis cadant. Certe nullum fratribus aut sororibus scandalum faciant, cum scriptum sit: ‘si cibus scandalizat fratrem, non manducabo carnem in saeculo ne fratrem scandalizem.’” *Ep.* 4.2.3 (CCSL 3B:20).

¹⁵⁵ That they did not adopt poverty either is evident from *De habitu virginum*, discussed in chapter 5.

¹⁵⁶ Clarke, *Letters*, 1:176 n. 22.

¹⁵⁷ 1 Cor 7:32-34a. 1 Cor 7:32-34 is also cited, along with 1 Cor 7:1-7, as support for the testimony, “De bono uirginitatis et continentiae.” *Test.* 3.32 (CCSL 3:125-27). There it continues, “Quae autem nupsit cogitat de his quae sunt mundi huius, quomodo placeat uiro.” I have followed the punctuation suggested by Laetitia Ciccolini, “Le texte de 1 Co 7, 34 chez Cyprien de Carthage” (paper presented at the XVII. International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, 2015). This reading replicates the distinction between married and unmarried men in considering married and unmarried women (virgins).

only be one, but also be understood and believed to be one: no one who sees a virgin should doubt that she is one.¹⁵⁸

Later in the treatise, Cyprian again demonstrates that virgins should not glory in their physical appearance, using quotations from Gal 6:14 and 5:24, linked by the image of crucifixion.

Paul proclaims in a loud and lofty voice, “But God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”¹⁵⁹ And yet a virgin in the Church glories concerning her fleshly appearance and the beauty of her body! Paul adds, and says, “For they that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh, with its faults and lusts.”¹⁶⁰ And she who professes to have renounced the lusts and vices of the flesh, is found in the midst of those very things which she has renounced!¹⁶¹

Galatians 6:14 also appears in *Ad Quirinum*, highlighting the dichotomy between earthly and heavenly things.¹⁶² Since, for Cyprian, heavenly realities dictate present

¹⁵⁸ “ut secundum apostolum quae innupta est sancta sit et corpore et spiritu. instruit Paulus et dicit: ‘caeleps cogitat ea quae sunt Domini, quomodo placeat Deo: qui autem matrimonium contraxit cogitat ea quae sunt mundi huius, quomodo placeat uxori. sic et mulier et uirgo: innupta cogitat ea quae sunt Domini, ut sit sancta et corpore et spiritu.’ uirgo non esse tantum sed et intellegi debet et credi: nemo cum uirginem uiderit, dubitet an uirgo sit.” *Hab. virg.* 5 (CSEL 3.1:190-91). Punctuation as per Ciccolini, “Le texte de 1 Co 7, 34.” This will be the text included in the forthcoming CCSL edition of the work. For variations between Cyprian’s text, the Vulgate, other Old Latin versions and the Greek text, see Ramos-Lissón, “Exégesis de 1 Cor 7,32-34,” 648-50.

¹⁵⁹ Gal 6:14.

¹⁶⁰ Gal 5:24.

¹⁶¹ “Paulus forti ac sublimi uoce proclamat: ‘mihi autem absit gloriari nisi in cruce Domini mei Iesu Christi, per quem mihi mundus crucifixus est et ego mundo’: et uirgo in ecclesia de specie carnis ac de corporis pulchritudine gloriatur. addit Paulus et dicit: ‘qui enim sunt Christi carnem crucifixerunt cum uitiiis et concupiscentiis. et quae se concupiscentiis carnis et uitiiis renuntiasse profitetur, in isdem quibus renuntiauerat inuenitur.’” *Hab. virg.* 6 (CSEL 3.1:191). Fahey sees a possible allusion to Eph 2:3 here. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 482. However, Cyprian is probably conforming to his usual practice of re-using key words from the text he has just quoted.

¹⁶² *Test.* 3.11 (CCSL 3:102), as one of many verses in support of the testimony, “Eum qui fidem consecutus est exposito priore homine caelestia tantum et spiritualia cogitare debere nec adtendere ad saeculum, cui iam renuntiauit.” (CCSL 3:99).

behaviour—one must live in accordance with what one shall be—it is not surprising that the verse should be used in a disciplinary context. However, the only specific application he makes is with regard to the virgins under his care. The way in which the link with Gal 5:24 is made and elaborated upon gives Paul’s words a sexual emphasis, which in Galatians 6 is not at all in view, and in Galatians 5 is but one area in which the sinful nature must be renounced. The renunciation of the flesh is therefore particularly linked with virginity, and this intersects with the virgins’ exemplary and symbolic role in the church.¹⁶³

A final passage also used in *Test.* 3.11, but again specifically applied to virgins, is 1 Cor 5:7-8, which Cyprian uses to condemn the use of cosmetics:

The voice of the warning apostle is, “Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened, for Christ our Passover is sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”¹⁶⁴ But are sincerity and truth preserved, when what is sincere is polluted by adulterous colours, and what is true is changed into a lie by the deceitful dyes of medication?¹⁶⁵

In directing this text to virgins, Cyprian uses “adulteriis” to describe the make-up, as well as employing a play on words in his use of “medicaminum” and “mendacium.” The virgins are to live up to the high calling that they have embraced; their purity is to be evident to all.

¹⁶³ For further discussion of the virgins’ role, see Dunn, “Infected Sheep,” 7-8.

¹⁶⁴ 1 Cor 5:7-8. Also *Test.* 3.11 (CCSL 3:103).

¹⁶⁵ “Monentis apostoli uox est: ‘expurgate uetus fermentum, ut sitis noua conspersio, sicut estis azymi: nam et pascha nostrum inmolatus est Christus. itaque festa celebremus non in fermento ueteri neque in fermento malitiae et nequitiae sed in azymis sinceritatis et ueritatis.’ num sinceritas perseuerat et ueritas, quando quae sincera sunt polluantur colorum adulteriis, medicaminum fucis in mendacium uera mutantur?” *Hab. virg.* 16 (CSEL 3.1:198-99). Not *Hab. virg.* 15 as Fahey, *Cyprian*, 446.

Ad Quirinum

There are a considerable number of verses that Cyprian only cites in *Ad Quirinum*. Here we see his use of Scripture to direct the Christian life as a whole, rather than responding to specific situations that arise. Of course, the selection and arrangement of texts are still influenced by the context of Roman North Africa. Cyprian uses Paul to address a wide range of disciplinary concerns, from the need to obey parents, to the necessity of controlling one's appetite.

As part of a series of four testimonies drawn from 1 Timothy, Cyprian provides direction on how to deal with allegations of wrongdoing, and the consequences if they are proven, with testimonies drawn from consecutive verses.¹⁶⁶ *Test.* 3.76 is entitled: “*Maiores natu non temere accusandum.*”¹⁶⁷ Fahey suggests the translation of this heading should be, “We must not rashly accuse an older person.”¹⁶⁸ This is correct as, although the Greek of 1 Tim 5:19 has κατὰ πρεσβυτέρου, and the Vulgate reads “*aduersus presbyterum*,” Cyprian cites his supporting text as, “*Aduersus maiorem natu accusationem ne receperis*” (Do not receive an accusation against an older person).¹⁶⁹ It is likely that his text follows the Greek in using the same term for both 1 Tim 5:1 and 1 Tim 5:17-20,¹⁷⁰ whereas the Vulgate distinguishes between older men in general and leaders in particular.¹⁷¹ As the technical term “presbyter” does not appear in Cyprian's text, he simply applies the verse to older people generally.¹⁷²

Here again we see the importance of individual words in Cyprian's use of Scripture, highlighting the role of memory in his appropriation of texts. The context of 1 Tim 5:17-20 makes it clear that verse 17 applies to leaders in the congregation, but Cyprian

¹⁶⁶ For more detailed discussion of these texts, see Edwina Murphy, “Widows, Welfare, and the Wayward: 1 Timothy 5 in Cyprian's *Ad Quirinum*,” *StPatr* (forthcoming).

¹⁶⁷ CCSL 3:161. See also, “*Non temere de altero iudicandum.*” *Test.* 3.21 (CCSL 3:118).

¹⁶⁸ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 509.

¹⁶⁹ *Test.* 3.76 (CCSL 3:161). The Vulgate reads: “*Aduersus presbyterum accusationem noli recipere.*”

¹⁷⁰ Cyprian never cites 1 Tim 5:1, so it is not possible to be certain.

¹⁷¹ Where 1 Tim 5:1 reads: “*Seniorem ne increpaveris.*”

¹⁷² This respect for the aged is also apparent in *Ep.* 3.3, where Cyprian quotes and re-phrases 1 Tim 4:12a: “*Nam si apostolus Paulus ad Timotheum scribens dixit: ‘iuuentutem tuam nemo despiciat,’ quanto magis tibi a collegis tuis dicendum est: ‘senectutem tuam nemo despiciat?’*” (CCSL 3B:15).

does not use it in this way, because the word “presbyter” is absent. On the other hand, in *Test.* 3.85, Cyprian exploits the presence of the term in Lev 19:32 to support the testimony, “We should stand when a bishop or presbyter comes,”¹⁷³ although in the original context, it simply means “older person.”¹⁷⁴ In 1 Tim 5:17, the meaning is presbyter, or church leader, but the absence of the word itself results in Cyprian overlooking it. A testimony entitled, “We must not accuse a bishop or presbyter,” would have fitted quite well with Cyprian’s directions elsewhere, especially as he omits the clause discussed below.¹⁷⁵

The removal of the qualification, “except on two or three witnesses,”¹⁷⁶ changes the verse and its application significantly, “rashly” in the title of the testimony being a poor substitute. Although, as Larry Welborn states, “the Deuteronomic rule of judicial evidence enjoyed a broad currency in Palestinian Judaism and in early Christianity,”¹⁷⁷ Cyprian never cites Deut 19:15 or its New Testament derivations. This suggests that the specific direction no longer had a place in his church practice. The responsibility falls instead on the bishop: “each individual shepherd has been assigned a portion of the

¹⁷³ “Surgendum, cum episcopus aut presbyter ueniat.” The quotation from Lev 19:32 reads: “A facie senioris exurges et honorabis personam presbyteri.” *Test.* 3.85 (CCSL 3:164).

¹⁷⁴ Contra Fahey, who cites it as an example of Cyprian’s appropriation of precepts applying to OT priests. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 81.

¹⁷⁵ Opposing the bishop is frequently denounced by Cyprian. For example, *Laps.* 16-19 (CCSL 3:229-32), *Ep.* 66 (CCSL 3C:434-45).

¹⁷⁶ “nisi sub duobus et tribus testibus.” Vulgate. 1 Tim 5:19 here reflects Deut 19:15. For a discussion of Paul’s use of Deut 19:15, see David Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 133-35.

¹⁷⁷ L. L. Welborn, “‘By the Mouth of Two or Three Witnesses’: Paul’s Invocation of a Deuteronomic Statute,” *NovT* 52 (2010): 211. Tertullian uses the rule when contrasting the repeated correction of Christians, “sub duobus aut tribus testibus,” with the single admonition to be given to heretics. *Praescr.* 16 (CCSL 1:199-200). He also uses it to explain why Jesus revealed his glory to the Three: “non quasi ceteros reprobans sed quoniam in tribus testibus stabit omne uerbum.” *Praescr.* 22 (CCSL 1:203-4). 1 Tim 5:19, “Aduersus presbyterum accusationem noli recipere nisi sub duobus et tribus testibus,” simply appears as part of the citation of the entire chapter in *Spec.* 39 (PL 34:1022), and it is therefore questionable whether it continued to have any practical force.

flock to rule and govern, knowing that one day he will be called upon to render an account to the Lord for his actions.”¹⁷⁸

The following testimony states: “We must publicly reprimand the sinner.”¹⁷⁹ Although the supporting verse, 1 Tim 5:20, follows directly from 1 Tim 5:19 as cited in the previous testimony, the two ideas are somewhat disconnected from one another in Cyprian’s collection. Whereas *Test.* 3.74-76 introduced the verses by explicitly assigning them, “Ad Timotheum I,” the best manuscripts have this verse more generally located, “In epistulis Pauli.”¹⁸⁰ Consequently, “Rebuke sinners before everyone, so that others may also fear,”¹⁸¹ now makes a statement regarding how to deal with sinners in general, rather than the original presbyters, or even the “older person” of the previous testimony, in particular. The resulting testimony fits well with the practice, attested elsewhere in Cyprian, of public correction and repentance.¹⁸²

The testimony, “We must boast in nothing, since nothing is our own,”¹⁸³ is supported, among other verses, by 1 Cor 4:7: “Also in the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: ‘For what do you have that you have not received? But if you have received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?’”¹⁸⁴ Alexis-Baker sees this as the last in a series of testimonies on economic sharing, reversing “the common assumption in Roman society that wealth *per se* merits praise and glory.”¹⁸⁵ I have included it here, instead of

¹⁷⁸ “Et singulis pastoribus portio gregis sit adscripta quam regat unusquisque et gubernet rationem sui actus domino redditurus.” *Ep.* 59.14.2 (CCSL 3C:362). Depending on the circumstances, Cyprian also mentions the role of various combinations of clergy, laity, neighbouring bishops, and bishops in council in making weighty decisions. *Epp.* 1.1.1, 14.4, 17.1.2, 34.4.1, 43.7.2 (CCSL 3B:1, 83, 97, 169-70, 209-10).

¹⁷⁹ “Peccantem publice obiurgandum.” *Test.* 3.77 (CCSL 3:161).

¹⁸⁰ CCSL 3:161.

¹⁸¹ “Peccantes coram omnibus corripe, ut et ceteri metum habeant.” *Test.* 3.77 (CCSL 3:161).

¹⁸² *Laps.* 29 (CCSL 3:237).

¹⁸³ “In nullo gloriandum, quando nostrum nihil sit.” *Test.* 3.4 (CCSL 3:92).

¹⁸⁴ 1 Cor 4:7. “Item in epistula Pauli ad Corinthios I: ‘Quid enim habes, quod non acceperis? Si autem accepisti, quid gloriaris, quasi non acceperis?’” *Test.* 3.4 (CCSL 3:92).

¹⁸⁵ Alexis-Baker, “*Ad Quirinum*,” 365.

in the following chapter, because although wealth is not excluded from those things received, the focus of this and the other supporting texts is on humility before God.

One of the verses in support of the testimony, “Anger must be defeated, so that we do not sin,”¹⁸⁶ is Eph 4:26: “Of this same thing to the Ephesians: ‘Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun set on your anger.’”¹⁸⁷ Ephesians is also used as the sole support for the testimony, “We must not speak foolishly and offensively.”¹⁸⁸ In this case, Cyprian subtly alters his text to suit his purposes, borrowing the direction that these things “are not even to be named among you” from verse 3. In addition, he drops the opening word of the verse, and the call for thanksgiving, all of which leaves him with the following: “In Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians: ‘Foolish and offensive speaking, which are not appropriate, are not to be even named among you.’”¹⁸⁹

Cyprian extends his ethical injunctions even to appetite: “We must not have an excessive desire for food.”¹⁹⁰ Each of the verses cited in support mentions food and/or eating, although their original contexts are not directed towards the point Cyprian is making:

In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians: “Food does not recommend us to God; we will not be better off if we do eat, nor in want if we do not.”¹⁹¹ And again: “When you come together to eat, wait one for another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, that you may not come together for judgement.”¹⁹² Also

¹⁸⁶ “Iracundiam uincendam esse ne cogat delinquere.” *Test.* 3.8 (CCSL 3:96)

¹⁸⁷ “De hoc ipso ad Ephesios: ‘Irascimini et nolite delinquere. Sol non occidat super iracundiam uestram.’” *Test.* 3.8 (CCSL 3:96).

¹⁸⁸ “Inepte et scurriliter non loquendum.” *Test.* 3.41 (CCSL 3:133).

¹⁸⁹ Eph 5:4. “In epistula Pauli ad Ephesios: ‘Stultiloquium et scurrilitas quae ad rem non pertinent nec nominentur quidem in uobis.’” *Test.* 3.41 (CCSL 3:133). Cf. Eph 5:3-4 in the Vulgate: “Fornicatio autem, et omnis immunditia, aut avaritia, nec nominetur in uobis, sicut decet sanctos: aut turpitudine, aut stultiloquium, aut scurrilitas, quae ad rem non pertinet: sed magis gratiarum actio.”

¹⁹⁰ “Ciborum nimiam concupiscentiam non adpetendam.” *Test.* 3.60 (CCSL 3:150).

¹⁹¹ 1 Cor 8:8.

¹⁹² 1 Cor 11:33-34.

to the Romans: “The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.”¹⁹³

In a similarly pithy testimony, “We must not deceive a brother,”¹⁹⁴ Cyprian broadens the original context of sexual immorality in 1 Thessalonians to include any kind of deception: “In the first Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians: ‘No-one should deceive his brother in this matter, because God is the avenger of all these things.’”¹⁹⁵ Again, “We must avoid detraction,”¹⁹⁶ is supported by Tit 3:2a: “Also in the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians: ‘To speak ill of no-one, nor to be litigious.’”¹⁹⁷ In the midst of all these temptations to sin, Cyprian reminds the Christian that, “Every one is tempted only as much as he is able to bear.”¹⁹⁸ The text given in support is 1 Cor 10:13: “In the first to the Corinthians: ‘No temptation shall overtake you, except what is common to humanity. But God, who is faithful, will not permit you to be tempted beyond your ability, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.’”¹⁹⁹

The direction, “The catechumen should no longer sin,”²⁰⁰ rather than continuing to sin prior to baptism, is supported by a Latin text that differs from the Greek. Cyprian reads,

¹⁹³ Rom 14:17. “In epistula Pauli ad Corinthios I: ‘Cibus nos non commendat Deo: neque si manducauerimus, abundabimus, neque si non ederimus, egebimus.’ Et iterum: ‘Cum conuenitis ad manducandum, inuicem expectate. Si quis esurit, domi manducet, ut non in iudicium conueniatis.’ Item ad Romanos: ‘Non est regnum Dei esca et potus, sed iustitia et pax et gaudium in Spiritu sancto.’” *Test.* 3.60 (CCSL 3:150-51).

¹⁹⁴ “Fratrem non circumueniendum.” *Test.* 3.88 (CCSL 3:165).

¹⁹⁵ 1 Thess 4:6. “Apud Thessalonicenses I: ‘Non circumuenire in negotio fratrem suum, quia ultor est Deus de his omnibus.’” *Test.* 3.88 (CCSL 3:165).

¹⁹⁶ “Non detrahendum.” *Test.* 3.107 (CCSL 3:173).

¹⁹⁷ “Item in epistula Pauli ad Colosenses: ‘De nullo male loqui nec litigiosos esse.’” *Test.* 3.107 (CCSL 3:174). Cyprian also cites Prov 20:13 and Ps 49:20. As mentioned above, when Cyprian cites a source for verses from Titus, he attributes them to Colossians.

¹⁹⁸ “Tantum unumquemque temptari quantum potest sustinere.” *Test.* 3.91 (CCSL 3:166).

¹⁹⁹ 1 Cor 10:13. “Ad Corinthios I: ‘Temptatio uos non occupauit nisi humana. Fidelis autem Deus non patietur uos temptari super quod potestis, et faciet cum temptatione etiam euadendi facultatem, ut possitis tolerare.’” *Test.* 3.91 (CCSL 3:166-67).

²⁰⁰ “Catecuminum peccare iam non debere.” *Test.* 3.98 (CCSL 3:170).

“Let us do evil while good is coming: their condemnation is just.”²⁰¹ The Greek text, however, makes a different point: “Why not do evil so that good may come?”²⁰²

A testimony that sums up much of Cyprian’s attitude to the Christian life is, “We must be active in works and not words.”²⁰³ This is the only time he cites the supporting verses 1 Cor 4:20 and Rom 2:13. “And Paul, in the first to the Corinthians: ‘The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.’²⁰⁴ Also to the Romans: ‘Not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.’”²⁰⁵ Fahey notes that in his interpretation of the latter verse, “Cyprian sees the reference to ‘lex’ as the law of Christ which for him was primarily the ‘praecepta’ or ‘mandata’ contained in Jesus’ own words in the gospel.”²⁰⁶ This fits well with other references to the law of Christ.

Two testimonies deal with different aspects of secular judgement. *Test.* 3.38, “The servant of God ought to be innocent so he does not fall into secular punishment,”²⁰⁷ is supported by Rom 13:3b: “In Paul’s letter to the Romans: ‘Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will be praised for it.’”²⁰⁸ Fahey comments that this text “is considerably more benign in its attitude toward pagan civil institutions than Cyprian was accustomed to take.”²⁰⁹ However, Cyprian does take a hard line with

²⁰¹ Rom 3:8. “In epistulis Pauli ad Romanos: ‘Faciamus mala, dum ueniunt bona: quorum condemnatio iusta est.’” *Test.* 3.98 (CCSL 3:170).

²⁰² Fahey, *Cyprian*, 427. See also Schelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter*, 101.

²⁰³ “Factis non uerbis operandum.” *Test.* 3.96 (CCSL 3:168).

²⁰⁴ 1 Cor 4:20.

²⁰⁵ Rom 2:13. “Item in epistulis Pauli ad Corinthios I: ‘Non in sermone est regnum Dei sed in uirtute.’ Item ad Romanos: ‘Non auditores legis iusti apud Deum, sed factores legis iustificabuntur.’” *Test.* 3.96 (CCSL 3:169).

²⁰⁶ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 425. For the use of this verse by other early interpreters, see Schelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter*, 80-81.

²⁰⁷ “Seruum Dei innocentem esse debere ne incidat in poenam saecularem.” *Test.* 3.38 (CCSL 3:131).

²⁰⁸ “In epistula Pauli ad Romanos: ‘Vis non timere potestatem? Bonum fac, et habebis laudem ab ea.’” *Test.* 3.38 (CCSL 3:131). The previous testimony, “Fidelem non oportere ob alia delicta nisi ob nomen solum puniri,” cites 1 Pet 4:15-16 to make a similar point. *Test.* 3.37 (CCSL 3:131).

²⁰⁹ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 437. In support, he cites Frend’s statement: “One of the most striking features of African Christianity in the third century was its uncompromising hostility to the institutions of the Roman Empire.” Frend, *Donatist Church*, 106. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 662 n. 23.

confessors who return from banishment, “so that he dies, if he is caught, now not as a Christian, but as a criminal.”²¹⁰ Brent understands Cyprian to have a positive attitude towards Roman law. It is not the Twelve Tables themselves which are the problem, but rather the corruption of the law courts.²¹¹ The other testimony cites a combination of 1 Cor 6:1-2 and 1 Cor 6:7-9a to support the testimony, “Believers who differ among themselves should not be tried by a Gentile judge.”²¹²

In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: “Do any of you dare, having a matter against another, to discuss it among the unrighteous, and not among the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?” And again: “Now indeed there is altogether a fault among you, because you have lawsuits against each other. Why not rather suffer injury? Why not rather be cheated? But you yourselves cause injury and cheat—even your brethren! Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?”²¹³

Here we see, even at an early stage, Cyprian’s belief that all Christians will judge the world, not only martyrs.

²¹⁰ Allusion to 1 Pet 4:15-16. “ut deprehensus non iam quasi Christianus sed quasi nocens pereat.” *Ep.* 13.4.1 (CCSL 3B:75). “Cyprian speaks here like a Roman aristocrat, insisting on the proper respect for law however misguided; disregard for a legal sentence of exile is categorized by him among instances of *prava conversatio* (‘evil conduct’).” Clarke, *Letters*, 1:257.

²¹¹ Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, 49-50.

²¹² “Fideles inter se disceptantes non debere gentilem iudicem experiri.” *Test.* 3.44 (CCSL 3:134).

²¹³ “In epistula Pauli ad Corinthios I: ‘Audet quisquam uestrum aduersus alterum negotium habens disceptare apud iniustos et non apud sanctos? Nescitis quia sancti mundum iudicabunt?’ Et iterum: ‘Iam quidem in totum delictum in uobis est, quia iudicia habetis cum iniuriam. Quare non magis iniuriam patimini? Quare non magis fraudem patimini? Sed uos iniuriam facitis et fraudatis et hoc fratres. Aut nescitis quoniam iniusti regnum Dei non consequuntur?’” *Test.* 3.44 (CCSL 3:134-35). Vischer comments: “Es ist bemerkenswert, daß Cyprian als Beleg für diese Weisung die vv. 1-2 und 7-8 zitiert; er sieht offenbar, wie eng die beiden Stücke zusammenhängen und daß man nicht das eine vom andern trennen kann.—Die Schrift ‚ad Quirinium‘ wurde ungefähr 246-248 verfaßt; das Verbot hat aber sicher auch vor Cyprian schon gegolten. Er spricht es nicht als eine Neuerung aus.” Lukas Vischer, *Die Auslegungsgeschichte von I. Kor. 6, 1-11: Rechtsverzicht und Schlichtung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1955), 22.

Cyprian's testimony, "A women should be silent in church,"²¹⁴ uses a classic combination of 1 Cor 14:34-35a and 1 Tim 2:11-14:

In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: "Let women be silent in the church. But if any wish to learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home." Also to Timothy: "Let a woman learn with silence, in all subjection. But I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to be placed over man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not seduced, but the woman was seduced."²¹⁵

Although Tertullian uses these texts, he does clarify that a woman may prophesy in accordance with 1 Cor 11:5.²¹⁶ Cyprian never quotes that verse, however.

Another series of testimonies is drawn from the household code of Ephesians:²¹⁷ "We must obey parents,"²¹⁸ is supported by Eph 6:1-3: "In the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians: 'Children, be obedient to your parents, for this is right. Honour your father and mother (which is the first command with a promise), that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.'"²¹⁹ It is followed by the testimony, "Fathers also should not be harsh in respect of their children,"²²⁰ citing Eph 6:4: "And, fathers, do not drive not your children to anger, but nourish them in the discipline and instruction of the

²¹⁴ "Mulierem in ecclesia tacere debere." *Test.* 3.46 (CCSL 3:135). 1 Cor 14:34-35 is paraphrased and cited by Tertullian in *Bapt.* 17 (CCSL 1:292), and alluded to in *Marc.* 5.8.11 (CCSL 1:688). "Non permittitur mulieri in ecclesia loqui," (*Virg.* 9.1 [CCSL 2:1218]), may be 1 Cor 14:34 or 1 Tim 2:12.

²¹⁵ 1 Tim 2:11-14. "In epistula Pauli ad Corinthios I: 'Mulieres uestrae in ecclesiis taceant. Si quae autem quid discere uolunt, domi uiros suos interrogent.' Item ad Timotheum: 'Mulier cum silentio discat in omni summissione. Docere autem mulieri non permitto neque praepositam esse uiro. Adam enim primus formatus est, deinde Eua: et Adam seductus non est, mulier autem seducta est.'" *Test.* 3.46 (CCSL 3:135-36).

²¹⁶ Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.8.11 (CCSL 1:688).

²¹⁷ Noted by Fahey, *Cyprian*, 481; Alexis-Baker, "Ad Quirinum," 376.

²¹⁸ "Parentibus obsequendum." *Test.* 3.70 (CCSL 3:158).

²¹⁹ "In epistula Pauli ad Ephesios: 'Filii, obsequentes estote parentibus uestris. Hoc enim est iustum. Honora patrem tuum et matrem, quod est mandatum primum in promissione, ut bene sit tibi et sis longaeuus super terram.'" *Test.* 3.70 (CCSL 3:158-59).

²²⁰ "Patres quoque asperos circa filios esse non oportere." *Test.* 3.71 (CCSL 3:159).

Lord.”²²¹ The responsibilities of servants and masters are then outlined: “Servants, when they have believed, should serve their earthly masters more,”²²² is demonstrated by Eph 6:5-6, “In the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians: ‘Servants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, and in simplicity of your heart, as to Christ; not serving to be seen, as if you were pleasing people, but as servants of God.’”²²³ It is followed by the testimony, “Likewise, masters should be more gentle,”²²⁴ citing Eph 6:9: “Also in the same place: ‘And you, masters, do the same things to them, forbearing anger, knowing that both your master and theirs is in heaven and there is no favouritism with him.’”²²⁵

Despite this series of quotations from Ephesians 6, Cyprian does not cite the preceding verses from Eph 5:21-24 on submitting to one another, particularly wives to their husbands. Neither does he cite Eph 5:25a, directing husbands to love their wives.²²⁶ He does, however, discuss marital relations in the testimony, “A wife must not depart from her husband, or if she does depart, she must remain unmarried,”²²⁷ a close paraphrase of part of the quotation that supports it:

In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: “But to them that are married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not be separated from her husband; but if she should depart, that she remain unmarried or be

²²¹ “Et, patres, nolite in iracundiam mittere filios uestros, sed nutrite eos in disciplina et correptione Domini.” *Test.* 3.71 (CCSL 3:159).

²²² “Seruos cum crediderint plus dominis carnalibus seruire debere.” *Test.* 3.72 (CCSL 3:159).

²²³ “Serui, obaudite dominis carnalibus cum metu et tremore, in simplicitate cordis uestris sicut Christo, non ad oculum seruientes quasi hominibus placentes, sed quasi serui Christi.” *Test.* 3.72 (CCSL 3:159). Eph 6:5 is also alluded to in *Pat.* 3 (CCSL 3A:119): “Si dominus nobis et pater Deus est, sectemur patientiam domini pariter et patris, quia et seruos esse oportet obsequentes et filios non decet esse degeneres.”

²²⁴ “Item dominos mitiores esse debere.” *Test.* 3.73 (CCSL 3:159).

²²⁵ “Et uos, domini, eadem facite ad eos laxantes iracundiam, scientes quia et uester et ipsorum dominus est in caelis, et exceptio personarum non est in illo.” *Test.* 3.73 (CCSL 3:159-60).

²²⁶ Fahey, *Cyprian*, 480.

²²⁷ “Uxorem a uiro non recedere aut, si recesserit, innuptam manere.” *Test.* 3.90 (CCSL 3:166).

reconciled to her husband: and that the husband should not put away his wife.”²²⁸

Although the verses cited also include directions that the husband must not send away his wife, Cyprian does not generalise the title. Possibly wives leaving husbands was more prevalent in the Christian community.

Cyprian therefore uses Paul to address a wide range of concerns. In the letters and treatises, he particularly emphasises the necessity of love, sustained by patience, and the avoidance of behaviour which would harm the community. The works of the flesh are to be entirely repudiated. Some refuse to repent of their sins, but those who do will find mercy with Christ who redeems from the divine wrath. At times, Cyprian specifically addresses virgins. The freedom from the flesh which is particularly theirs must be reflected in their dress and deportment. If virgins cannot persevere in their commitment, however, they may marry.

In Book 3 of *Ad Quirinum*, Cyprian instructs believers in how to live in the context of Roman North Africa. His use of many Pauline texts is unexceptional: sins of anger, foolish speech, deception, and over-indulgence in food are to be avoided, as are lawsuits; doing what is right, both in the household and in society, is to be embraced. Beyond these general exhortations, his selection (and omission) of particular texts provides insight into a number of aspects of contemporary church life.

4.5 Prophetic fulfilment

The one instance of a Pauline citation to demonstrate prophetic fulfilment in this area is in *Test.* 3.67, “It was foretold that sound discipline would be despised”.²²⁹

Paul, in the second to Timothy: “There will be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts will gather to themselves teachers who will scratch their itching ears with what they want

²²⁸ 1 Cor 7:10-11. “In epistulis Pauli ad Corinthios I: ‘His autem quae nupserunt praecipio, non ego sed Dominus, uxorem a uiro non separari, si autem recesserit, manere innuptam aut reconciliari uiro, et uirum uxorem non dimittere.’” *Test.* 3.90 (CCSL 3:166).

²²⁹ “Praedictum quod disciplinam sanam aspernaturi essent.” *Test.* 3.67 (CCSL 3:156).

to hear; and they will indeed turn their hearing away from the truth, and be converted to fables.”²³⁰

Whilst this is the only instance of prophetic fulfilment in the area of discipline, there are a number of references predicting schism in the church, as the previous chapter demonstrated. This testimony is closely related to those texts; only the use of discipline rather than schism in the heading justifies its inclusion here.

4.6 Conclusion

Cyprian is very interested in discipline, especially given his challenging circumstances. Christians are to model themselves on Christ and Paul in their humility, an essential characteristic of believers. Having died and risen with Christ, their minds must be set on heavenly things. While all Christians are thus free of the flesh, this is particularly true of virgins. Living as temples of God, filled with the Spirit, Christians must not defile themselves by sinning, but live according to what they will one day be. The concept of sin is not restricted to sins against God, however, but is most commonly seen in failing to love one’s neighbour, as frequent injunctions testify.

Some studies, especially in the Lutheran tradition, regard Cyprian’s emphasis on discipline as peripheral to, if not a perversion of, Paul’s thought. It is true that Cyprian not only ignores Paul’s discussion of faith versus works, he actively omits references which cast the law in a negative light.²³¹ Fahey notes the same phenomenon in Tertullian’s work,²³² which suggests that the early North African tradition marginalised these verses. The pointed aversion to these texts probably has two roots. Although a need remains for an apologetic against the Jews, as evidenced by *Ad Quirinium*, there is no apparent threat from “Jewish Christian activists teaching justification by works of the law, such as is presupposed by those Pauline epistles dealing with the doctrine of

²³⁰ 2 Tim 4:3-4. “Paulus ad Timotheum II: ‘Erit tempus, quando sanam doctrinam non sustinebunt, sed secundum sua desideria coaceruabunt sibi magistros prurientes in audiendo scalpentis aures. Et a ueritate quidem auditum auertent, ad fabulas autem conuertentur.’” *Test.* 3.67 (CCSL 3:156-57).

²³¹ Gal 5:18, 23b; 4:4 as discussed above.

²³² He does not seek to explain it, however. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 477.

justification by faith in most detail.”²³³ At the same time, ethical concerns play a major role in the thought of both Tertullian and Cyprian, along with a Roman respect for the law. Cyprian’s goal is that those under his care will actively follow of the commands of Christ.²³⁴ This aim that may be compromised if he simultaneously promotes the idea of freedom from the law, a doctrine liable to misinterpretation, as Paul’s letters show.

This does not mean that Cyprian adheres to a doctrine of merit rather than grace, however.²³⁵ Instead, he is interested in how grace, received by faith, impacts behaviour. He consequently turns his attention to the large amount of Pauline material which addresses how believers should conduct themselves. These directives on what it means to live according to the Spirit are not only from the deutero-Pauline material; in fact, they are mainly drawn from Romans, Galatians and 1 Corinthians. Cyprian’s use speaks against a caricature that Paul is only concerned with justification by faith, rather than the sanctification which follows.

Inevitably, this movement is not a straight path from glory to glory—Christians will sin. Right from the beginning, even in *Ad Quirinum*, Cyprian calls for repentance. This provides the framework for his response in *De lapsis*, although his most forceful argument in its favour comes in *Ep. 55*.²³⁶ Bishops, exhorted to speak the unwelcome truth in disciplining their flock, are also called to imitate Paul in his identification with sinners—they must not adopt the harsh rigidity of the philosophers. Cyprian fears the contagion of sin less than the contagion of the teaching that there is no need to repent from sin. Sinners must demonstrate that they recognise the severity of their sins and turn from them. This mourning will not involve feasting and expensive clothes, but rather prayer, fasting and giving alms. The particular role of almsgiving in repentance and cleansing from sin is considered in the following chapter. It is quite clear, however, that if God calls sinners to repent, their repentance will not in be vain—he will restore the

²³³ Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification. Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 20. Cyprian himself receives no mention in this work.

²³⁴ Expressed in the positive reference to “the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2), in *Ep. 55.18.1* (CCSL 3B:277).

²³⁵ Contra Hanson, *Tradition*, 263.

²³⁶ “Cipriano difende la coerenza del proprio atteggiamento e distingue due momenti: durante e dopo la persecuzione.” Fattorini and Picenardi, “Riconciliazione,” 385.

sinner. Cyprian therefore attends to both the justice and mercy of God in his exhortations concerning discipline and repentance.

5. A sacrifice pleasing and acceptable to God: Wealth and welfare

*Finally, beloved brethren, the divine admonition in the Scriptures, old well as new, has never failed, has never been silent in urging God's people always and everywhere to works of mercy; and in the strain and exhortation of the Holy Spirit, everyone who is instructed into the hope of the heavenly kingdom is commanded to give alms.*¹

Almsgiving and the right use of wealth, a special case of discipline and repentance, plays a central role in the organisation of the Christian community. This is especially evident when it is considered in relation to Mayer and Allen's schema of pastoral care. Certainly, it corresponds to the bishop's role in "social welfare," but it also relates to "direction for daily life," "intercession" (the ransom of captives), "mission" (since Christians were also directed to give to pagans), and the "application of ritualised forms of care" (as giving was used penitentially).² The question is, to what extent is Cyprian's teaching influenced by the surrounding culture, and to what extent is it distinct from it?

The Roman Empire was not known for its welfare system. As Anneliese Parkin states, "Such organised material aid and services as the elite were prepared to extend to their social and economic inferiors were not directed at the poorest of Graeco-Roman society in the early imperial period."³ The focus of the wealthy elites was more on cultivating clients—a reciprocal means of exchange—rather than helping those who were unable to respond.⁴ Even the distributions of grain to the *plebs* in the first century were, as Peter Brown highlights, based on citizenship rather than need.⁵ Consequently, the elite

¹ "Numquam denique, fratres dilectissimi, admonitio diuina cessauit et tacuit quominus in scripturis sanctis tam ueteribus quam nouis semper et ubique ad misericordiae opera Dei populus prouocaretur et canente adque exhortante Spiritu sancto quisque ad spem regni caelestis instruitur facere eleemosynas iuberetur." *Eleem.* 4 (CCSL 3A:57).

² Allen and Mayer, "Through a Bishop's Eyes," 393-94.

³ Anneliese Parkin, "'You Do Him No Service': An Exploration of Pagan Almsgiving," in *Poverty in the Roman World*, ed. Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 60.

⁴ Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 8.

⁵ Even if many of those who received it were, in fact, poor. Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2002), 5.

literature has little to say about concern for the truly poor,⁶ although Parkin has deduced that giving to the marginalised by others of low social status may indeed have been common.⁷

Christians, drawing on the heritage of Judaism, brought care for the poor to the foreground of concern. Origen's depiction of true Christians as those who really believe the doctrine, rather than pretending to be Christians for material gain, shows the importance of Christian care in attracting the poor.⁸ Although Lucian regarded this generosity as stupidity which could be easily exploited by the unscrupulous,⁹ by the time of Julian "the Apostate," the distinctiveness of organised Christian care for the poor was considered worthy of imitation.¹⁰ Cyprian shares this concern for the needy—on his conversion he gave up his wealth.¹¹ Despite the attempts of some to see this as an act of patronage,¹² such renunciation of goods is not typical of patrons; his motivation is better understood in the light of gospel precepts.¹³ The extent to which his teaching and practice as bishop reflects patronage systems will be considered along with his use of Pauline texts on giving.

Whilst almsgiving is incumbent upon all Christians, much of Cyprian's teaching on wealth is directed towards the "recalcitrant rich," as Rebecca Weaver designates them.¹⁴ These members of the congregation are unlikely to belong to the elite of the empire,

⁶ Even in law, the jurists' interests lay more with the "*relatively* poor, including, and perhaps especially, formerly affluent or comparatively secure (*idoneus*) citizens who had become *poorer*" rather than the "truly destitute." Caroline Humfress, "Poverty and Roman Law," in *Poverty in the Roman World*, ed. Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 183.

⁷ Parkin, "You do him no service," 73-74.

⁸ Origen, *Cels.* 1.67 (PG 11:785).

⁹ Lucian, *Peregr.* 13 (LCL 302:14-15).

¹⁰ Julian attempts to mount a rear-guard action by directing the priests to imitate the Jews and "impious Galilaeans" in this respect, using a reference to Homer to justify the practice. *Ep.* 22 (LCL 157:70-71). For a discussion of the organisation of early Christian almsgiving, see Robert M. Grant, *Early Christianity and Society* (London: Collins, 1978), 124-45.

¹¹ *Vit. Cypr.* 2 (CSEL 3.1:xcii).

¹² Bobertz, "Cyprian of Carthage as Patron," 128.

¹³ Freedom from the patronage system is presented as one of the benefits of the new life in Christ in *Don.* 11 (CCSL 3A:10).

¹⁴ Rebecca H. Weaver, "Wealth and Poverty in the Early Church," *Int* 41 (1987): 374.

although some appear to be part of the municipal elite. In *De lapsis*, Cyprian mentions those who leave estates and go into hiding,¹⁵ as well as those who sacrifice instead of fleeing and losing their patrimony.¹⁶ In depicting the laxity of the church prior to the persecution, Cyprian alleges, “Each one was intent on adding to his inheritance.”¹⁷ Not the poor, of course—in the same breath, bishops are accused of acquiring estates by fraud and loaning money at interest “while their brethren in the Church went hungry.”¹⁸ There are some, subsequently viewed more favourably, who have sacrificed in order to protect their entire household and those who, by their sacrifice, spared tenants and farmers and sheltered refugees.¹⁹ There are men feasting sumptuously and women wearing silk dresses and expensive jewels.²⁰ Even the virgins are wealthy and rich.²¹

It would appear, then, that the church includes a number of those identified by Walter Scheidel and Stephen Friesen as members of “middling” non-elite groups. They suggest that this category comprised perhaps 6-12 percent of the population, receiving 15-25 percent of total income. They further hypothesise that, in a city, this group may be as large as between one-eighth and one-quarter of the total inhabitants.²² This correlates with those who control, at least to some extent, the means and labour of production,²³ and who may therefore be considered upper (middle) class, even if they are not truly elite. The distinction, as Dale Martin puts it, is between “those who to a great extent

¹⁵ *Laps.* 3 (CCSL 3:222).

¹⁶ *Laps.* 11 (CCSL 3:226).

¹⁷ “Studebant augendo patrimonio singuli.” *Laps.* 6 (CCSL 3:223).

¹⁸ “esurientibus in ecclesia fratribus.” *Laps.* 6 (CCSL 3:224).

¹⁹ Not to be equated with those who forced their families or “tenants and friends” (*inquilinos uel amicos*) to sacrifice. Friends here most likely refers to clients. *Ep.* 55.13.2 (CCSL 3B:271).

²⁰ *Laps.* 30 (CCSL 3:237-38).

²¹ *Hab. virg.* 8 (CSEL 3.1:193).

²² Walter Scheidel and Steven J. Friesen, “The Size of the Economy and the Distribution of Income in the Roman Empire,” *JRS* 99 (2009): 84-85, 90. This would then include both those previously categorised by Friesen as PS4, “moderate surplus resources,” estimated at 7% for a large city in the Roman Empire (against less than 3% in total for PS1-3), and a number of those classified as PS5, “stable near subsistence level,” estimated at 22%. Steven J. Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus,” *JSNT* 26 (2004): 347.

²³ To borrow from the definition of G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 43.

controlled their economic destiny and those who did not.”²⁴ Those in the latter category, who therefore require assistance from the church community, include widows and orphans,²⁵ strangers, the sick,²⁶ the imprisoned,²⁷ refugees from persecution,²⁸ captives,²⁹ and those who can no longer support themselves in their pre-Christian careers.³⁰ In order to garner support for those in need, Cyprian appropriates Pauline texts using the strategies of model, image, direct application and qualification.

5.1 Model

Cyprian uses two models drawn from his reading of Paul to encourage his congregation to care for the poor and captive. The first is an allusion to Gal 3:6 in *De opere et eleemosynis* where, for those schooled in a Lutheran reading of Paul, Abraham makes an unexpected appearance as a model of giving to the poor. The children of Abraham (cf. Gal 3:7) are those “whom [Jesus] sees to be laborious in aiding and nourishing the poor.”³¹ Cyprian quotes the Lord’s response to Zacchaeus’ declaration of his disposition of wealth in Luke 19:8-9 before continuing:

For if Abraham believed in God, and it was counted to him as righteousness,³²
certainly the one who gives alms according to God’s precept believes in God,

²⁴ Martin, *Corinthian Body*, xvii.

²⁵ *Test.* 3.74, 113 (CCSL 3:160, 175-76).

²⁶ Both mentioned in *Ep.* 7.2 (CCSL 3B:39).

²⁷ *Ep.* 5.1.2 (CCSL 3B:27).

²⁸ *Epp.* 21.2.2, 30.8 (CCSL 3B:113, 149). These are not only those condemned to exile, contra Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 52. As Clarke notes, “extorres” includes those forced to flee by circumstance. This is evident from the fact that these two letters refer to those exiled in Rome, a place to which one may not be banished. Clarke, *Letters*, 1:230 n. 5.

²⁹ *Ep.* 62.2.3 (CCSL 3C:386-87).

³⁰ For example, the teacher of acting in *Ep.* 2 (CCSL 3B:6-8). For a discussion of how the poor appear in sermons and saints’ lives in the fourth and fifth centuries, see Richard Finn, “Portraying the Poor: Descriptions of Poverty in Christian Texts from the Late Roman Empire,” in *Poverty in the Roman World*, ed. Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 130-44.

³¹ “Eos denique et Abrahae filios dicit quos in iuuandis alendisque pauperibus operarios cernit.” *Eleem.* 8 (CCSL 3A:60).

³² Allusion to Gal 3:6.

and the one who has the truth of faith maintains the fear of God; moreover, the one who maintains the fear of God considers God in showing mercy to the poor. For he labours thus because he believes.³³

This could, of course, be seen as an allusion to Gen 15:6, which Paul was quoting in Gal 3:6, or to Rom 4:3 where he also cites it.³⁴ However, I believe that the use of the term “children of Abraham” and the connection with Luke 19:8-9 makes Galatians the more likely source, given Cyprian’s propensity for using the same pairings of verses in different works.³⁵ Cyprian sees that Zacchaeus’ giving is approved, and that those who give to the poor are also Abraham’s children because giving to the poor demonstrates faith in God.³⁶ True belief must always result in action for Cyprian.

A second model employed by Cyprian is the apostle Paul himself. *Ep.* 62 is written to accompany funds sent by the Carthaginian church to Numidian bishops in order to ransom captive believers.³⁷ In it, Cyprian argues the case for such a contribution in which quotations from Paul play an important part. Firstly, the bishops are understood to have the same attitude as Paul in 2 Cor 11:29, where he identifies with those in need

³³ “Nam si Abraham credidit Deo et deputatum est ei ad iustitiam, utique qui secundum praeceptum Dei eleemosynis facit Deo credit: et qui habet fidei ueritatem seruat Dei timorem: qui autem timorem Dei seruat in miserationibus pauperum Deum cogitat. Operatur enim ideo quia credit.” *Eleem.* 8 (CCSL 3A:60).

³⁴ CCSL links the reference to Rom 4:9 instead (3A:60 n. 161). Fahey considers it an allusion to Gal 3:6. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 474.

³⁵ In *Ep.* 63 (CCSL 3C:393-94), the quotation of Gal 3:6-9 is followed by Luke 19:9. Bobertz notes that verses near each other in *Ad Quirinum* often appear together in Cyprian’s letters and treatises. Bobertz, “Analysis of *Vita Cypriani*,” 123 n. 10. Such combinations are not limited to verses from the testimonia collections, however, as is evident in Cyprian’s use of 1 Cor 12:26 and 2 Cor 11:29 discussed below.

³⁶ On alms as an index to one’s underlying faith, see G. A. Anderson, “Redeem Your Sins by the Giving of Alms: Sin, Debt, and the ‘Treasury of Merit’ in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition,” *LSpir* 3 (2007): 61.

³⁷ For evidence that they were Numidian, see Clarke, *Letters*, 3:280 n. 1. The development of the practice of ransoming captives in early Christianity, with its background in Jewish piety, is discussed by Carolyn Osiek, “The Ransom of Captives: Evolution of a Tradition,” *HTR* 74 (1981): 365-86. *Ep.* 62 is a good example of Osiek’s claim regarding the early church’s stance towards the imprisoned and captive: “paraenesis and practice are interlaced.” Osiek, “Ransom of Captives,” 367.

by asking, “Who is weak and I am not weak?”³⁸ Cyprian’s congregation similarly imitate Paul, hence “we must account the distress of those in peril as our own distress.”³⁹

5.2 Image

The necessity of redeeming the captive in *Ep.* 62 is further supported by the use of three images. The first is Paul’s metaphor of the body in 1 Cor 12:26: “If one member suffers, the other members also suffer with it; and if one member rejoices, the other members also rejoice with it.”⁴⁰ Not only does Cyprian quote these words, which he first applies to the emotions of the bishops, he elaborates on them in the remainder of the paragraph, Cyprian’s congregation joining the bishops in recognising the unity of the body: “For, I need hardly remind you, in our union we form but one body and, therefore, not just love but our religion also ought to rouse and spur us on to redeem brethren who are our fellow members.”⁴¹

Cyprian then focusses his attention on the motivation of the givers, following the image of the body with that of the temple. As we have seen, this is one of his favourite images, which he uses in each area of his pastoral concern. Here, however, he takes the image in a new direction. Quoting 1 Cor 3:16, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”⁴² Cyprian emphasises that “what have been taken captive are temples of God.”⁴³ Such temples must not be allowed to linger in

³⁸ “quis infirmatur, inquit, et ego non infirmor?” *Ep.* 62.1.1 (CCSL 3C:385). Cyprian does not include here, “Quis scandalizatur, et non ego uror?” which is more appropriate in *Ep.* 17.1.1.

³⁹ “periclitantium dolor pro nostro dolore numerandus est.” *Ep.* 62.1.2 (CCSL 3C:385).

⁴⁰ “si patitur membrum unum, compatiuntur et cetera membra: et si laetatur membrum unum, collaetantur et cetera membra.” *Ep.* 62.1.1 (CCSL 3C:385). 1 Cor 12:26 is immediately followed by 2 Cor 11:29, discussed above. These texts are also cited together in *Ep.* 17.1.1 (CCSL 3B:96), where they demonstrate the appropriateness of the grief of the *stantes* over their lapsed brethren.

⁴¹ “cum sit scilicet adunationis nostrae corpus unum et non tantum dilectio sed et religio instigare nos debeat et confortare ad fratrum membra redimenda.” *Ep.* 62.1.2 (CCSL 3C:385-86). For a discussion of what “religio” might mean, other than “religion,” see Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 26-34.

⁴² “nescitis quia templum dei estis et spiritus dei habitat in uobis?” *Ep.* 62.2.1 (CCSL 3C:386).

⁴³ “fuit dei templa esse quae capta sunt.” *Ep.* 62.2.1 (CCSL 3C:386).

captivity; rather, swiftly ransoming these temples will earn the praise of Christ and God.⁴⁴ The argument therefore moves from regarding the captivity of the brethren as the believers' own captivity, to regarding it as the captivity of the temples of God. This understanding of Christians as the place where God dwells by his Spirit is then extended, so that the brethren's captivity is reckoned to be the captivity of Christ himself.

The image of being clothed with Christ thus forms the climax of the section, citing Gal 3:27: "To quote the apostle Paul: 'All of you who have been baptised in Christ, have put on Christ.' And so we ought to behold Christ in our captive brethren and we ought to redeem Him from the peril of captivity who redeemed us from the peril of death."⁴⁵ Cyprian continues to expound the idea that the captives are Christ himself; to redeem the captives is to redeem Christ, just as he first redeemed us. By piling up the images and by using quotations, rather than simply the images themselves, Cyprian gives greater rhetorical weight to his argument for ransoming the captives, one which focuses on their needs rather than the rewards to be gained from such generosity.⁴⁶

A final image that Cyprian uses in his exhortation to care for the poor is that of sacrifice.⁴⁷ In *De dominica oratione*, he expounds the Lord's Prayer as a guide to the Christian life. Towards the end, he quotes Phil 4:18 as evidence for his assertion that God listens to those who have demonstrated their faith by good works:⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *Ep.* 62.2.1 (CCSL 3C:386).

⁴⁵ "Nam cum dicat Paulus apostolus: 'quotquot in Christo baptizati estis, Christum induistis,' in captiuis fratribus nostris contemplandus est Christus et redimendus de periculo captiuitatis, qui nos redemit de periculo mortis." *Ep.* 62.2.2 (CCSL 3C:386).

⁴⁶ The promise of reward does appear later in the letter, however, through his use of Matt 25:36. *Ep.* 62.3.1 (CCSL 3C:387).

⁴⁷ For the link between alms and sacrifice in the Second Temple period, see Anderson, "Redeem Your Sins," 54-56.

⁴⁸ "Cito orationes ad Deum ascendunt quas ad Deum merita nostri operis imponunt." *Dom. or.* 33 (CCSL 3A:110). This is first demonstrated by quotations from Tob 12:11-15 and Isa 58:6b-9a. In linking Isaiah to the quote from Philipians, there is also an allusion to the image of the "household of God" (domesticos Dei), found in Eph 2:19 (CCSL 3A:111).

The blessed Apostle Paul, when aided by his brethren in his great distress, said that the good works they had done are sacrifices to God. “I am filled,” he says, “having received from Epaphroditus the things you sent. They are a sweet-smelling fragrance, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.”⁴⁹ For the person who has mercy on the poor, loans money to God;⁵⁰ and the one who gives to the least, gives to God himself,⁵¹ and offers to God a spiritual sacrifice—a sweet odour.⁵²

In order to understand how the image of sacrifice relates to Cyprian’s theology of almsgiving as a whole, we must first examine how it functions within this treatise. *De dominica oratione* focuses on God’s mercy and grace in the process of sanctification.⁵³ As Cyprian says, we continually ask God “that the sanctification and quickening which is received from the grace of God may be preserved by His protection.”⁵⁴ This sanctification is experienced by partaking in the Eucharist,⁵⁵ and by asking for forgiveness in prayer.⁵⁶ However, God’s mercy and pardon are not poured out unless such petitioners likewise forgive their debtors.⁵⁷ Similarly, the sacrifice of one who is in disagreement with a brother will not be accepted—they must first be reconciled: “Our

⁴⁹ Phil 4:18. This reference is only mentioned in a footnote to the section on Acts by Roman Garrison, *Redemptive Almsgiving in Early Christianity* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 67 n. 4.

⁵⁰ Cf. Prov 19:17.

⁵¹ Cf. Matt 25:40.

⁵² “Beatus apostolus Paulus in necessitate pressuræ adiutus a fratribus opera quæ fiunt sacrificia Deo dixit esse. ‘Saturatus sum,’ inquit, ‘recipiens ab Epaphrodito ea quæ a uobis missa sunt, odorem suauitatis, sacrificium acceptum et placitum Deo.’ Nam quando qui miseretur pauperi Deo faenerat et qui dat minimis Deo donat, spiritaliter Deo suauitatis odore sacrificat.” *Dom. or.* 33 (CCSL 3A:111).

⁵³ Réveillaud notes that Augustine suggested the reading of the treatise in order to combat the Pelagians. Réveillaud, *L’oraison dominicale*, 57-62. See Augustine, *Ep.* 215.3 (CSEL 57:395). For other similar admonitions by Augustine, see Han-luen Kantzer Konline, “Grace, Free Will, and the Lord’s Prayer: Cyprian’s Importance for the ‘Augustinian’ Doctrine of Grace,” *AugStud* 45 (2014): 248.

⁵⁴ “ut sanctificatio et uiuificatio quæ de Dei gratia sumitur ipsius protectione seruetur.” *Dom. or.* 12 (CCSL 3A:97).

⁵⁵ *Dom. or.* 18 (CCSL 3A:101). Described as “sacrificia diuina” in *Dom. or.* 4 (CCSL 3A:91).

⁵⁶ “quia qui orare nos pro debitis et peccatis docuit paternam misericordiam promisit et ueniam secuturam.” *Dom. or.* 22 (CCSL 3A:104).

⁵⁷ “scientes impetrari non posse quod pro peccatis petimus, nisi et ipsi circa peccatores nostros paria fecerimus.” *Dom. or.* 23 (CCSL 3A:104).

peace and brotherly agreement is the greater sacrifice to God.”⁵⁸ Abel is an example of one who, in giving a right sacrifice, becomes a sacrifice himself—the first martyr—and a type of Christ’s sacrifice to come.⁵⁹ Christ’s sacrifice cleanses from sin, but the benefits of that sacrifice are only available to those who imitate him.⁶⁰

Christ’s work of salvation is not limited to his self-sacrifice, however; he also prays for his people that they might be saved and live in peace.⁶¹ Believers should be watchful and earnest in prayer,⁶² also remembering, “Petition is ineffectual when it is a barren entreaty that beseeches God,”⁶³ that is, prayer without fasting and almsgiving. It is then, after a number of examples of prayer attended by merciful deeds, that good works are presented as a pleasing sacrifice to God, with the quotation from Phil 4:18.⁶⁴ The treatise ends with the exhortation, “New-created and newborn of the Spirit by the mercy of God, let us imitate what we shall one day be.”⁶⁵

Offering the sacrifice of good works in Phil 4:18 is therefore one of a number of such images that Cyprian weaves through *De dominica oratione*, illustrating the ongoing sanctification of the Christian. The link between this treatise and *De opere et*

⁵⁸ “Sacrificium Deo maius est pax nostra et fraterna concordia.” *Dom. or.* 23 (CCSL 3A:105).

⁵⁹ *Dom. or.* 24 (CCSL 3A:105). “Mais lorsque l’offrande est agréée, le fidèle lui-même devient à l’image de ce qu’il offre.” Réveillaud, *L’oraison dominicale*, 65.

⁶⁰ For imitation of and participation in Christ’s sacrifice, see Laurance, “*Priest*” as *Type of Christ*, 223-30.

⁶¹ *Dom. or.* 30 (CCSL 3A:108).

⁶² *Dom. or.* 31 (CCSL 3A:109).

⁶³ “Inefficax petitio est, cum precatur Deum sterilis oratio.” *Dom. or.* 32 (CCSL 3A:110). William Countryman comments on this passage: “Only almsgiving can give one the right to have one’s prayers heard. This extreme doctrine is novel, it seems, with Cyprian; the closest approach to it in an earlier author is the statement in *II Clement* that ‘almsgiving is better than prayer.’” Countryman, *Rich Christian*, 195. He continues, with reference to *Eleem.* 4 (CCSL 3A:57), that almsgiving is “superior to prayer, lamentation and fasting.” Countryman, *Rich Christian*, 196. However, far from being novel, these words are a summary of the central verses of Isa 58:1-9, prefaced by a quotation of verse 1, and followed by a quotation of verses 7-9.

⁶⁴ *Dom. or.* 33 (CCSL 3A:111).

⁶⁵ “Per Dei indulgentiam recreati spiritualiter et renati imitemur quod futuri sumus.” *Dom. or.* 36 (CCSL 3A:113).

eleemosynis, demonstrated by the large number of shared scriptural references,⁶⁶ has not been fully appreciated.⁶⁷ However, the latter's presentation of alms as a means of cleansing from post-baptismal sin must be understood within this wider context.⁶⁸ Almsgiving cleanses from sin because it is part of what it looks like to be in a continuing relationship with the one who grants and preserves salvation—a demonstration of faith.⁶⁹

That *De opere et eleemosynis* is not a general treatise on almsgiving, but the response to a particular pastoral situation,⁷⁰ is further demonstrated by the way Cyprian tailors his use of 1 John 1:8-9. In *De dominica oratione*, the affirmation of universal sinfulness in verse 8 is followed by the promise in verse 9: "If we confess our sins, the Lord is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins."⁷¹ However, in *De opere et eleemosynis*, only verse 8 is cited, followed by a discussion of the "wholesome remedies" of giving alms. The focus on the cleansing effects of almsgiving in *De opere et eleemosynis*,

⁶⁶ Besides frequent echoes in the language used, the treatises have the following passages in common: Deut 33:9 (*Dom. or.* 9, *Eleem.* 16); allusion to John 5:14b (*Dom. or.* 12, *Eleem.* 1); 1 Tim 6:7-10 (*Dom. or.* 19, *Eleem.* 10); Luke 12:20 (*Dom. or.* 20, *Eleem.* 13); Matt 19:21 (allusion *Dom. or.* 20, *Eleem.* 7); Prov 10:3a (*Dom. or.* 21, *Eleem.* 11); Ps 36:25 (*Dom. or.* 21, *Eleem.* 19); Matt 6:31-3 (*Dom. or.* 21, *Eleem.* 9); reference to Daniel being fed in the lions' den and Elijah being fed by ravens (*Dom. or.* 21, *Eleem.* 11); 1 John 1:8 (*Dom. or.* 22, *Eleem.* 3); Tob 22:8 (*Dom. or.* 32, *Eleem.* 5); Isa 58:7-9a (*Dom. or.* 33, *Eleem.* 4). Most scholars date *De dominica oratione* to late 251 to 252, whether or not, like Sage, they regard the order in *Vita Cypriani* as chronological. Sage, *Cyprian*, 381-83. Réveillaud, however, dates it to 250. Réveillaud, *L'oraison dominicale*, 39.

⁶⁷ Rhee does note the importance of both for "redemptive almsgiving," as well as the significance of the plague for the second work. Helen Rhee, *Loving the Poor, Saving the Rich: Wealth, Poverty, and Early Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 99-100.

⁶⁸ *Eleem.* 1-2 (CCSL 3A:55). Cf. *Ep.* 55.22 (CCSL 3B:281).

⁶⁹ As Poirier says, "L'accomplissement des œuvres commandées par Dieu pour le salut relève de la foi." Poirier, *Bienfaisance et les aumônes*, 49.

⁷⁰ As proposed by Geoffrey D. Dunn, "Cyprian's Care for the Poor: The Evidence of *De Opere et Eleemosynis*," *StPatr* 42 (2006): 364-65.

⁷¹ "Si autem confessi fuerimus peccata nostra, fidelis et iustus est Dominus qui nobis peccata dimittat." *Dom. or.* 22 (CCSL 3A:104).

written in light of the plague,⁷² is therefore due to Cyprian's pastoral concern to exhort his flock by focusing on the "one thing [they] lack."⁷³

5.3 Direct application

Cyprian makes use of a number of Pauline texts that deal with the right use of wealth. Firstly, a selection of verses from 1 Timothy are grouped to demonstrate that, "All authentic widows should be honoured":⁷⁴

In the first Epistle of Paul to Timothy: "Honour widows who are truly widows. But the one who lives for pleasure is dead while she lives."⁷⁵ And again: "Pass over the younger widows. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ they want to marry, having judgement because they have rejected their first pledge."⁷⁶

Whilst this section endorses the care of widows traditional in the church, as continued from Jewish practice,⁷⁷ the testimony is shaped more towards discipline than charity due to those verses which are included and those which are omitted. The verses selected emphasise the qualifications for a widow to receive support, rather than the responsibility of the congregation to support them.⁷⁸ Given this emphasis on satisfying

⁷² Dunn, "Cyprian's Care for the Poor," 367-68. Note that the allusion to Matt 5:45, which Dunn identifies as a link between *Eleem.* 25 and *Vit. Cypr.* 9, is also present in *Dom. or.* 17. For a discussion of alternate dates, see Countryman, *Rich Christian*, 205-6 n. 35.

⁷³ Likewise, in *Laps.* 35 (CCSL 3:240-41), Cyprian cites love of patrimony as the cause of their downfall; giving alms will therefore wash away the sin and heal the wound, demonstrating true repentance.

⁷⁴ "Viduas probatas quasque honorandas." *Test.* 3.74. (CCSL 3:160).

⁷⁵ 1 Tim 5:3, 6.

⁷⁶ 1 Tim 5:11-12. "In epistulis pauli ad timotheum i: 'uiduas honora, quae uere sunt uiduae. Quae autem delicata est, uiua mortua est.' Et iterum: 'iuniores autem uiduas praeteri. Cum enim indeliciatae fuerint in christo, nubere uolunt habentes iudicium, quoniam primam fidem reprobauerunt.'" *Test.* 3.74 (CCSL 3:160).

⁷⁷ *Test.* 3.113, "Viduam et pupillos protegi oportere," gives instruction on the care of widows and orphans, using only verses from the Old Testament. CCSL 3:175-76. Neither *Test.* 3.74, nor this testimony, are mentioned by Dunn, "Widows," 295-307.

⁷⁸ "Theo-economics," to use Wilhite's term, may underpin Cyprian's concern here, although it results in a different stance on the issue of widows to that of Tertullian. David E. Wilhite, "Tertullian and Widows: A

requirements, the absence of 1 Tim 5:9 is significant, suggesting that a widow did not need to be over sixty years old to be assisted by the church in Carthage at this time. The focus on giving is restored in the following testimony, “That every person ought to have care rather of his own people, and especially of believers.”⁷⁹ One of the three verses given in support is 1 Tim 5:8: “Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”⁸⁰ There is no mention of benefit to the giver in this testimony; to care for the poor is presented as a duty.

A seemingly more straightforward series of quotes from Paul (see the section on qualification below), appears in *Test.* 3.1, “On the good of works and alms.”⁸¹ This extensive list of proof texts includes these quotations from 2 Corinthians:

Of this same thing also in the second Epistle to the Corinthians: “Let your abundance supply their want, that their abundance also may be the supplement of your want, that there may be equality: as it is written, the one who had much had no excess; and the one who had little had no lack.”⁸² Also

North African Appropriation of Pauline Household Economics,” in *Engaging economics: New Testament scenarios and early Christian reception*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker and Kelly D. Liebengood (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 222-42.

⁷⁹ “Suorum et maxime fidelium curam plus unumquemque habere debere.” *Test.* 3.75 (CCSL 3:160-61). Also cited are Isa 58:7 and Matt 10:25. The latter does not advocate caring for those of the household in need, but rather predicts believers will be persecuted because of their identification with Christ. The reason for its inclusion seems to be the word “domesticos,” although it may also be intended to broaden the reference of household to include believers. For a discussion of associative strategies in patristic exegesis, see John J. O’Keefe and R. R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 63-68.

⁸⁰ “Ad timotheum i: ‘si quis autem suorum et maxime domesticorum non agit curam, fidem denegat et est deterior infideli.’” *Test.* 3.75 (CCSL 3:160). For more detailed discussion of these texts, see Murphy, “Widows, Welfare and the Wayward.”

⁸¹ “De bono operis et misericordiae.” CCSL 3:80.

⁸² 2 Cor 8:14-15. For a discussion of these verses in Paul, see Welborn, “Equality,” 73-90. The principle of equality was a standard argument in deliberative oratory, as well as in ancient law. For examples, see Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1985), 67-68. It was however, an equality among equals, perhaps best

in the same place: “The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and the one who sows in blessing shall also reap blessing. But let everyone do as he has decided in his heart: not sorrowfully, or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.”⁸³ Also in the same place: “As it is written, he has scattered abroad; he has given to the poor: his righteousness remains for ever.”⁸⁴ Also in the same place: “Now the one who supplies seed to the sower, will both supply bread to be eaten, and shall multiply your seed, and shall increase the growth of the fruits of your righteousness: that in all things you may be made rich.”⁸⁵ Also in the same place: “The administration of this service has not only supplied that which is lacking to the saints, but has abounded by much giving of thanks unto God.”⁸⁶

The final set of verses here, 2 Cor 9:10-11a, 12, is also used in *De opere et eleemosynis* to address the concern that by following Cyprian’s advice and giving to the poor, believers may end up impoverished themselves. The quotation is placed between Prov 28:27⁸⁷ and Jesus’ words in Matt 6:31-32 on seeking first the kingdom, and is introduced with an extended citation formula: “the blessed Apostle Paul, full of the

expressed: “Iustitia est aequitas ius uni cuique rei tribuens pro dignitate cuiusque.” *Rhet. Her.* 3.2.3 (LCL 403:162-63). Paul uses a traditional principle, but redefines those who are worthy.

⁸³ 2 Cor 9:6-7.

⁸⁴ 2 Cor 9:9.

⁸⁵ 2 Cor 9:10-11a.

⁸⁶ 2 Cor 9:12. “De hoc ipso ad Corinthios II: ‘Vestra abundantia illorum inopiam suppleat, ut et illorum abundantia uestrae inopiae sit supplementum et sit aequalitas, sicut scriptum est: qui multum habuit non abundauit et qui modicum non indiguit.’ Item illic: ‘Qui parce seminat parce et metet: et qui seminat in benedictione de benedictione et metet. Vnusquisque autem sicut corde proposuit, non quasi ex tristitia uel ex necessitate. Hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus.’ Item illic: ‘Sicut scriptum est: distribuit, dedit pauperibus, iustitia eius manet in aeternum.’ Item illic: ‘Qui administrat semen seminanti, et panem ad edendum praestabit et multiplicabit seminationem uestram et augebit incrementa frugum iustitiae uestrae, ut in omnibus locupletemini.’ Item illic: ‘Administratio huius officii non tantum supplebit ea quae sanctis desunt, sed et abundabit per multam gratiarum actionem in Deum.’” *Test.* 3.1 (CCSL 3:87-88). A number of these verses are mentioned by Garrison, *Redemptive Almsgiving*, 69.

⁸⁷ “Qui dat pauperibus numquam egebit: qui autem auertit oculum suum in magna penuria erit.” (CCSL 3A:60).

grace of the Lord's inspiration."⁸⁸ The verses demonstrate that, "while thanks are directed to God for our almsgivings and labours, by the prayer of the poor, the wealth of the doer is increased by the retribution of God."⁸⁹ The overall message is that it is not the generous who are impoverished, but rather those who neglect the poor. Those who have their priorities right will not only increase, rather than decrease, their wealth, but will also receive a crop of righteousness. The thanksgiving directed towards God and the benefits which accrue to the giver are implications drawn from the text, rather than originating with Cyprian.

Later in the same work, as discussed in detail in chapter 2, Cyprian employs Gal 6:10, 9: "So then, while we have time, let us do what is good to all, especially those of the household of faith. Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due time we will reap."⁹⁰ Giving clothing and food to the poor will earn the reward of heavenly garments, sharing the heavenly banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁹¹ In *De bono patientiae*, citing the same verses, Cyprian encourages his congregation to persevere in being righteous and doing good works. They will store up treasure in heaven if they do not faint, as the apostle promises.⁹²

In addition to his exhortations to give to the needy, Cyprian also issues warnings on the dangers of wealth, using 1 Tim 6:7-10 a number of times. In his treatise on the Lord's Prayer, he uses it to explicate the phrase, "Give us this day our daily bread." Christ's disciples ask for food for the day, because they are eagerly awaiting God's kingdom, not trying to extend their stay in this world:

⁸⁸ "Item beatus apostolus paulus dominicae inspirationis gratia plenus." *Eleem.* 9 (CCSL 3A:61).

⁸⁹ "quoniam dum gratiarum actio ad deum pro eleemosynis adque operationibus nostris pauperum oratione dirigitur, census operantis dei retributione cumulatur." *Eleem.* 9 (CCSL 3A:61).

⁹⁰ "Ergo dum tempus habemus, operemur quod bonum est ad omnes, maxime autem ad domestic fidei. Bonum autem facientes non deficiamus, tempore enim suo metemus." *Eleem.* 24 (CCSL 3A:71), *Pat.* 13 (CCSL 3A:125). As Fahey notes, Cyprian cites these verses in reverse order both times that he uses them. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 479.

⁹¹ *Eleem.* 24 (CCSL 3A:71).

⁹² *Pat.* 13 (CCSL 3A:125). For a discussion of the link between almsgiving and eschatology in early patristic thought, see Rhee, "Wealth," 64-84.

Thus also the blessed apostle admonishes us, giving substance and strength to the steadfastness of our hope and faith: “We brought nothing,” he says, “into this world, nor indeed can we carry anything out. Having therefore food and clothing, let us be content with that. (v9) But those that want to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have made shipwreck from the faith, and have pierced themselves with many sorrows.”⁹³

Of note here is the way Cyprian uses Paul in his commentary on this section of Matthew.⁹⁴ He continues naturally from the clause of the prayer requesting daily provision, to warnings on the dangers of wealth. This theme is more fully explored in *De opere et eleemosynis*. Unsurprisingly, there are those who are concerned that if they give generously, as Cyprian is exhorting them to do, their estate will fail. Cyprian attempts to re-orient their priorities with his favoured rhetorical contrast:

While you are anxious lest any of your wealth is diminished, you do not see that you yourself are being diminished—you love money more than your own soul. While you fear losing your patrimony for your own sake, you yourself are perishing for the sake of your patrimony. And therefore the apostle well exclaims, and says: [cites 1 Tim 6:7-10].⁹⁵

⁹³ “Sic et beatus apostolus monet formans et corroborans spei nostrae ac fidei firmitatem: ‘Nihil,’ inquit, ‘intulimus in hunc mundum, uerum nec auferre possumus. Habentes itaque exhibitionem et tegumentum his contenti sumus. Qui autem uolunt diuites fieri incidunt in temptationem et muscipulas et desideria multa et nocentia, quae mergunt hominem in perditionem et in interitum. Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas, quam quidam appetentes naufragauerunt a fide et inseruerunt se doloribus multis.’” *Dom. or.* 19 (CCSL 3A:102). Also cited in the testimony, “Possidendi concupiscentiam et pecuniam non adpetendam.” *Test.* 3.61 (CCSL 3:151-52).

⁹⁴ On the Pauline theme of justification by faith evident in Hilary of Poitiers’ commentary on Matthew, see Williams, “Justification by Faith,” 657.

⁹⁵ “et dum ne quid de rebus tuis minuatur adtendis, non respicis quod ipse minuaris amator magis mamonae quam animae tuae, ut dum times ne pro te patrimonium perdas, ipse pro patrimonio pereas. Et ideo bene apostolus clamat et dicit: [1 Tim 6:7-10].” *Eleem.* 10 (CCSL 3A:61-62), reading “simus” for “sumus,” “muscipula” for “muscipulas,” and “adpetentes” for “appetentes.”

In *De habitu virginum*, Cyprian starts a series of paragraphs with the phrase, “You say that you are wealthy and rich,” followed by a direction which he then supports with Scripture. Clearly, women committing themselves to virginity were not required to renounce their possessions:

You say that you are wealthy and rich; but Paul meets your riches, and with his own voice prescribes for the moderating of your dress and ornament within a just limit. “Let women,” said he, “adorn themselves with reserve and modesty, not with braided hair, gold, pearls, or costly dress, but with a good life, as becomes women professing chastity.”⁹⁶

He then continues *ad maiorem* that, if even married women are directed to be modest in their dress, how much more so should virgins be. A further consideration is that it is not right for virgins to pride themselves on being pure if, by their dress and behaviour, they cause others to sin:

You say that you are wealthy and rich. But not everything that can be done ought also to be done; nor ought the broad desires that arise out of the pride of the world be extended beyond the honour and modesty of virginity, since it is written, “All things are lawful, but not everything is beneficial. All things are lawful, but not everything edifies.”⁹⁷

⁹⁶ 1 Tim 2:9-10. “Locupletem te dicis et diuitem. sed diuitiis tuis Paulus occurrit et ad cultum adque ornatum tuum iusto fine moderandum sua uoce praescribit. ‘sint,’ inquit, ‘mulieres cum verecundia et pudicitia componentes se, non in tortis crinibus neque auro neque margaritis aut ueste pretiosa, sed ut decet mulieres promittentes castitatem per bonam conuersationem.’” *Hab. virg.* 8 (CSEL 3.1:193-94). Cyprian then quotes 1 Pet 3:3-4. Both these passages also appear in support of the testimony, “Mulierem ornari saeculariter non debere.” *Test.* 3.36 (CCSL 3:130-31).

⁹⁷ 1 Cor 10:23. “Locupletem te dicis et diuitem. sed non omne quod potest debet et fieri nec desideria prolixa et de saeculi ambitione nascentia ultra honorem ac pudorem uirginitatis extendi, cum scriptum sit: ‘omnia licent, sed non omnia expediunt. omnia licent, sed non omnia aedificant.’” *Hab. virg.* 9 (CSEL 3.1:194). This verse also appears in support of the testimony, “Item non quidquid licet esses faciendum.” *Test.* 3.92 (CCSL 3:167).

The third use of this phrase is directed against virgins boasting in their riches. Cyprian cites Wisd 5:8-9⁹⁸ before continuing: “And the apostle again warns us, and says, ‘And they that buy, as though they bought not; and they that possess, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as though they used it not. For the fashion of this world is passing away.’”⁹⁹ He then reflects on Peter, who did not have silver and gold,¹⁰⁰ but was rich in spiritual blessings. Virgins cannot possess this spiritual wealth, however, if they would rather “be rich to this world than to Christ.”¹⁰¹ Once more the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly is prominent—this world is passing away. A wise person will therefore trust in Christ, not earthly riches.

The final paragraph in the series emphasises that God has given wealth to be used, not selfishly, but to meet the needs of others, drawing on Christ’s words of treasure in heaven.¹⁰² Here Cyprian directs that money be used to redeem sins rather than to increase them.¹⁰³ As elsewhere in his work, almsgiving is presented as cleansing from sin when love of money is the cause of sin.¹⁰⁴

These texts demonstrate that at least some virgins were wealthy; they have not renounced their wealth, they continue to enjoy it—too much, as far as Cyprian is

⁹⁸ “quid nobis profuit superbia aut quid diuitiarum iactatio contulit nobis? transierunt omnia illa tamquam umbra.”

⁹⁹ 1 Cor 7:30b-31. “et apostolus rursum moneat et dicat: ‘et qui emunt sic sint quasi non possidentes, et qui hoc mundo utuntur quasi non utantur. praeterit enim figura huius mundi.’” *Hab. virg.* 10 (CSEL 3.1:194). 1 Cor 7:29-31 is cited as support for the testimony, “Eum qui fidem consecutus est exposito priore homine caelestia tantum et spiritalia cogitare debere nec adtendere ad saeculum, cui iam renuntiauit.” *Test.* 3.11 (CCSL 3:99-101).

¹⁰⁰ Allusion to Acts 3:6.

¹⁰¹ “se diuitem saeculo mauult esse quam Christo.” *Hab. virg.* 10 (CSEL 3.1:195).

¹⁰² Matt 6:20. *Hab. virg.* 11 (CSEL 3.1:195).

¹⁰³ “adquin temptatio est patrimonium grande, nisi ad usus bonos census operatur, ut patrimonio suo unusquisque locupletior magis redimere debeat quam augere delicta.” *Hab. virg.* 11 (CSEL 3.1:195).

¹⁰⁴ The exception is in *Ep.* 55.22.1 (CCSL 3B:281) where, arguing for the possibility of repentance, he cites Tob 4:10, “Almsgiving delivers from death” (eleemosyna a morte liberat), to make the point that it cannot be referring to the freedom from death achieved by Christ’s blood, so it must refer to death which creeps in through subsequent sins.

concerned. What we can learn from these and other texts about the social situation of virgins will be considered in the final chapter.

5.4 Qualification

Along with these injunctions to care for the poor and captive, Cyprian also uses Paul to qualify them. After discussing at length the benefit of good works and mercy in the first testimony of *Ad Quirinum* Book 3, Cyprian qualifies the statement in the next testimony, “In works and alms, even if by smallness of power less be done, the will itself is sufficient.”¹⁰⁵ This is strategic, as the only passage cited was omitted from the verses quoted from 2 Corinthians in *Test.* 3.1: “In the second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: ‘If there is a ready will, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have—not that others should be relieved while you are pressured.’”¹⁰⁶ The poor should not be disheartened, as wealth is not necessary to please God. Giving is, however, presented as incumbent upon all Christians¹⁰⁷ and, here at least, is free from all connotations of patronage.

The other qualification is a minor note which appears through the quotation of 1 Cor 13:3.¹⁰⁸ In *Test.* 3.3, it appears under the heading, “That love and brotherly affection are to be religiously and steadfastly practised,”¹⁰⁹ as part of a longer quotation of 1 Cor 13:2-8. In *De unitate*, Cyprian stresses the importance of unity, and that not even

¹⁰⁵ “In opere et elemosynis, etiamsi per mediocritatem minus fiat, ipsam uoluntatem satis esse.” *Test.* 3.2 (CCSL 3:88).

¹⁰⁶ 2 Cor 8:12-13. “In epistula Pauli ad Corinthios ii: ‘si uoluntas prompta est, secundum quodcumque habuerit, acceptabile est, non secundum quod non habuerit: neque ut aliis refrigerium, uobis praessura sit.’” *Test.* 3.2 (CCSL 3:88-89).

¹⁰⁷ The expectation, “even the poor ought to labour in good works” (*operari etiam paupers debeant*), is found in *Eleem.* 15 (CCSL 3A:64), citing the example of the widow in the temple, although the thrust of the argument is the consequent certainty of punishment for the rich who do not give.

¹⁰⁸ “Et si in cibos distribuero omnia mea et si tradidero corpus meum ut ardeam, agapem autem non habeam, nihil proficio.” *Test.* 3.3 (CCSL 3:90).

¹⁰⁹ “Agapem et dilectionem fraternam religiose et firmiter exercendam.” *Test.* 3.3 (CCSL 3:89). Alexis-Baker sees this testimony as one of a series on economic sharing. Alexis-Baker, “*Ad Quirinum*,” 365. However, of fifteen separate citations in this section, only Acts 4:32 makes any reference to economic sharing and, even in that case, the beginning of the verse emphasises the believers’ unity. *Test.* 3.3 (CCSL 3:89-91).

martyrdom (or almsgiving) can atone for the sin of schism.¹¹⁰ Again, in *De zelo et livore*, the overriding importance of love is emphasised. Cyprian alludes to 1 Cor 13:2-3 before quoting verse 4:

So also the Apostle Paul, when he was urging the merits of peace and love, and when he was strongly asserting and teaching that neither faith nor alms, nor even the passion itself of the confessor and the martyr, would avail him, unless he kept the requirements of love whole and inviolate, added, and said: “Love is generous, love is kind, love does not envy,”¹¹¹ teaching, doubtless, and showing that whoever is generous, and kind, and averse from jealousy and envy, such a one can maintain love.¹¹²

5.5 Conclusion

Cyprian does not mention the request of the pillars of the Jerusalem church to “remember the poor,”¹¹³ but he certainly shares Paul’s eagerness to fulfil it. In exhorting his congregation to do likewise, he makes use of a number of reading and motivational

¹¹⁰ Reading “caritatem” instead of “agapem.” *Unit. eccl.* 14 (CCSL 3:259).

¹¹¹ Hays reads exegetical intent into Cyprian’s text here, suggesting he translates from the Greek in a way that emphasises almsgiving as an expression of love. Christopher M. Hays, “By Almsgiving and Faith Sins Are Purged? The Theological Underpinnings of Early Christian Care for the Poor,” in *Engaging economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker and Kelly D. Liebengood (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 262. However, Cyprian, unlike Tertullian, does not make his own translation. Here “magnanima” is simply an Old Latin reading attested by both Tertullian (“magnanimis,” *Pat.* 12.9 [CCSL 1:313]) and Augustine (*Serm.* 350 [PL 39:1534], *Grat.* 34 [PL 44:902]); “benigna” is also the Vulgate reading. Cyprian does make his characteristic substitution of “caritas” for “agape,” however, as well as replacing “aemulatur” (*Test.* 3.3 [CCSL 3:90]) with “zelat” in order to conform it to the title of the treatise.

¹¹² “ideo et apostolus paulus cum pacis et caritatis merita depromeret cum que adseueraret firmiter et doceret nec fidem sibi nec eleemosynas nec passionem quoque ipsam confessoris et martyris profuturam, nisi caritatis foedera integra adque inuiolata seruasset, adiecit et dixit: ‘caritas magnanima est, caritas benigna est, caritas non zelat, docens scilicet et ostendens eum posse caritatem tenere quisque magnanimus fuerit et benignus et zeli ac liuoris alienus.’” *Zel. liv.* 13 (CCSL 3A:82).

¹¹³ Gal 2:10. Perhaps because the phrase is not so easily removed from the syntax of the sentence in Latin as it is in English, or perhaps because he does not want to represent Paul as being told what to do.

strategies. In concluding, I will consider how these relate to previous work on patronage and redemptive almsgiving.¹¹⁴

The citations of Paul examined here support Dunn's conclusion that, at least at the time of his conversion, Cyprian's "explicitly expressed motivation was religious rather than socio-political."¹¹⁵ The Pauline texts in *Ad Quirinum* present giving as a duty incumbent upon all Christians, if in proportion to their wealth; in fact, caring for family members in need is more likely to apply to those of moderate means. In the community's care for widows, there is an emphasis on ensuring they are truly deserving of honour (i.e. truly needy), rather than following the benefaction conventions of the Greco-Roman period.¹¹⁶ In his selection of texts, Cyprian retains Paul's desire for equality among Christians. However, the promise of reward is also present. Those who give liberally will be liberally blessed, both materially and in righteousness. Cyprian's choice of texts highlights Paul's use of righteousness language in relationship to giving, something imitated by Cyprian in his use of Abraham as a model in *De opere et eleemosynis*. Likewise the giving of thanks to God, inspired by such generosity, is adopted by Cyprian in *De habitu virginum*.

The foundations thus laid, sustained injunctions to give in Cyprian's later writings are prompted by pastoral circumstances. When Christians are captured in barbarian raids, Cyprian uses Paul in a creative way to address a novel situation. The texts focus on identification: Paul himself is a model of suffering with those who suffer; the image of the body is used to show that Christians participate in the circumstances of their brothers and sisters. Images of the temple and being clothed with Christ identify the captive Christians with the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and with Christ himself. Believers are called to sacrificial action in response to the redemption Christ has purchased for them.

¹¹⁴ Defined by Roman Garrison as the idea that "the giving of alms provided a ransom for sin." Garrison, *Redemptive Almsgiving*, 10.

¹¹⁵ Dunn, "White Crown of Works," 725. Contra Bobertz, "Cyprian of Carthage as Patron."

¹¹⁶ Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 201.

The devastating plague, which required the resources of the Christian community to assist both those within it and those without, is the occasion for *De opere et eleemosynis*. The Pauline verses employed here emphasise the advantages of giving, both temporal and spiritual, as befits deliberative discourse;¹¹⁷ the disadvantages of clinging to wealth are likewise on display. Similarly, *De bono patientiae* focuses on the necessity of perseverance in giving to achieve the heavenly recompense. Cyprian's appropriation of these texts reminds us that Paul himself used the promise of reward, or soteriological self-interest, to exhort believers.¹¹⁸ Patronage, however, is nowhere in sight. Cyprian therefore uses Paul to advocate for a counter-cultural attitude towards almsgiving—to please God rather than to cultivate clients.¹¹⁹ None of the works examined here belong to the Decian persecution and its immediate aftermath, when Dunn understands Cyprian to be acting as a patron, using almsgiving “to turn the faithful poor into Cyprian's own clients.”¹²⁰ Given the consistency of his attitude in the periods before and after, however, that conclusion may warrant further investigation.

There remains the question of almsgiving as an effective means of cleansing from sin, particularly prominent in *De opere et eleemosynis*. To correctly understand Cyprian's teaching on this subject, however, we need to situate it the broader context of his thought. Examining his use of Paul in *De dominica oratione* allows us to do just that. The image of good works as an acceptable and pleasing sacrifice to God is one of a series of sacrificial images which Cyprian employs throughout that treatise. He thereby creates a commentary on the means of sanctification—living in relationship with the merciful Father by participating in Christ's sacrifice. Believers thus preserve what has been granted by God's grace, and imitate what they will one day be. In Cyprian's work, almsgiving is presented as cleansing from sin when that sin is related to the wrong use of wealth; it is not a cure-all. Almsgiving will not profit a person if they do not have

¹¹⁷ “In deliberative speeches, appeal to honour (*honestas*) and advantage (*utilitas*) were the basic modes of persuasion.” Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric*, 115. See Cicero, *Inv.* 2.52 (LCL 386:324-27). For a discussion of the rhetorical structure of *De opere et eleemosynis*, see Dunn, “Cyprian's Care for the Poor,” 364.

¹¹⁸ For a discussion of such strategies in Jerome, see Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Why Care for the Poor? The Role of Almsgiving in Jerome's Asceticism,” *ZAC* 18 (2014): 283-301.

¹¹⁹ Dunn, “Cyprian's Care for the Poor,” 368.

¹²⁰ Dunn, “White Crown of Works,” 740.

love, expressed by maintaining the unity of the church, or even by being free from jealousy.

Cyprian has often been understood as being out of alignment with Paul in emphasising redemptive almsgiving rather than the belief that “Jesus died for sins once for all.”¹²¹ Such a view fails to take into account both Cyprian’s presentation of almsgiving as a means of repentance from an unfaithful use of wealth, and Paul’s use of sacrificial and righteousness terminology in the context of almsgiving. If we replace the term “redemptive almsgiving” with “sanctification,” it is easier to understand what alms is intended to achieve. Sanctification is being made holy by the removal of sin, but in the context of a restored relationship with God through Christ. Redemptive almsgiving, thus understood, is therefore not only “implicit in the teachings of Jesus and other New Testament traditions,”¹²² but in Paul as well. Furthermore, giving not only demonstrates obedience to the gospel of Christ, but is a concrete expression of the love and unity of the church and the communion of its members.¹²³

¹²¹ Garrison, *Redemptive Almsgiving*, 134.

¹²² Garrison, *Redemptive Almsgiving*, 11 (italics in original removed). Of course, Cyprian also supports his argument by using a number of Old Testament texts, for example, Prov 16:6, Sir 3:30 and Tob 12:8-9 in *Eleem.* 2, 5 (CCSL 3A: 55, 58).

¹²³ As Poirier says, “La liturgie ne se situe pas en marge de l’activité sociale du chrétien, elle contribue à lui donner son sens. Le don individuel, la charge de portée collective, l’offrande à Dieu ne doivent pas être ici dissociés, les diverses valeurs du mot *munus* sont ici solidaires.” Poirier, “Charité individuelle,” 260.

6. Interpreting Paul

If in any respect the truth has grown faltering or shaky, we must go back to the Lord as our source, and to the tradition of the Gospels and the apostles. Let our conduct draw its rules from the same source from which our beginnings and our precepts took their rise.¹

Cyprian's rhetorical framework presents Scripture as the control for the faith and practice of the church. Not only does he say it, but, in his rejection of Greco-Roman authors and models, he lives out his conviction that the truth is divine truth, found only in God's word. He will not defer to any other authority. Tertullian may at times agree with Plato or Seneca, but Cyprian does not (at least not out loud). He always defends the biblical basis of his teaching.

In many ways, Cyprian shows independence from his North African forebear. Certainly, like Tertullian, and unsurprisingly given his prior career, Cyprian is influenced by the rhetorical rather than the philosophical schools in his exegesis. And like him, he uses the methods of the law courts. But Tertullian's obsession becomes Cyprian's occasional indulgence. So Cyprian does not concern himself with the letter versus the spirit of the law. He has no need to articulate the rule of faith, or demonstrate that the weight of the biblical evidence supports his interpretation. Neither does he point to the succession of the bishops as guaranteeing the traditional interpretation of the Scriptures. Rather, as tradition is claimed by his opponents in support of heretical baptism, Cyprian only regards it as authoritative when it is congruent with Scripture. Given that the rule of faith is not in dispute, it is unity which provides the distinctive framework for his interpretation of Scripture.

On a textual level, individual words are important in Cyprian's exegesis as they draw his attention to a particular verse. Cyprian is not opposed to making alterations in his citations of Scripture, however, especially through the use of synonyms. He also feels free to abbreviate verses, or to leave part of a passage out, if the contents do not fit with

¹ "ut si in aliquo nutauerit et uacillauerit ueritas, ad originem dominicam et ad euangelicam atque apostolicam traditionem reuertamur et inde surgat actus nostri ratio unde et ordo et origo surrexit." *Ep.* 74.10.3 (CCSL 3C:578).

what he is trying to achieve. His high respect for Scripture, therefore, does not prevent him from adapting it to better suit his purposes, as Paul himself did.² At times, the texts Cyprian omits reveal as much about his theology as his exegesis of those he includes.

In this concluding chapter, I present an overview of the reading strategies Cyprian uses to apply Paul in the areas of his pastoral concern, and briefly consider their implications for a number of his works. I then discuss Cyprian's portrayal of Paul and his teaching, particularly the role of grace in Cyprian's thought. Finally, I highlight the contribution this study of Paul makes to understanding the social context of North African Christianity, before ending with some suggestions for the way forward.

6.1 Reading strategies and pastoral concerns

Cyprian's contribution to biblical exegesis goes beyond his testimonia collections and typological use of the Old Testament. Here I consider each of Cyprian's reading strategies across his work as a whole.

Model

Models are an important means by which Cyprian appropriates Paul—the strategy is used across all areas of his pastoral concern. To be a Christian is to imitate Christ; even leaving aside the material from the Gospels, Jesus is presented as the most important exemplar. Believers should not only listen to his teaching, therefore, but replicate his deeds, whether it is the exact form of the Eucharist, or the humility he displayed—confessors take note—in his passion. Furthermore, Christ's suffering and subsequent glory is a pattern for every Christian, one which engenders perseverance and hope in the midst of trial; all will experience transformation into his heavenly likeness. But it is also true that believers are already risen with Christ, and must therefore put aside all vices and works of the flesh. Now identified with the heavenly man, they must leave behind earthly things, a teaching particularly relevant to virgins.

Paul is the other major figure presented as an example. The apostle's belief that dying is gain should be adopted by all Christians. Despite the sufferings that he undergoes for the sake of the gospel, Paul understands them as beneficial rather than detrimental, as

² For example, Paul's quotation of Exod 16:18 in 2 Cor 8:15, as mentioned in chapter 1.3.

should Cyprian's audience. Those who, like Paul, persevere in the fight and finish the race, will receive the crown of righteousness. Like Christ, Paul is humble despite his elevated spiritual experiences. In this, he is a model for confessors, but also for bishops. Bishops are to imitate Paul in being prepared to confront people with the truth, no matter how unpopular that may be. However, bishops are also to imitate Paul in mourning with those who mourn, sharing in others' weakness, and being all things to all people in order to save some.

Other figures are also used as models, both positive and negative. One who should be imitated is Abraham, the father of those who have faith. This has implications for the use of wine in the cup, as well as giving to the poor—giving demonstrates that one shares his faith. Also worthy of imitation are the apostles, presented as opponents of heretical baptism, whose attitude is summarised by Ephesians 4. Some models are particularly associated with Rome. The Roman church, praised by Paul, is replicated in her successors. This is used both to congratulate Cornelius, and as a means of persuading him to limit the influence of Cyprian's opponents in Rome. In addition, the apostle Peter is used to remind Stephen that if he wishes to be regarded as sitting in his place, he must also adopt his willingness to be corrected.

Unlike the Jews, whose behaviour caused God's name to be blasphemed, Christians should act in such a way as to glorify God. Another negative example is provided by the Gentiles who, by forsaking the creator and worshipping the creature, indulged in immoral behaviour. Likewise to be avoided is the path of those whose feet are swift to shed blood. Bishops must be careful not to imitate the harshness and rigidity of philosophers; rather they should model themselves on the clemency of God.

Image

Images are another rich source of readings for Cyprian. Those related to soldiers, athletic contests, and the arena are predominantly used in the area of future hope and divine glory, although bishops must also avoid being caught up in worldly concerns. The rewards of crowns and palms are liberally promised to the faithful, and Cyprian makes particular use of images to reimagine worldly sufferings as signs of present and future glory. A prominent image is that of being clothed with Christ—to be clothed with him is to be identified with him. Christians must therefore put on the attributes of

Christ, including his wisdom, and be joined with others in unity. If believers have put on Christ, then they will walk like him. If they have denied him, this must be reflected in their dress. Dressing extravagantly means that one cannot be clothed with him at all. As Christians have put on Christ in baptism, those who have been captured by barbarians should be regarded as Christ himself and ransomed. In the context of the baptismal dispute, those who have truly been baptised, and therefore put on Christ, must have received the Holy Spirit as well.

The Holy Spirit is also linked with the image of the temple. Christians must not violate the temple by their behaviour, particularly by committing adultery. As temples of the Holy Spirit, Christians must live according to the Spirit; as temples of God, captured Christians must be redeemed. Another significant theme is that of sacrifice, exploited in a number of ways: Paul himself was poured out as a libation; those in the mines present themselves as living sacrifices; and good works are pleasing sacrifices to God.

Cyprian makes particular use of the Pauline identification of the church as the bride of Christ. He creatively combines it with imagery relating to the new man and being born again to demonstrate that children of God can only be born within the one church. At times, Cyprian adopts Pauline typology: the sea of Exodus as baptism, Hagar and Sarah as representing the synagogue and the church; at others, he departs from it: the cloud which accompanied the Israelites functions as a veil, rather than God's presence. Cyprian also makes use of Paul's description of Christ as the head of man in his typological use of the Old Testament.

Maxim

Another productive way of employing Scripture is through the use of maxims. "The just will live by faith" is not fully developed as a doctrine, but simply used to make the point that the person who has faith should not be afraid to die. With regard to the church, a number of sayings related to evil speech demonstrate that the words of heretics are to be ignored. Positively, maxims are used to support the baptism of infants before the eighth day, as well as the full efficacy of clinical baptism.

It is in the area of discipline, however, that maxims really come into their own. Serving Christ, rather than pleasing people, is a commonplace that Cyprian uses in a range of

situations. It must be kept in mind by bishops who are responsible for directing their flock, even if their correction is unwelcome, but it can equally be applied to being unashamed to drink Eucharistic wine in the morning. In a gender-specific application of the text, virgins must seek to serve Christ rather than please men with their dress. A proper attention to prayer will help maintain healthy discipline in the Christian life, whereas prayerlessness leads to laxity. Cyprian therefore often resorts to the abbreviated text, “Be urgent and watchful in prayer,” to exhort his flock.

Another useful phrase is, “God is not mocked.” It conveys both a warning to those who will not repent, and a judgement on Basilides—God will not be deceived, even if Stephen has been. Cyprian gives the maxim a different nuance in *Ep.* 55, where he uses it to overcome objections to readmitting the lapsed to communion. Other maxims are used to address the responsibilities and privileges of different callings: virgins must not give an opportunity to the devil by living with men; on the other hand, if a bishop is not to be despised for his youth, he is even less to be despised for his age.

Title and contextual exegesis

Outside *Ad Quirinum*, Cyprian only uses titles drawn from Paul in relation to the church. Christ as the wisdom of God is twice invoked in *De unitate*, in order to encourage Christians to imitate that aspect of his character. Heretics, however, are routinely depicted as perverse and self-condemned. Another strategy, again used in the context of the church, is contextual exegesis. Cyprian only appropriates Paul in this way once, in his discussion of Phil 1:8. As this text has been employed by his opponents to endorse heretical baptism, he uses techniques drawn from the law court, dealing with ambiguity in a document, to make his case.

Direct application

Most frequently, Cyprian directly applies Pauline verses and passages to the situation at hand. There are too many to comment on individually, but some patterns may be discerned. In the area of divine truth, a number of specifically doctrinal points are made in *Ad Quirinum*. Furthermore, Cyprian particularly employs Paul’s words against philosophy, designating it as worldly and opposed to God’s wisdom. This is evident in the proud behaviour of the philosophers themselves. The other main component of

Cyprian's teaching here is future hope and eternal glory. Suffering is only transitory—multiple verses present the rewards which await those who faithfully persevere. Indeed, present sacrifices will only increase the heavenly recompense. So there is no need to fear death; rather, it is the gateway to eternal joy.

With regard to ecclesiology, Ephesians 4 is employed in a variety of contexts, demonstrating that there is one baptism within the one church. A number of texts condemn schism and seek to reassure those remaining within the community—they should not be distressed that some have left. The theme of departing from the church is complemented by another group of verses, drawn from various contexts in Paul's writing, on departing from divine tradition. Cyprian reappropriates them to emphasise living in an orderly manner within the church. The controversial use of texts continues with Paul's equation of adultery with idolatry being used against Novatian's claims to purity. Paul's words about following another gospel are used against Lucian's issuing of certificates in the name of Paulus; the same text is used to indicate that wine should be used in the cup. On another aspect of the Eucharist, Cyprian warns against the premature welcoming of the lapsed to communion, employing injunctions against drinking both the cup of Christ and that of demons. Texts are also applied to demonstrate that bishops must be blameless and teachable. There may be diversity in their unity—each must give an account to the Lord—but there should be no quarrelling.

Cyprian directly applies a large number of texts to matters of discipline and repentance. In fact, this category contains the largest number of Pauline citations. Many of these are found in *Ad Quirinum*, addressing a wide range of concerns relating to everyday life in North Africa. Those used in his letters and treatises are grouped around three main concerns: the putting off of the flesh and living by the Spirit; the importance of persevering in love; and finally, the necessity of repentance and the ongoing sanctification of the believer. In addition, virgins receive specific commands related to their dress and deportment.

An extensive list of citations, including several passages from 1 Corinthians 8-9, are used to support the first testimony of *Ad Quirinum* Book 3, on the good of works and alms. Other testimonies instruct believers on caring for widows—presuming they satisfy the criteria—as well as on providing for one's own relatives, especially believers. A recurring warning is that wealth has caused the shipwreck of many, so Christians must

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be careful not to cling to it. Virgins, in particular, are challenged on their use of wealth for earthly rather than heavenly purposes.

Prophetic fulfilment

Cyprian employs the reading strategy of prophetic fulfilment in a number of ways. He draws on Paul's interpretation of Old Testament texts in two successive testimonies, making his case for the place of the church in God's economy. He also uses Paul's words in Philippians as evidence that the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ have come to pass. Furthermore, the current trials of the empire demonstrate the veracity of the Old Testament warnings as mediated by Paul. Likewise, the apostle's own predictions of heresies and schisms are now taking place. The Lord permits the disgruntled and trouble-makers to quarrel and separate themselves from the church because the faith of others is thereby highlighted. Related to this is Paul's prophecy that sound discipline would be despised.

Qualification

Cyprian qualifies his teaching on the glories of martyrdom and almsgiving by making use of 1 Corinthians 13 on the supremacy of love. Those who suffer outside the church, having severed the bond of peace with their brothers and sisters, will not be rewarded. Neither will alms avail anything for those who do not love fellow believers by remaining united with them, or benefit those who are envious and jealous. On the other hand, even if less is done because of the reduced ability of the giver, that is no less pleasing to the Lord.

Cyprian frequently takes Paul's words and directly applies them to the situation at hand. However, his use of Paul is far more varied than that. Providing models for his congregation to imitate or, in the case of Christ, as a paradigm of future glory, is an important means by which Cyprian inculcates values and desired behaviours in his congregation. Using Pauline images allows him to construct a framework for understanding a situation, and to apply Scripture to address new concerns. Maxims succinctly summarise teaching that can be applied to a range of situations. Similarly, titles provide a shorthand means of expressing approbation or condemnation. Into contextual exegesis, Cyprian hardly ever ventures, but he shows he has a talent for it.

Prophetic fulfilment reveals divine truth both to insiders and to outsiders. At times, Cyprian uses Paul to qualify what he says elsewhere. In all this, there is a flexibility of approach as Cyprian weaves together different strategies to create, in Vos' words, "a biblically oriented universe of meaning, which—at the same time—is firmly rooted in the stark historical reality of his day."³

6.2 Testimonia, treatises and letters: Context, care and communication

Although the treatises are not necessarily listed in chronological order by Pontius, having examined their content and context, there is nothing to prevent that from being largely the case, with one or two possible exceptions. *Ad Donatum* represents Cyprian's reflection on his conversion; *De habitu virginum* an early pastoral letter.⁴ *De lapsis* and *De unitate*, as generally agreed, were delivered on his return to Carthage after Easter 251. I have argued for the close links between *De dominica oratione* and *De opere et eleemosynis*, with the more general treatise given particular application in light of the plague. As *Ad Demetrianum* is probably, and *De mortalitate* definitely, related to the plague, the order *De dominica oratione*, followed by three treatises responding to different aspects of the plague—a defence to outsiders, a call to hope, and a call to give—fits the context well.

A chronological approach faces a challenge with the next work in Pontius's list, however. *De bono patientiae* is referred to in *Ep.* 73, setting its date at 256.⁵ It is possible that *De zelo et livore* was written in 256 or later—as Poirier notes, nothing in the text restricts it to a certain period in Cyprian's ministry⁶—and Weber confidently

³ Vos, "Universe of Meaning," 65.

⁴ Dated to 249 by Dunn, "Infected Sheep," 5.

⁵ Clarke, *Letters*, 4:219.

⁶ Poirier, *Jalousie et l'envie*, 9. He does cite Deléani's note that the negative use of the term "zelus," as in the treatise, appears in three texts, perhaps suggesting a date around 253. Simone Deléani, "Les titres des traités de saint Cyprien: forme et fonction," in *Titres et articulations du texte dans les œuvres antiques*, ed. Jean-Claude Fredouille, et al. (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 412 n. 64. However, given that the negative usage outside *De zelo et livore* is spread over a two year period, and that the term is only used positively twice (*Ep.* 4.3.2 [CCSL 3B:21], *Ep.* 73.10.1-2 [CCSL 3C:540]), the observation provides slender support for dating the treatise.

places *Ad Fortunatum* in 257.⁷ If that is the case, then the treatises would be in order of composition. But *De zelo et livore* and *Ad Fortunatum* may equally be placed in 253.⁸ This could mean that *De bono patientiae* is placed earlier in the sequence than its date would suggest, or that *Ad Fortunatum*, as a testimonia collection, is reserved for the end.⁹ Still, the fact that all the other treatises appear to be in broad chronological order increases the probability of this being the case for the latter works as well.

In appropriating Paul in these treatises, Cyprian most often combines a number of reading strategies to achieve his aims. This is particularly the case in *De unitate*—the only strategy missing is the rarely-used contextual exegesis. Even where direct application dominates, as in the testimonia collections of *Ad Quirinum* and *Ad Fortunatum*, strategies of model, image, prophetic fulfilment, and qualification appear.

Epistle 62 is a particularly interesting example of Cyprian's exegesis, as he addresses a situation that New Testament does not—the ransom of captives. He cannot, therefore, simply quote Paul's directions on the matter. However, he still grounds his argument in Paul's authority, citing Paul himself as a model of how to relate to the captives' circumstances. In addition, Cyprian constructs a series of Pauline images of increasing intensity—members of one body, temples of God, and being clothed with Christ—to demonstrate the necessity of sacrificial action on behalf of the captives. He complements this with Matt 25:36, where Christ's words, "I was sick and you visited me ... I was in prison, and you visited me," are recast, and a greater reward promised to those to whom he will say, "I was captive, and you redeemed me."¹⁰

On the other hand, Cyprian rarely cites Paul in *Ad Donatum* and *Ad Demetrianum*. In the first, this is due to the overall paucity of biblical quotations. Cyprian merely employs a negative model of the immoral behaviour of those who worship the gods and, positively, uses the image of the temple to picture the Christian as the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Although Cyprian quotes many texts in *Ad Demetrianum*, they are

⁷ R. Weber, "Introduction aux ouvrages 'Ad Quirinum' et 'Ad Fortunatum'," in *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera, Pars 1* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1972), liii.

⁸ On *Ad Fortunatum*, see Clarke, *Letters*, 3:226-27.

⁹ Coupled with the unidentified letter or letters on martyrdom, as discussed in chapter 1.5.

¹⁰ "captivus fui, et redemistis me." *Ep.* 62.3.1 (CCSL 3C:387).

predominantly from the Old Testament, as Cyprian uses prophetic fulfilment to demonstrate the truth of the Scriptures. Besides an allusion to believers as sons of God, the only Pauline reference is the citation of Deuteronomy in Romans, promising God's vengeance. These treatises, however, also emphasise God's grace, and their lack of New Testament and, more specifically, Pauline citations may be one reason for Cyprian's infrequent use of Paul's best-known texts on the subject. Cyprian's understanding of grace will be discussed below.

6.3 The blessed Apostle Paul

Cyprian views Paul as one through whom the Holy Spirit speaks, providing authoritative direction for Christians. His life serves as a model for clergy and laity alike, and his teaching reveals how to walk according to heavenly precepts.

Twice in *De unitate*, Cyprian expressly depicts the Holy Spirit predicting current events through the apostle Paul. The heresies which are multiplying are a sign of the last days, "as the Holy Spirit foretold and warned us through the Apostle."¹¹ In other extended citation formulas, Cyprian emphasises Paul's authority by describing him as "filled with the Holy Spirit,"¹² and "full of the grace of the Lord's inspiration."¹³ This "inspiration" is not a technical term limited to Scripture, however—Cyprian is inspired too.¹⁴

Paul also derives authority from his divinely-appointed mission. In addition to being "sent forth for the calling and training of the gentiles,"¹⁵ he is "especially chosen by the Lord and sent forth to preach the truths of the gospel."¹⁶ This is combined with a reference to Paul as the Lord's chosen vessel in *De habitu virginum*. Cyprian introduces verses from 1 Corinthians 15, declaring: "It is the apostle's word whom the Lord called

¹¹ "praenuntiante per apostolum nobis et praemonente Spiritu sancto: [cites 2 Tim 3:1-9]." *Unit. eccl.* 16 (CCSL 3:261). He also introduces 1 Cor 11:19 with, "Per apostolum praemonet Spiritus sanctus et dicit." *Unit. eccl.* 10 (CCSL 3:256).

¹² "plenus Spiritu sancto." *Pat.* 2 (CCSL 3A:118).

¹³ "dominicae inspirationis gratia plenus." *Eleem.* 9 (CCSL 3A:61).

¹⁴ *Fort. praef.* 1 (CCSL 3:183). For further discussion, see Fahey, *Cyprian*, 44-45.

¹⁵ "uocandis formandisque gentibus missus." *Pat.* 2 (CCSL 3A:118).

¹⁶ "Beatus quoque apostolus Paulus a domino electus et missus et praedicator ueritatis euangelicae constitutus." *Ep.* 63.10.1 (CCSL 3C:401).

a vessel of his election,¹⁷ whom God sent to proclaim the heavenly command.”¹⁸ This authority is further enhanced by Paul’s spiritual experiences. Cyprian provides a résumé of the apostle’s qualifications in *Ad Fortunatum*, including his being caught up into the third heaven,¹⁹ in support of Paul’s statement that present sufferings are not worthy of being compared to future glory.²⁰

These spiritual experiences did not make Paul arrogant, however. He is worthy of imitation in that, even after the third heaven and paradise and “having been imprisoned many times, scourged and exposed to the beasts,”²¹ he continued to be in all things meek and humble.”²² In fact, he toiled night and day so as not to burden the Thessalonians.²³ Paul’s words about the thorn in his flesh²⁴ are similarly introduced with a catalogue of his sufferings—shipwrecks, scourgings, grievous tortures of the flesh and body.²⁵ Here, if Paul says he is benefited by his adversity, Christians may be confident that weakness and trials, once endured, will result in strength and reward. So Paul not only reveals the contest in which Christians compete and attain a crown,²⁶ but himself lives it out. His sacrificial self-offering, the completion of his life of service, will be rewarded. All those who have loved the Lord’s coming will likewise be recompensed.²⁷

Specific events in Paul’s life also give rise to lessons for Christians. His self-description as a blasphemer and persecutor²⁸ demonstrates that those who do wrong in ignorance

¹⁷ Allusion to Acts 9:15.

¹⁸ “sola in uobis quae sunt uirtutis et spiritus ad gloriam remanserunt. apostoli uox est quem Dominus uas electionis suae dixit, quem ad promenda mandata caelestia Deus misit.” *Hab. virg.* 23 (CSEL 3.1:204). Cyprian also uses the phrase, “Paulus apostolus quem dominus uas electionis suae dixit,” in *Ep.* 27.3.3 (CCSL 3B:131).

¹⁹ Allusion to 2 Cor 12:2-4.

²⁰ Rom 8:18. *Fort.* 13 (CCSL 3:214).

²¹ Allusion to 2 Cor 11:23.

²² Allusion to 2 Cor 12:2-4. “carcerem saepe repetitum, post flagella, post bestias, circa omnia mitis et humilis perseueravit.” *Ep.* 14.2.3 (CCSL 3B:82).

²³ 2 Thess 3:8.

²⁴ 2 Cor 12:7-9.

²⁵ Allusion to 2 Cor 11:24-27. *Mort.* 13 (CCSL 3A:23).

²⁶ 1 Cor 9:24-25.

²⁷ 2 Tim 4:6-8. *Ep.* 10.4.3 (CCSL 3B:52).

²⁸ 1 Tim 1:13.

may receive mercy, but those who deliberately persist in error will not be pardoned for their sin.²⁹ Despite the way some interpret Phil 1:8, Paul was consistent in his opposition to heretics—he made no concessions to them, nor did he consider that such unbelievers could receive forgiveness of sins outside of the Church.³⁰ In fact, he was united with the other apostles in considering them antichrists,³¹ and had himself been the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit in predicting that such heresies would arise.³² On a positive note, the very fact that he is an apostle is a demonstration of Christ’s patience.³³ Furthermore, the help provided by the Philippians in his time of distress shows that such good works are sacrifices to God.³⁴

Paul is particularly a model for bishops. Even though he was last among the apostles, he corrected Peter with reason and truth. Peter, in accepting that correction, is an example of how bishops, especially Peter’s successors, should conduct themselves. Harmony and forbearance, not arrogant pretension, should be their hallmarks.³⁵ Certainly, it is sometimes necessary for the bishop to speak the truth in the face of opposition,³⁶ and to persevere in pleasing God rather than people.³⁷ But the apostle was also merciful rather than callous, mourning with those who mourn.³⁸ Paul is an imitator of Christ, pleasing “all men in all things, seeking not what is profitable to myself but profitable to the many, that they may be saved.”³⁹ Becoming weak to those who are weak, suffering with those who suffer,⁴⁰ Paul’s concern is for the repentance and restoration of the sinner.⁴¹

²⁹ *Ep.* 73.13.1-2 (CCSL 3C:543-44).

³⁰ *Ep.* 73.14.1-3 (CCSL 3C:544-46).

³¹ *Ep.* 73.15.1-2 (CCSL 3C:546-47).

³² *Unit. eccl.* 16 (CCSL 3:261).

³³ *Pat.* 8 (CCSL 3A:123).

³⁴ *Dom. or.* 33 (CCSL 3A:111).

³⁵ *Ep.* 71.3.1 (CCSL 3C:519-20).

³⁶ Gal 4:16. *Ep.* 4.5.2 (CCSL 3B:25-26).

³⁷ Gal 1:10. *Ep.* 4.5.2 (CCSL 3B:26), *Ep.* 59.8.2 (CCSL 3C:350).

³⁸ *Ep.* 55.19.1 (CCSL 3B:278).

³⁹ 1 Cor 10:33-11:1. *Ep.* 55.15.2 (CCSL 3B:273).

⁴⁰ 2 Cor 11:29 and 1 Cor 12:26 are both cited in *Ep.* 55.15.2 (CCSL 3B:273-74) and *Ep.* 17.1.1 (CCSL 3B:96).

⁴¹ *Ep.* 55.26.2 (CCSL 3B:289).

But mostly, Paul speaks. In his letters, Paul “has formed us to a course of living by divine teaching.”⁴² He teaches Christians how to arm themselves and prepare for battle against the evil one.⁴³ He instructs the righteous⁴⁴ and threatens and denounces the obstinate and the unrighteous.⁴⁵ He “reproaches and rebukes and blames any who grieve the departure of their friends.”⁴⁶ He forewarns with foresight and wholesomeness, he arouses and exhorts, teaches and advises.⁴⁷ In the case of heretics, he expressly orders remaining aloof from them.⁴⁸ He anxiously and carefully admonishes,⁴⁹ and openly and manifestly declares.⁵⁰ He recalls sinners to repentance,⁵¹ and reproves the proud to break their arrogance.⁵² He urges the merits of peace and love,⁵³ and identifies the destructive ways of the jealous⁵⁴ and those enslaved to their wealth.⁵⁵ In *De habitu virginum*, Paul becomes a dialogue partner, his loud and lofty voice being juxtaposed with the behaviour of the virgins.⁵⁶ At one point, he directly addresses their claims: “You say that you are wealthy and rich; but Paul meets your riches, and with his own voice prescribes for the moderating of your dress and ornament within a just limit.”⁵⁷ In

⁴² “Paulus in epistulis suis dicit, quibus nos ad curricula uiuendi per diuina magisteria formauit.” *Hab. virg.* 2 (CSEL 3.1:188).

⁴³ *Ep.* 58.8.3 (CCSL 3C:331).

⁴⁴ *Pat.* 13 (CCSL 3A:126).

⁴⁵ *Laps.* 15 (CCSL 3:229).

⁴⁶ “Inprobat denique apostolus Paulus et obiurgat et culpat, si qui contristentur excessu suorum.” *Mort.* 21 (CCSL 3A:28).

⁴⁷ *Zel. liv.* 14 (CCSL 3A:82-83).

⁴⁸ *Ep.* 59.20 (CCSL 3C:373).

⁴⁹ “sollicite et caute apostolus admonet.” *Dom. or.* 31 (CCSL 3A:109).

⁵⁰ *Dom. or.* 16 (CCSL 3A:100).

⁵¹ *Pat.* 4 (CCSL 3A:120).

⁵² *Ep.* 55.18.1 (CCSL 3B:277).

⁵³ *Zel. liv.* 13 (CCSL 3A:82).

⁵⁴ *Zel. liv.* 8 (CCSL 3A:79).

⁵⁵ *Laps.* 12 (CCSL 3:227).

⁵⁶ *Hab. virg.* 6, 16 (CSEL 3.1:191, 198-99).

⁵⁷ “Locupletem te dicis et diuitem. sed diuitiis tuis Paulus occurrit et ad cultum adque ornatum tuum iusto fine moderandum sua uoce praescribit. [Cites 1 Tim 2:9-10].” *Hab. virg.* 8 (CSEL 3.1:193-94).

all these ways, Paul gives “substance and strength to the steadfastness of our hope and faith,”⁵⁸ that “our faith may advance and grow and attain to the highest point.”⁵⁹

6.4 Preaching the truths of the gospel

What is this faith which the apostle commends? I hesitate to identify the centre of Paul’s thought according to Cyprian, as he does not view Paul through the lens of a handful of privileged texts. Rather, he embraces the broad spectrum of Pauline ideas, employing them to address the situation at hand. But do some letters shape his thought to a greater extent than others? A possible contender is the Corinthian correspondence which, as Robert Sider notes, emphasises “the Spirit as wisdom and power and vivid images of the eschaton as anticipated in the present and expected in the near future.”⁶⁰ He suggests that Tertullian’s Paul “emerges more from the Epistles to the Corinthians than from the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians.”⁶¹ This is true of Cyprian to the extent that the letter of Paul he cites most frequently is 1 Corinthians. However, references to Romans and Galatians follow close behind. The key difference between Cyprian and modern interpreters—whether drawing on Luther’s legacy or re-interpreting it as part of the so-called New Perspective—is that they privilege certain passages in these letters, whereas Cyprian draws on them more widely.⁶²

Naturally, Cyprian’s attention is drawn to those parts of Paul’s letters which best address the circumstances faced by his congregation. Given this approach, he finds much in common between the above letters and the deutero-Paulines; Christian life and Christian hope receive much more attention than the mechanics of becoming one. Yet, the latter is not entirely neglected. Cyprian’s gospel according to Paul might therefore be summarised as follows: People are sinners, justified by grace. They are redeemed at

⁵⁸ “formans et corroborans spei nostrae ac fidei firmitatem.” *Dom. or.* 19 (CCSL 3A:102).

⁵⁹ “ut fides nostra proficiat et crescat et ad summa perueniat, hortatur dicens.” *Fort.* 8 (CCSL 3:196).

⁶⁰ Robert Dick Sider, “Literary Artifice and the Figure of Paul in the Writings of Tertullian,” in *Paul and the Legacies of Paul*, ed. William S. Babcock (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990), 100.

⁶¹ Sider, “Literary Artifice,” 119.

⁶² A recent attempt to consider Galatians as a whole is Mark W. Elliott et al., eds., *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul’s Letter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014).

great cost by Christ, who gave himself up for the church, his bride. Through baptism in that one church, Christians are born again, living by faith as children of God. In this, they are united as members of the one body of Christ; this bond must be preserved in love. Having put on Christ, they must imitate him; risen with Christ, they are dead to sin; temples of God, they must live by the Spirit who indwells them, putting aside the works of the flesh and embracing good works. This is not easy, as Christians are involved in a spiritual battle in which the devil seeks to deceive and destroy. The soldier of God must stand firm, putting on the armour of God. But if they fall, they are called to repent. Those who persevere (or are restored), will emerge victorious and be rewarded with crowns, sharing in the likeness of Christ.

6.5 Doctor Sacrae Scripturae, Doctor Gratiae?

Cyprian believes himself to be, in Trigg's expression, "a mediator of God's word to the community,"⁶³ bringing Scripture to bear upon the circumstances of believers. If grace is present in Cyprian's appropriation of Paul, as I have suggested above, why does he make so little use of the soon-to-be classic texts of Romans and Galatians on the subject? Two things need to be kept in mind: Cyprian's context—as opposed to Paul's, Augustine's, or Luther's—and the difference between Cyprian's texts directed towards disciplinary ends, and those which seek to provide a summary of the gospel, whether to new believers or to outsiders.

Cyprian shows no interest in contrasting faith and works. In fact, as discussed above, Cyprian pointedly avoids texts which portray the law in a negative light, while retaining the positive "law of Christ." Given that there is no threat from so-called Judaisers within the church (or Pelagians, or an indulgence-granting papacy), this lacuna should not surprise us. But if the context which necessitates Paul's rejection of the works of the law no longer exists—and Cyprian therefore has little need to engage with those texts—it does not follow that grace likewise disappears. Neither does it mean that Cyprian

⁶³ Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation*, 48.

holds to a “doctrine of merit,” denying human sinfulness and the consequent need for faith.⁶⁴

In *De dominica oratione*, as Han-luen Kantzer Komline points out, Cyprian anticipates Augustine, the Doctor of Grace, in four key areas of his thought: “that God deserves all the credit for good human works, that grace precedes merit, that the saints continue to struggle with sin in this life, and that grace is necessary for perseverance.”⁶⁵ I do not think it is a coincidence that this work, the closest Cyprian comes to a general treatise, is the one which has the greatest focus on God’s grace and mercy. It does not stand alone, however. Despite Cyprian’s circumstances requiring him to teach his congregation how to persevere in their belief, rather than speculating on the genesis of that belief, his treatises to a new Christian and an old “pagan” are tributes to justification by grace. At the end of his apology to Demetrian, for example, he calls those who are now persecuting Christians to instead rejoice with them in eternity:

Nor let any one be restrained either by his sins or by his years from coming to obtain salvation ... implore God, who is the one and true God, in confession and faith of acknowledgment of Him, and pardon is granted to the one who confesses, and saving mercy is given from the divine goodness to the believer, and a passage is opened to immortality even in death itself. This grace does Christ bestow; this gift of his mercy he confers by undergoing death with the victory of the cross, by redeeming the believer at the price of his blood, by reconciling man with God the Father, by quickening mortality by heavenly regeneration.... With him we shall always live, having become sons of God through him; with him we shall always rejoice, having been restored by his blood.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Hanson, *Tradition*, 263. Rather, see how Cyprian uses the example of the publican “*qui spem salutis non in fiducia innocentiae suae posuit, cum innocens nemo sit, sed peccata confessus humiliter orauit, et exaudiuit orantem qui humilibus ignoscit.*” *Dom. or.* 6 (CCSL 3A:92).

⁶⁵ Kantzer Komline, “Grace,” 278. He also argues (274-78) that this work may have been an important influence on Augustine.

⁶⁶ “Nec quisquam aut peccatis retardetur aut annis quominus ueniat ad consequendam salute ... et deum qui unus et uerus est confessione et fide agnitionis eius inploret, uenia confitenti datur et credenti indulgentia salutaris de diuina pietate conceditur et ad immortalitatem sub ipsa morte transitur. Hanc

If Cyprian emphasises grace in his summary of the gospel, the same cannot be said of predestination; his focus is rather on calling people to respond with faith. The idea expressed in the testimony, “The freedom to believe or not believe is placed in the will,”⁶⁷ is also found in works which emphasise that those who leave the church do so of their own accord.⁶⁸ Cyprian does not theologise on the “freedom of the will,” however, and is just as likely to use the term in contexts unrelated to salvation.⁶⁹ Neither does he oppose it to the sovereignty of God. In *Ep.* 59, for example, Cyprian highlights the freedom given to follow Christ or not.⁷⁰ However, he also claims that believing that bishops could be appointed without God’s approval is “to lack that faith by which we live our lives, it is to deny honour to God even when we know and believe that all things are ruled and governed by His sovereign will and judgment.”⁷¹

Cyprian therefore uses the images of the wheat and tares, and the vessels of gold, silver, and clay to exhort believers to be the more valuable objects.⁷² He does not cite Rom 9:13: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated,” although perhaps he understands it to be related

gratiam Christus inperit, hoc munus misericordiae suae tribuit subigendo mortem trophaeo crucis, redimendo credentem pretio sui sanguinis, reconciliando hominem Deo patri, uiuificando mortalem regeneratione caelesti.... Cum ipso semper uiuemus facti per ipsum filii Dei: cum ipso exultabimus semper ipsius cruore reparati.” *Demetr.* 26 (CCSL 3A:50-51). I therefore disagree with Price who finds little about Christianity in this work beyond the necessity of worshipping God alone, and the account of the patience of Christians due to their hope in the punishment to be meted out to their persecutors in the Last Judgement. Simon Price, “Latin Christian Apologetics: Minucius Felix, Tertullian, and Cyprian,” in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, ed. Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 122.

⁶⁷ “Credendi vel non credendi libertatem in arbitrio positam.” *Test.* 3.52 (CCSL 3:139).

⁶⁸ *Unit.* 10 (CCSL 3:256), *Ep.* 59.7.3 (CCSL 3C:348).

⁶⁹ “arbitrium liberum” can refer to bishops using their own discretion in judgement (*Ep.* 72.3.2 [CCSL 3C:528]), as well as the freedom to choose virginity rather than it being commanded (*Hab. virg.* 23 [CSEL 3.1:204]).

⁷⁰ Citing John 6:68-70, 1 John 2:19 and Rom 3:3-4. *Ep.* 59.7.2-4 (CCSL 3C:348-49).

⁷¹ “Hoc est fidem non habere qua uiuimus, hoc est deo honorem non dare cuius nutu et arbitrio regi et gubernari omnia scimus et credimus.” *Ep.* 59.5.3 (CCSL 3C:345-46).

⁷² *Ep.* 54.3.1 (CCSL 3B:253-54).

to the inclusion of Israel and therefore not relevant to his concerns.⁷³ Instead, Cyprian uses verses which focus on perseverance in belief, like the end of this argument in Rom 11:20b-21: “Be not high-minded but fear. For if the Lord spared not the natural branches, it may be He will not spare you either.”⁷⁴

Although Cyprian does not embrace predestination, there is a sense of prevenient grace in his work. In *Ad Donatum*, he presents the seeming impossibility of being freed from the bonds of sin, until he experienced the new birth of baptism and the Spirit.⁷⁵ In *De dominica oratione*, Christians are called to pray for the salvation of their persecutors, so that God’s will may be done in them and they too begin to be heavenly, just as believers are through their faith.⁷⁶ Cyprian therefore emphasises God’s grace and mercy in rescuing people from their sinful lives, while maintaining that they have the freedom to respond (or not). Both these perspectives are found in the Scriptures, even if, from a Reformed point of view, the freedom of the will is the antithesis to justification by faith.⁷⁷

If works do not achieve salvation, they still have an important place in the Christian life. Paul frequently promises rewards to those who faithfully persevere, and this teaching resonates strongly with Cyprian. The recompense of eternal crowns is a significant way in which Cyprian appropriates Paul to encourage his flock to withstand temporal suffering and sacrifice. On the remedial side, good works may cleanse from sins, as will be discussed in the following section. But what of sins committed after baptism that are not atoned for? This possibility is not considered by Cyprian—there is no accounting for sins; rather, all faithful believers will immediately enter the presence of Christ. Cyprian is therefore closer to the Reformers on this point than Augustine who, after his

⁷³ Book 1 of *Ad Quirinum* is devoted to demonstrating that the church supersedes Israel. As Fahey notes, Cyprian tends to use Isaiah rather than Romans for the relationship between Jew and Gentile. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 420-21.

⁷⁴ “Inflari aliquos et tumere audio, cum scriptum sit: ‘noli altum sapere, sed time. Si enim dominus naturalibus ramis non pepercit, ne forte nec tibi parcat.’” *Ep.* 13.4.2 (CCSL 3B:75).

⁷⁵ He continues: “quamuis non iactatum possit esse sed gratum, quicquid non uirtute hominis adscribitur, sed de Dei munere praedicator.” *Don.* 3-4 (CCSL 3A:4-5).

⁷⁶ *Dom. or.* 17 (CCSL 3A:100-1).

⁷⁷ See, for example, McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 20-23.

mother's death, anticipates potential danger. Although he acknowledges that Christ has paid the debt, he prays for her post-baptismal sins, desiring also the prayers of others for his pious mother.⁷⁸

If Cyprian does not subscribe to a Pauline doctrine of grace, it is only because he understands grace to be a biblical doctrine. Due to the nature of the works, two of his treatises which have the greatest focus on grace are those with the fewest NT citations, and his fullest treatment of the subject is in his commentary on the Lord's Prayer. Because he does not face a challenge from so-called Judaisers, he has no need to appropriate Paul's words opposing grace to the works of the law. Instead, he uses texts opposing the works of the flesh to the life of the spirit. In his disciplinary works, then, Cyprian focuses more on Pauline injunctions to persevere and on the rewards for so doing.

6.6 The church in context: Martyrs, marriage, money and the ministry

What can we learn about Christianity in Roman North Africa from Cyprian's use of Paul? Here I examine a number of areas that are of interest to scholars, with a caveat: If we seek to determine Cyprian's thought on a particular subject without considering the broader context of his work, we will be misled. Cyprian the pastor writes to exhort members of his audience to embrace a particular ethic, often emphasising the high esteem in which he holds them, and holding out the hope of future reward. Considered in isolation, his works on martyrdom suggest that the martyrs have a great and glorious reward, far beyond that of other Christians. Similarly, a study of *De habitu virginum* will confirm the view that virgins have a destiny which surpasses that of the married. *De opere and eleemosynis* may appear to teach the redemptive value of almsgiving, in opposition to the doctrine that all sins are dealt with in Jesus' death and resurrection.⁷⁹ But martyrs are not the only ones who go to live and reign with Christ when they die, nor is virginity the only way to live out the resurrection life in the present. The promises that Cyprian makes to these groups need to be read in the light of other works, such as

⁷⁸ Augustine, *Conf.* 9.13 (CCSL 27:152-54).

⁷⁹ Garrison, *Redemptive Almsgiving*, 134.

De mortalitate and *De zelo et livore*, in which faithfulness in all aspects of the Christian life will be rewarded.⁸⁰

Similarly, later tradition can colour our perception of Cyprian's thought. What Cyprian means by a given term, and the way it is used by subsequent authors, is not always the same. This has been demonstrated regarding the primacy of the bishop of Rome, but equally needs to be kept in mind in other areas of his thought.

Martyrs

Cyprian highly esteems martyrs and confessors, asking for the day of their death to be noted⁸¹ and laying the blame for their errors, if at all possible, on clergy who have led them astray.⁸² He frequently uses Paul to emphasise the benefits of martyrdom, and exhorts his flock to martyrdom in a number of works, especially *Ad Fortunatum*. To the martyrs belongs the hundred-fold reward, the recompense of crowns received from Christ, the privilege of accompanying him in judgement. There is no doubt about their anticipated glory.

But Cyprian is notable in the North African tradition for extending the rewards of martyrdom to all faithful Christians. Whereas Tertullian distinguishes between the immediate entry into paradise of the martyrs, and the *refrigerium* experienced by other Christians until the resurrection,⁸³ Cyprian uses Paul to emphasise the immediacy of the reward experienced by all faithful Christians. Christ's transformation will be replicated in all believers; Paul's desire to depart to be with Christ should be that of all Christians, whether facing martyrdom or the plague. Crowns await not only the martyrs, but also those who overcome the devil in less dramatic ways: resisting anger, remaining humble despite their wealth, and loving rather than envying.⁸⁴ Furthermore, all the faithful will join the martyrs in living and reigning with Christ.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ See especially *Zel. liv.* 16 (CCSL 3A:84-85).

⁸¹ *Ep.* 12.2.1 (CCSL 3B:69-70).

⁸² *Ep.* 15.1.2 (CCSL 3B:85-87).

⁸³ Tertullian, *An.* 55, 58 (CCSL 2:861-63, 867-69).

⁸⁴ *Zel. liv.* 16 (CCSL 3A:84-85).

⁸⁵ *Fort.* 12 (CCSL 3:213-14). See also *Mort.* 2, 21 (CCSL 3A:18, 28).

An incidental insight arising from Cyprian's correspondence during the Decian persecution relates to educational levels in the Christian community. As has been noted by Clarke, the Latin of some of Cyprian's correspondents leaves much to be desired;⁸⁶ yet, they were at least literate. It is possible that Lucianus takes the lead among the confessors because of his relative ability in this regard, which would leave us with a low estimate of competence of the others,⁸⁷ but his prominence may simply be due to his faith, courage, and desire for such a position.⁸⁸ The other hint comes from Cyprian imagining the defence of someone who had gained a certificate when the opportunity presented itself: "I had previously read and I had learnt from my bishop's preaching that we should not offer sacrifice to idols."⁸⁹ This suggests both that Christians were used to "work arounds" in their business dealings,⁹⁰ and that Christian literature was not only in the hands of a few, but more widely available to be studied by individual members of the congregation.

Marriage

Rather than labelling him a moderate encratite,⁹¹ Cyprian is more accurately termed a moderate philogamist.⁹² There is no doubt, as David Hunter points out, that *De habitu virginum* was very influential on later writers like Ambrose and Jerome.⁹³ But we need to be wary of viewing Cyprian's work through the lens of subsequent developments. It must also be remembered, as Dunn states, that in both *De habitu virginum* and *Ep.* 4,

⁸⁶ Clarke highlights the letter of the Roman clergy (*Ep.* 8 [CCSL 3B:40-43]), that of Celerinus (*Ep.* 21 [CCSL 3B:111-15]), and the two written by Lucianus (*Epp.* 22 and 23 [CCSL 3B:116-20]). Clarke, *Letters*, 1:7, 119 n. 14.

⁸⁷ Clarke does not regard Aurelius as necessarily illiterate (*Ep.* 27.1.2 [CCSL 3B:128]), only that this is the basis on which Lucianus issues certificates in the young man's name. Clarke, *Letters*, 1:358 n. 11.

⁸⁸ *Ep.* 27.1.1 (CCSL 3B:127).

⁸⁹ "ego prius legeram et episcopo tractante cognoueram non sacrificandum idolis nec simulacra seruum dei adorare debere." *Ep.* 55.14.1 (CCSL 3B:271).

⁹⁰ Clarke, *Letters*, 1:32.

⁹¹ David G. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 122.

⁹² Borrowing the term from J. Massingberd Ford, "St Paul, the Philogamist (I Cor. VII in Early Patristic Exegesis)," *NTS* 11 (1965): 326-48.

⁹³ Hunter, *Marriage*, 120-21.

“Cyprian was concerned to reinforce and re-establish ecclesial discipline among those who had embraced virginity as part of their Christian spirituality.”⁹⁴ Cyprian’s praise of the virgins, emphasising their renunciation of the flesh and the heavenly rewards awaiting them, must be read in light of his disciplinary strategy. His claim that, “the greater holiness and truth of that repeated birth [baptism] belongs to you, who have no longer any desires of the flesh and of the body,”⁹⁵ is made because the virgins are, in fact, clinging to such desires and he wants to convince them that such behaviour is incompatible with their calling. True, virgins are destined for the “better dwellings,”⁹⁶ and the sixty-fold reward, second only to the hundred-fold due to the martyrs.⁹⁷ But that this is simply making rhetorical use of a commonplace⁹⁸ is seen in *Ep.* 76, where the virgins among the confessors may be expected to add the hundred-fold of martyrdom to their sixty-fold reward.⁹⁹ A logical accounting would have them exchanging the one for the other, but Cyprian simply combines them in his exhortations.

Whilst Cyprian always honours virgins, the only place where Cyprian advocates adopting virginity is in the testimony, “On the good of virginity and continence,”¹⁰⁰ in which he cites a number of Old and New Testament verses. Even here, he quotes 1 Cor 7:1-7 in full. He thereby retains the verses on each person having their own husband and wife, the prohibition on denying one’s spouse, and the acknowledgement that each has their own gift from the Lord. These statements relativise the benefits of virginity, and suggest that *continentia* includes not only celibacy, but right sexual conduct in general. As I have shown, Cyprian truncates passages when certain verses do not suit his purpose, so retaining these verses demonstrates his approval of them. In addition,

⁹⁴ Dunn, “Mary in the Writings of Cyprian,” 375.

⁹⁵ “natiuitatis iteratae uobis maior sanctitas et ueritas competit, quibus desideria iam carnis et corporis nulla sunt.” *Hab. virg.* 23 (CSEL 3.1:204).

⁹⁶ *Hab. virg.* 23 (CSEL 3.1:204).

⁹⁷ *Hab. virg.* 21 (CSEL 3.1:202).

⁹⁸ Drawn from the anonymous sermon, *De centesima, sexagesima, tricesima*. For a discussion of this text, see Rémi Gounelle, “La parabole des mines (Lc 19, 12-27) dans le *De centesima* pseudo-cyprianique,” *ASR*, n.s., 3 (2010): 127-60. Notably, Cyprian does not adopt the thirty-fold reward for married people who embrace celibacy upon baptism. The idea of celibate marriage is foreign to Cyprian.

⁹⁹ *Ep.* 76.6.2 (CCSL 3C:614).

¹⁰⁰ “De bono uirginitatis et continentiae.” *Test.* 3.32 (CCSL 3:125-27).

Cyprian incorporates testimonies on marrying in the Lord,¹⁰¹ not leaving husbands (or wives),¹⁰² and relationships between parents and children.¹⁰³ He is prepared to suggest that virgins renounce virginity for marriage, if they are unable to persevere in their commitment.¹⁰⁴ Whilst Cyprian does make the point that the virgins have an advantage in avoiding the pain of childbirth,¹⁰⁵ he never presents children as an impediment to following Christ, as Tertullian did.¹⁰⁶ He does not diminish parental bonds, but seeks to demonstrate that the best way of caring for one's children is to give alms.¹⁰⁷

Virgins are what all Christians will one day be.¹⁰⁸ But this imitation of the future in the present is also achieved through prayer. In reflecting on the hours of prayer, Cyprian gives an insight into his vision of the future of the believers in the kingdom in which there will be “day alone without the intervention of night.”¹⁰⁹ He calls on those “who by the indulgence of God have been recreated spiritually and reborn” to imitate what they are destined to be, not ceasing here also to pray and to give thanks.¹¹⁰

¹⁰¹ “Matrimonium cum gentilibus non iungendum.” *Test.* 3.62 (CCSL 3:153-54), citing 1 Cor 7:39-40, 1 Cor 6:16-17, 2 Cor 6:14.

¹⁰² “Uxorem a uiro non recedere aut, si recesserit, innuptam manere.” *Test.* 3.90 (CCSL 3:166), citing 1 Cor 7:10-11.

¹⁰³ “Parentibus obsequendum.” *Test.* 3.70 (CCSL 3:158), citing Eph 6:1-3; “Patres quoque asperos circa filios esse non oportere.” *Test.* 3.71 (CCSL 3:159), citing Eph 6:4.

¹⁰⁴ *Ep.* 4.2.3 (CCSL 3B:20).

¹⁰⁵ *Hab. virg.* 22 (CSEL 3.1:202-3). Hunter, *Marriage*, 121.

¹⁰⁶ Tertullian, *Ux.* 1.5.1-2 (CCSL 1:378-79), *Exh. cast.* 12.1-5 (CCSL 2:1031-33). See discussion of Tertullian in Hunter, *Marriage*, 116-20.

¹⁰⁷ *Eleem.* 17-20 (CCSL 3A:65-68).

¹⁰⁸ The emphasis on the resurrection in *De habitu virginum* is noted by Outi Lehtipuu, *Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 186-87.

¹⁰⁹ “habitura in regno sine interuentu noctis solum diem.” *Dom. or.* 36 (CCSL 3A:113).

¹¹⁰ “Per Dei indulgentiam recreati spiritaliter et renati imitemur quod futuri sumus.” *Dom. or.* 36 (CCSL 3A:113). As Hamman says, by praying day and night “nous répétons dès ici-bas notre rôle d'éternité. La vigilance donne à la prière sa dimension eschatologique.” Adalbert-G. Hamman, “Le rythme de la prière chrétienne ancienne,” in *Études Patristiques: Méthodologie-Liturgie-Histoire-Théologie* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1991), 172-73.

Virginité is a formal state, if not necessarily a permanent one, undertaken by both older and younger women.¹¹¹ We know that at least some virgins were wealthy as the intent of *De habitu virginum* is to restrain their displays of wealth, and direct them in its proper use—caring for the poor. However, Cyprian never asks them to assist the less-wealthy virgins among them, nor draws attention to the fact that their extravagant dress separates them from their sisters who have committed themselves to the same vocation. This may suggest that, in Cyprian’s context, virginité was particularly adopted by wealthy women. As Katherine Bain has argued, “a marriage-free state for wealthy women entailed more than celibacy. To be unmarried also meant to control the household’s resources and management and to have civic status and legal and religious responsibility.”¹¹² If such circumstances are also present in Roman North Africa, it would reduce the likelihood that *Ep.* 4 reveals the “difficulty female virgins experienced in finding affordable accommodation outside the family home.”¹¹³ Rather, such young, independently wealthy women may well hold a powerful attraction for clergy of more modest means. Cyprian is determined to stop the men from taking advantage of them.¹¹⁴

As Seagraves notes, Cyprian refers to a number of married clergy in a matter-of-fact manner, although he himself appears to have been celibate.¹¹⁵ He praises the “virginal chastity”¹¹⁶ of Cornelius, but does not specifically encourage celibacy in his clergy.¹¹⁷ The presbyter Numidicus, for example, is depicted “with joy [beholding] the wife who

¹¹¹ *Hab. virg.* 24 (CSEL 3.1:204-5).

¹¹² Katherine Bain, “Socioeconomic Status in Early Christianity and Thecla’s Rejection of Marriage,” *JFSR* 27.2 (2011): 69. Here she is particularly referring to widows, but earlier in the paper she relates evidence of a twenty-year-old woman, Trophime, depicted on her tombstone (Asia Minor, second century CE) with iconography identifying her as dominant in her household (62-63). It is not clear whether she had been married or not. With the patronage of older independent women, as in the case of Tryphaena and Thecla, wealthy younger women may have enjoyed significant freedom.

¹¹³ Richard Finn, *Asceticism in the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 92.

¹¹⁴ As Dunn notes, the clergy bear the brunt of the blame in Cyprian’s mind. Dunn, “Infected Sheep,” 17.

¹¹⁵ Seagraves, *Pascentes*, 131-32.

¹¹⁶ “uirginalis continentiae.” *Ep.* 55.8.2 (CCSL 3B:265).

¹¹⁷ Contra Seagraves, *Pascentes*, 132. The passages cited by Seagraves do not support his assertion.

clung to his side burnt to ashes.”¹¹⁸ The characteristics Cyprian praises depends on the circumstances—he is willing to honour both chastity and conjugal devotion.¹¹⁹

Money

A significant number of the congregation are comparatively wealthy. They have property they should have been prepared to relinquish, and they spend money on silks and pearls.¹²⁰ There are men who have sacrificed to save their entire household of some size; others have forced their families and clients to sacrifice.¹²¹ There are therefore at least some who have the standing of patrons in society at large, as well as virgins who have significant funds at their disposal. On the other hand, there are many who need financial assistance: imprisoned confessors,¹²² refugees from persecution,¹²³ other strangers, the sick,¹²⁴ and those who have renounced unsuitable professions.¹²⁵ There are children, wives and virgins who need to be ransomed from their barbarian captors.¹²⁶ There are widows and orphans who need support.¹²⁷ But it is not only the case that the rich provide for the poor. Believers are to be responsible for their own family members,¹²⁸ thereby caring for others from what must often be modest funds. Even the poor are to give, even if the sum is insignificant.¹²⁹ Giving should not, therefore, simply be viewed through the framework of patronage; it is incumbent upon all Christians.

¹¹⁸ “uxorem adhaerentem lateri suo concrematam ... laetus aspexit.” *Ep.* 40.1.1 (CCSL 3B:193-94).

¹¹⁹ See also *Pat.* 20 (CCSL 3A:130), where patience “tuetur in uirginibus beatam integritatem, in uiduis laboriosam castitatem, in coniunctis et maritatis indiuiduam caritatem.”

¹²⁰ *Laps.* 10-12, 30 (CCSL 3:226-27, 238).

¹²¹ *Ep.* 55.13.2 (CCSL 3B:271).

¹²² *Ep.* 5.1.2 (CCSL 3B:27).

¹²³ *Epp.* 21.2.2, 30.8 (CCSL 3B:113, 149).

¹²⁴ Both mentioned in *Ep.* 7.2 (CCSL 3B:39).

¹²⁵ *Ep.* 2 (CCSL 3B:6-8).

¹²⁶ *Ep.* 62.2.3 (CCSL 3C:386-87).

¹²⁷ *Test.* 3.74, 113 (CCSL 3:160, 175-76).

¹²⁸ *Test.* 3.75 (CCSL 3:160-61).

¹²⁹ *Test.* 3.2 (CCSL 3:88).

Naturally, the wealthy are more susceptible to the snares of riches, and much of Cyprian's teaching on the matter is directed towards them. Money so easily leads to sin. Faithful Christians will not increase their sins, however, but decrease them by giving to the poor. This raises the question of "redemptive almsgiving." Outside the texts collected to support the testimony, "On the good of works and alms,"¹³⁰ Cyprian only teaches that alms will redeem from sin when love of money is the cause of the sin. The exception is in *Ep.* 55, where he is instead arguing for the possibility of repentance and pardon.¹³¹ As Countryman notes, however, *De opere et eleemosynis*, removed from its original context, "encouraged later, more mechanical notions about the relationship of almsgiving and divine favor."¹³²

Also somewhat overstated in scholarship is the presentation of the prayers of the poor as recompense for the alms of the rich. Certainly, some texts make this point,¹³³ but Cyprian's overwhelming emphasis is on treasure in heaven—exchanging worldly possessions for eternal ones. Given Cyprian's understanding of the importance of prayer in the Christian life, I think it is going too far to see these prayers as evidence of the poor as clients, especially when the intercession of the martyrs is instead regarded as patronage. I do not want to suggest that the North African church was insulated from its social milieu, but surely there remains a place for mutuality in the body of Christ. Unity expressed through generosity, exemplified by the early Christian community in Jerusalem, is Cyprian's desire for his own congregation.¹³⁴ If it is correct to speak of Christian "patronage of the poor" at this time, as Parkin does in the context of the late

¹³⁰ "De bono operis et misericordiae." *Test.* 3.1 (CCSL 3:80-89).

¹³¹ He uses the text, "Almsgiving delivers from death" (Tob 4:10), to make the point that this cannot refer to the death Christ overcame on our behalf by his blood, but must refer to subsequent sins. *Ep.* 55.22.1 (CCSL 3B:281).

¹³² Countryman, *Rich Christian*, 198-99.

¹³³ In one case, it is a gloss on Paul's words regarding thanksgiving to God (*Eleem.* 9 [CCSL 3A:61]); in others, the poor pray that the virgins may persevere in their virginity (*Hab. virg.* 11 [CSEL 3.1:195]), and the prayers of the ransomed captives repay the generosity of their benefactors by ensuring that they continue in their giving (*Ep.* 62.4.2 [CCSL 3C:388]).

¹³⁴ *Unit. eccl.* 26 (CCSL 3:267). "Such 'nostalgic remembrance' of the early *koinonía* has in Cyprian one of its first exponents." Justo L. González, *Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1990), 130 n. 97.

empire,¹³⁵ then it is a very different kind of patronage to that generally practised. The poor are not to spend their days calling on and fawning over the rich; instead, they may pray for them. It is God who grants rewards.

Ministry

Cyprian's use of Paul supports the consensus that he did not regard the bishop of Rome as exerting authority over other bishops. This is seen in his repeated statement that each bishop will render an account to the Lord. Furthermore, instead of his arrogant pretensions, Stephen should adopt the apostle Peter's willingness to be corrected. Bishops should not quarrel, but live in harmony with one another.

In relation to their conduct, bishops must avoid being caught up in the anxieties of this world and their lives should be blameless. Their judgement is not infallible, however. Therefore, not only should they teach, they should be teachable. In relation to their congregation, bishops must be respected. They must correct people with the truth, even if this is not popular, as they must please God rather than people. They must not imitate philosophers in their hard-heartedness, however; rather, they should rather suffer with those who suffer and receive the repentant sinner.

The situational and rhetorical nature of Cyprian's statements has often been under-appreciated. They must be read in light of the pastoral concern that elicits them, and in the context of Cyprian's writings as a whole. Furthermore, Cyprian's strategies of praising his audience (giving them a standard to live up to), and promising rewards (to motivate them to persevere), also need to be taken into account.

6.7 Conclusion: Looking back, looking ahead

At times, Cyprian seems in danger of being caricatured as a staunch Roman moralist who has imbibed the law and patronage systems of the empire, emphasising merit and knowing little of grace. Devoted to his own status and control, he acts as patron of the church, demanding obedience and suppressing the spirit (or at least locating it only in his own person). We cannot ignore Cyprian's context—I have, in fact, been arguing that it is crucial to comprehending his exegesis—and an appreciation of the understanding of

¹³⁵ Parkin, "You do him no service," 68.

life he shares with his contemporaries is essential.¹³⁶ But it is equally important to recognise the difference of opinion which is expressed against the background of that shared understanding. Cyprian is not only formed by Greco-Roman society, but by the Christian community and the Scriptures. Cyprian's appropriation of the Pauline corpus suggests that William Babcock is right in thinking that "Paul may have been one of the critical factors giving Christianity its distinctive identity within and over against its late-antique cultural environment."¹³⁷

Despite the organisation, routinisation and hierarchy which accompanied its development, Cyprian presents us with a church still distinct from the apparatus of the state. In a world saturated with violence, Cyprian taught patient submission, not retaliation. In this he draws on Paul's emphasis on imitating Christ, not least in his suffering and humility. Cyprian also embraces many other aspects of Paul's thought: his eschatology (with some flexibility regarding timeframes); the forsaking of the life of the flesh for life in the Spirit; and the importance of love and unity among believers. He particularly exploits Paul's focus on future rewards. If these do not nullify the grace of God in Paul, neither do they do so in Cyprian. Present trials will give way to eternal glory, and Christians will be transformed into the likeness of Christ. These are not simply theological statements, but the application of the biblical text as the basis for lived Christian experience.

It remains to be seen whether Cyprian uses these same reading strategies in his appropriation of other New Testament texts, particularly the Gospels. And of course, any account of Cyprian's interpretation of Scripture which does not also examine his use of the Old Testament will remain incomplete. It would be interesting to discover the extent to which it departs from his employment of the New. His use of models is one area in which continuity might be expected. In addition, given Cyprian's role in shaping the Western tradition, his use of Scripture needs to be taken into greater account in works on early patristic exegesis. Only then will we understand the creation of "the

¹³⁶ Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, is particularly valuable in this regard.

¹³⁷ Babcock, "Introduction," xxvii.

framework within which most people looked at the world and the words that they used to describe it.”¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 222.

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Appendices

1. “‘As Far As My Poor Memory Suggested’: Cyprian’s Compilation of *Ad Quirinum*,” *VC* 68 (2014): 533-50.
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