

For Us and for Our Salvation: Cyril of Alexandria's Christological Anthropology

Author: Veronica Mary Tierney

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FOR US AND FOR OUR SALVATION: CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA'S CHRISTOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Veronica M. Tierney

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Veronica M. Tierney

Advisor: Douglas Finn, PhD

Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444CE) is most famous for his contributions to Christology, and especially for his role in the Christological controversy that dominated the latter half of his episcopate. Despite a welcome expansion in Cyrilline studies, especially in the last few decades, anthropology remains an under-represented object of scholarly inquiry. Cyril wrote no single work focused on anthropology; nevertheless, the human story permeates his writings.

The underlying assumption of the dissertation is that Christology necessarily incorporates anthropology, given the fundamental assertion that the Son of God became a human being. Through close reading of several of Cyril's Christological works (*Commentary on John*, his twenty-nine extant *Festal Letters*, *On the Unity of Christ*, and *Doctrinal Questions and Answers*) several themes and patterns emerge, such that it is possible to connect the pieces and discover a coherent anthropology.

I argue that Cyril's anthropology offers a complete account of the human story, from God's purpose for humanity in creation, through fall, redemption, and judgment, and finally in the attainment of humanity's *telos* in the enjoyment of eternal, familial union with God in heaven. This account is best understood generally in terms of divine giving and human receiving, and specifically according to a paradigm of revelation and

imitation. In short, the Incarnation is the divine gift that reveals human nature and purpose, while human reception of that gift lies in both active and passive imitation of Christ. What emerges, therefore, is a distinctly Christological anthropology.

Cyril's account possesses several key features that together represent a significant contribution to anthropology: the *Imago Dei* is a divine gift extrinsic to our nature, which accounts for how it can be lost in the Fall and regained in Christ; the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in humanity and individual believers are marked by a pledge and fulfillment dynamic; human freedom is respected by God such that even participation in the divine life is never imposed upon humanity but depends upon positive consent; the differentiation between human nature as a general category and human beings as particular individuals allows for the work of Christ to be beneficial to all, yet imposed upon none; and finally, the ascension of Christ represents the definitive revelation of God's purpose for humanity, even as it inaugurates the consummation of the human *telos*.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AT	<i>Answers to Tiberius.</i>
CJ	<i>Commentary on John.</i>
DQA	<i>Doctrinal Questions and Answers.</i>
FC	Fathers of the Church. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.
FL	<i>Festal Letters.</i>
LXX	Septuagint.
PG	Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca. Ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris, 1857–1886.
SC	Sources chrétiennes. Paris.
UC	<i>On the Unity of Christ.</i>

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INTRODUCTION

Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444CE) is known chiefly for his role in the Christological controversy that erupted in 428 when Nestorius of Constantinople argued against the traditional moniker of “Mother of God” or *Theotokos* for the Virgin Mary. A brief sketch of his life will help to situate him and his thought. Cyril was likely born around 378 in Egypt. He was the nephew of Theophilus, his predecessor as archbishop of Alexandria, and surely benefitted from his uncle’s patronage from a young age. As an adult, Cyril began his ecclesiastical career when his uncle ordained him Lector in 403. Later that year, he attended the Synod of the Oak, at which John Chrysostom was deposed from the see of Constantinople. Theophilus died in 412 and Cyril succeeded him three days later. In the early years of his career, his writings were mainly exegetical and sought to combat a variety of heresies.¹ The Nestorian controversy emerged in the period from 428–431 and occupied Cyril’s attention for the remainder of his life.

The majority of modern scholarship on Cyril and his theology has focused on his Christology generally, and on his role in the Nestorian controversy in particular. In more recent years, the range of inquiry has broadened considerably. Attention has increasingly

¹ John A. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 2–8.

been paid to Cyril as exegete,² shedding light on the considerable portion of his extant works (roughly seventy-five percent) commenting upon Biblical texts. Recent scholarship has seen a broadening of topics taken up in Cyrilline studies. There has been investigation into Cyril's Mariology,³ his contribution to the doctrine of deification,⁴ the challenges of divine suffering implied by his Christology,⁵ his understandings of the Eucharist⁶ and of the Trinity,⁷ to name just a few. For example, Thomas Weinandy and Daniel Keating's 2003 collection of essays on Cyril's theology set out to remedy exactly the kind of narrow focus on the Christological controversy that had characterized much of the available scholarship.⁸ Yet despite the welcome expansion of investigation, there remains no monograph focused on Cyril's anthropology.

So much of Cyril's Christological commitment lies in soteriological concerns; any proposition regarding the person of Christ that jeopardizes salvation must necessarily be false. Cyril is an heir to the idea from Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and others that "what is not assumed is not healed."⁹ This phrase was used in arguments about the

² Lois Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, a New Testament Exegete: His Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007); Robert L. Wilken, "Cyril of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Old Testament," in *Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 1–21; Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, Interpreter of the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1952).

³ Antonia Atanassova, "Did Cyril of Alexandria Invent Mariology?," in *Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Burns & Oates, 2008), 105–25.

⁴ Daniel A. Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁵ Joseph M. Hallman, *The Coming of the Impassible God: Tracing a Dilemma in Christian Theology* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007).

⁶ Ellen Concannon, "The Eucharist as Source of St. Cyril of Alexandria's Christology," *Pro Ecclesia* 18, no. 3 (June 1, 2009): 318–36; Marie-Odile Boulnois, "L'eucharistie, mystère d'union chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: les modèles d'union trinitaire et christologique," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 74, no. 2 (April 1, 2000): 147–72.

⁷ Marie-Odile Boulnois, "The Mystery of the Trinity According to Cyril of Alexandria: The Deployment of the Triad and Its Recapitulation into the Unity of Divinity," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 75–111.

⁸ Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating, *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2003).

⁹ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, trans. David R. Maxwell, vol. 2, *Ancient Christian Texts* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 106.

necessary constitution of Christ's humanity and was based on the idea that we can deduce the humanity of Christ by looking to our own humanity, and especially to its weaknesses and needs. This strategy, whereby we learn who Christ is by starting with ourselves has a fundamental flaw, namely that we are a fallen starting point. This dissertation proposes to reverse that logic; by looking first to Christ as fully and perfectly human, we discover ourselves: as we were in our original creation, as we are in our fallen state, and as we are destined to become in the perfection of God's purposes for us. This process relies on a dynamic of divine revelation and human reception of that revelation in the form of imitation. Thus the truth of human nature and destiny is revealed to us in Christ, and we enter into that truth to the extent that we both imitate Christ and are made imitators of him by the working of the Holy Spirit.

It is my observation that some narratives of the *oikonomia* tend to end too soon, or in some unsatisfactory manner. Much of the discussion about Cyril's soteriology tends to frame it in terms of recapitulation, which is a restoration of fallen humanity to the pristine state that we enjoyed in Eden before the Fall. As such, considerable emphasis is placed on the death and resurrection of Christ as the critical events that bring about this restoration. The problem with what I see as a truncated view of the *oikonomia* is three-fold. First, such presentations cut off the work of Christ at his resurrection, rather than continuing with the narrative of ascension, enthronement, and ultimate return at the last day for judgment. If the importance of Christ's work is focused on the events of his death and resurrection, one wonders why bother with the rest of the Gospel proclamation. It would not be fitting for the Scriptures to include vain stories, nor for the Church's observance of the Great Fifty Days extending through Pentecost to be of no value.

Second, there is insufficient account of how the restored humanity is categorically different from the original humanity, such that a subsequent fall is no longer possible. One would not find an eternal cycle of fall and restoration to be in any way edifying to us, or indeed befitting God. Certainly there are gestures toward the Incarnation and Christ's gift of the Holy Spirit as critical to the restoration, but it is often unclear how or why the Father's original gift of the Holy Spirit to Adam could be lost, but the Incarnate Son's gift could be impervious to such loss. While I agree whole-heartedly with the centrality and necessity of Christ's death and resurrection to the restoration of humankind, nevertheless, I argue for a fuller conception of the *oikonomia* that continues beyond recapitulation, even as it depends upon this restoration.

And third, accounts of the *oikonomia* that focus heavily on the fall and restoration tend to fall into the seemingly inevitable problem where the Incarnation is framed in terms of divine response to a human problem. Adam fell, therefore Christ became necessary. Such narratives are nearly forced to cast God as a kind of bungling tinkerer, rather than the omnipotent and omniscient creator of all that is. Without a sufficient account of the whole of the *oikonomia*, where God's purpose in creating humanity leads to our perfection, not only in spite of, but through our fall into sinfulness, our conceptions of God and of the work of Christ on our behalf suffer.

This dissertation seeks to demonstrate how Cyril conceives of the human story, from creation, through fall and restoration, and finally to ultimate perfection, and to do this chiefly through the rubric of revelation and imitation specifically, as well as of giving and receiving more generally. There are two critical aspects to this human story that should be highlighted at the outset. The first is that Cyril differentiates between human

nature as a general category and individual human beings. This distinction is important to bear in mind as we investigate the universality of Christ's work in restoring human nature, and the particularity of individual human benefit (or lack thereof) from that work. And the second critical aspect is that Cyril sees a deep respect in the divine attitude toward human freedom to will and to choose. God does not force God's plan upon us but rather invites us to participate freely in that plan. To make this point, Cyril contrasts divine respect for human freedom with the devil's pattern of resorting to deception, coercion, and even violence to force human beings into submission.

Cyril's *Commentary on John* will be the primary text under investigation. John's Gospel offers an account of the life of Jesus, and as such, affords us the opportunity to engage with Cyril's thought on Christ as a human being. John narrates episodes where Jesus says and does things that seem appropriate to divinity, such as raising Lazarus from death, while also relating Jesus saying and doing things that seem appropriate to humanity, including weeping at the death of his friend. In terms of genre, Cyril's *Commentary on John* was written as a reference for combatting a variety of theological opponents, most notably Arians/neo-Arians, but also pagans and Jews. The dating of this work has been the subject of some debate, though consensus assigns it to 425–428. It must have been completed before the Nestorian conflict, as the lack of any reference to Nestorius himself or to Mary as *Theotokos* suggests.¹⁰

The second set of texts to be included is Cyril's *Festal Letters*. These were the bishop's annual correspondence to the Alexandrian churches and monasteries announcing

¹⁰ David R. Maxwell, "Translator's Introduction," in *Commentary on John*, vol. 1, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), xvi–xvii. Lois Farag, for example, has argued for a much earlier date, even before Cyril's elevation to the episcopate. See Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, New Testament Exegete*, 60–69.

the dates of Easter and its attendant fast and feast days. These annual letters also afforded the occasion to address whatever pastoral and theological issues may have been pressing at the time. They were written in the fall, copied and transmitted throughout the diocese, and read aloud at or about the Feast of the Epiphany.¹¹ Unlike the *Commentary on John*, the *Festal Letters* are easy to date. In their introduction to *Festal Letter 12*, written for 424, Marie-Odile Boulnois and Bernard Meunier point out that Cyril's anti-Arian concerns appear for the first time.¹² That observation helps to narrow down the date for the *Commentary on John* such that arguments for a date significantly earlier than the consensus range are weakened. Not only are the *Festal Letters* helpful in terms of chronology, their primary subject matter—the work of Christ in his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension—offers the opportunity to trace key aspects of the *oikonomia* in Cyril's thought. In addition, these letters are addressed to a diverse audience, including not only clergy and members of monastic communities, but also the laity.

Rounding out our collection of primary texts are *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* and *On the Unity of Christ*. The latter represents Cyril's mature Christology. Written after 435, and therefore some years after the conflict with Nestorius seemed concluded with the *Formula of Reunion* between Cyril and John of Antioch (433), this dialogue reflects back from a distance on the whole controversy with Nestorius, while it also takes aim at Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia as the theological ancestors to the Nestorian error.¹³ The former was written shortly after Cyril's defeat of

¹¹ John J. O'Keefe, "Introduction," in *Festal Letters, 1-12*, The Fathers of the Church 118 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 7.

¹² Marie-Odile Boulnois and Bernard Meunier, "Douzième Festale (424): Introduction," in *Lettres festales, III (XII-XVII)*, Sources Crétiennes 434 (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 20.

¹³ John A. McGuckin, "Introduction," in *On the Unity of Christ* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 30–31.

Nestorius, probably 431–434.¹⁴ The absence of any reference to Diodore or Theodore suggests that we may infer that this correspondence predated *On the Unity of Christ*. In *Doctrinal Questions and Answers*, Cyril responds to a request for help from a group of Palestinian monks and their spokesperson, the priest Tiberius. There is a variety of theological concerns expressed, including the image of God in human beings, sin and grace, and the resurrection. Cyril's responses here are pointed and succinct and offer clear indications of his thought on key aspects of his anthropology.

The dissertation is divided into three parts: Part I treats the revelation of human nature; Part II lays out the work of Christ; and Part III deals with human imitation of Christ. Within Part I, Chapters 1 and 2 seek to identify and describe Cyril's account of human nature as revealed in Scripture, focusing chiefly on the Genesis narratives of creation and fall, respectively. Scriptural revelation is presented as a gift from God to humanity for the twofold work of remedying the damage inflicted by sin on our rational and self-directive faculties, and of preparing humanity both for the coming of Christ and for the fulfilment of the divine purpose in creation. Chapter 1 addresses how humanity can be understood as being created in the image and likeness of God, located especially in our rational faculties and the exercise of free will, as well as how we are quite unlike God in terms of our inherent instability as creatures with a compound nature. Central to this part of the human story is God's gift of the Holy Spirit, which Cyril locates in God's breathing into the man's nostrils (Gen 2:7), and which he identifies as the image of God. Because the image of God is not proper to human nature, but rather a gift, it could therefore be lost. In Chapter 2 Cyril's account of the fall of the first couple is cast in

¹⁴ Lionel R Wickham, "Introduction," in *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), xxviii–xxix.

terms of the loss of this gift and its consequences, especially the curse leveled against the first couple, their expulsion from Eden, and their suffering under the tyranny of Satan. The image of God plays a central role in both disclosing and enacting the human *telos*, namely that humanity was created for eternal, familial union with God.

Chapter 3 takes up the same task of identifying and describing human nature as found in Chapters 1 and 2, but relies upon the revelation contained in the Incarnation and the narratives of the life and work of Jesus Christ. The revelation of original, sinless human nature as contained in the Genesis narratives offers little detail, as the story of the first transgression follows almost immediately. Moreover, disclosure of the human *telos* exists as mere gesture or hint. In the Incarnation, however, Jesus Christ reveals human nature in a far more fulsome way. The narratives of his life offer examples of three relationships—with God, with neighbor, and within oneself—unmarred by human sin. And the person and work of Christ, especially his ascension into heaven, provide the clearest indication of the ultimate end to which human existence is oriented.

Central to this presentation of the Incarnation as revelation of human nature and destiny is the reality that he is both like us and unlike us in his humanity. In keeping with the motto “what is not assumed is not healed,” Cyril presents Christ’s humanity as being entirely in common with our own. Yet the fact remains that his humanity is that of the Word; and that appropriation by the Word has effects on his humanity that ours does not possess. By virtue of the union, Christ’s humanity is necessarily sinless because it is impossible for divinity to be anything but good. This marks a significant difference from us who are ontologically and naturally unstable and therefore capable of sin. And this

difference means that our imitation of Christ in his sinlessness cannot be a matter of human effort alone.

Part II functions as the fulcrum of the dissertation. Whereas Part I laid out the human story as revealed both in Scripture and in the life of Christ, Part II addresses what the *oikonomia* accomplishes for all of human nature. Just as Chapter 2 identifies the remedial and preparatory aspects of the gift of divine revelation in Scripture, so now Chapters 4 and 5 present the *oikonomia* in its own remedial and preparatory functions, respectively. Everything that had gone wrong is here restored to its original state. All of the consequences of the Fall are here reversed, especially through the death and resurrection of Christ. And yet, the human story does not end in this recapitulation. That would be like a ship setting sail from one port to another. When passengers fall overboard, the crew rescues them and returns them to their place on deck. But the ship does not remain in the midst of the sea; it continues on to its destination. For Cyril, the destination is the heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God. The ascension of Christ marks both the first human appearance in heaven and the beginning of the possibility of our own arrival there. Jesus told his disciples that he would go ahead and prepare a place for them, that where he is, there they might also be (cf. Jn 14:3). Between the ascent of human nature into heaven, and the arrival of individual human beings into the very presence of God lies the final judgment, Christ's last work that is yet to come. It is here that all of humanity will be judged and separated between those who will be welcomed into the heavenly Jerusalem and those who will never reach that destination.

Everything accomplished by Christ in the *oikonomia* affects the entirety of human nature. And yet it is discrete human beings who were created for union with God. It is in

Part III that we see how the universally available benefits of the *oikonomia* are either received or rejected by particular human beings. The *Gospel of John* opens with a description of the Incarnation and the reality of both its rejection and its reception. The Evangelist writes, “but to all who received him, and believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12). The imitation of Christ is presented in both active and passive terms, and is the means by which individual human beings demonstrate and live out their own reception of and belief in Christ. This imitation involves modeling one’s life after the life of Christ, to the extent that is possible for us; it involves believing his teachings and promises; and it especially involves accepting the working of divine grace within and for us. Chapter 6 presents how we actively imitate Christ, while Chapter 7 offers how we are passively made imitators of Christ by means of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling activity. This imitation of Christ takes shape in adhering to the orthodox Christian faith in both internal assent and external expression, namely through the life of virtue, active charity, and participation in both baptism and Eucharist.

The dynamic of giving and receiving is a helpful lens through which to read and interpret Cyril of Alexandria’s writings on the subjects of anthropology and soteriology. To begin, this dynamic frames the fundamental relationship between God and humanity; God is the giver, while humanity is the recipient. “Human nature must not pride itself at all in its own goods, and neither should the nature of the holy angels. For once they are called into existence, all things that exist have their mode of being from God. We will maintain that everything in them essentially is a gift from the creator’s generosity and has the grace of the creator as its root.”¹⁵ God gives being, life, rationality, wisdom, free will,

¹⁵ CJ 1.9 (Maxwell 1, 49), Pusey 1, 110: “καὶ οὐκ ἂν ὅλως ἰδίῳις ἀγαθοῖς ἢ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐναγλαΐζοιτο φύσις, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ἢ τῶν ἀγίων ἀγγέλων. μετὰ γὰρ τοῦ κεκληῖσθαι πρὸς γένεσιν, καὶ τὸν τοῦ

and everything else constitutive of our nature. It is critical to make clear, however, that God's gifts are not forced; there is always the possibility that humanity will disdain, misuse, or even reject such gifts outright. True reception of God's gifts is the ideal, the means by which human beings flourish and attain the perfection that God has in store. Humanity, then, is fundamentally a receptive creature. We shall see this dynamic playing itself out in several ways over the course of this investigation.

πῶς εἶναι λόγον ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων παρὰ Θεοῦ ἔχει, καὶ οὐδὲν ἐν αὐτοῖς οὐσιωδῶς ἐνυπάρχειν διακείσόμεθα, ὃ μὴ δῶρόν ἐστι τῆς τοῦ κτίσαντος φιλοτιμίας, καὶ ῥίζαν ἔχει τὴν τοῦ δημιουργήσαντος χάριν.”

PART I: THE REVELATION OF HUMAN NATURE

Among the many gifts of God to human beings is knowledge. As we shall see more fully in what follows, God and human beings know differently: God knows all things by nature, whereas human beings must learn or be taught the things that we come to know. Furthermore, God's knowledge is perfect, whereas human knowledge is limited. In Eden prior to the Fall, humanity had free access to conversation with God. Marie-Odile Boulnois identifies *παρρησία*, "the freedom of speech that presupposes trust"¹⁶ as a chief characteristic of Adam's life in paradise and his relationship with God. Within this circumstance, the first human being was truly "taught by God" (Jn 6:45). The problem for humanity is that the learning process in Eden was cut short through the first transgression and the resulting loss of that trust-based speech with God. Human knowledge of its own nature was already limited on an essential level, but was further diminished and deformed due to human sin. In short, humanity became unable to know ourselves truly because we are epistemically circumscribed and disabled.

The remedy to this problem is a new kind of teaching. Whereas in Eden, human beings were taught by God in a minimally mediated fashion, outside of Paradise that teaching took on a fully mediated character. In Eden, this mediation was limited to God's use of sound to communicate through the bodily ear to the mind of Adam. Totally unmediated communication exists only among the persons of the Trinity. This distinction

¹⁶ Marie-Odile Boulnois, "Liberté, origine du mal et prescience divine selon Cyrille d'Alexandrie," *Revue d'études augustinienes et patristiques* 46, no. 1 (2000): 76. "la liberté de parole qui suppose la confiance"

is made clear in Cyril's discussion of the heavenly voice responding to Christ's plan to glorify God's name, and Christ's explanation that the voice was meant not for him but for the crowd (Jn 12:28–30). The fully mediated character of divine teaching takes shape in the gift of revelation, which was offered in two modes: first, the scriptural revelation in the Old Testament, especially in the accounts of the creation of the first human beings and the giving of the Law; and second, the revelation in the Incarnation of the Word, in the person and work of Jesus Christ as proclaimed and reflected upon in the New Testament. I will use the terms "Scripture" and "Incarnation" to differentiate between these two modes of revelation. The revelation in Scripture is necessary and helpful, but it is also limited. Cyril routinely refers to what is revealed in Scripture as a shadow of the truth that must ultimately cede its place to the truth itself. For Cyril, the whole of the Old Testament points to the coming of Christ and to the mystery of the *oikonomia*.¹⁷

According to Cyril, human beings need revelation for two reasons. The first is that it is an inherent quality of our status as creatures that we learn through teaching; we do not know by nature. Thus some means by which we might learn is necessary. Secondly, our rational faculties are so damaged by sin that we cannot learn without considerable assistance. Furthermore, this learning process relies on that very revelation to understand the state of sin that human beings have fallen into and the consequences of that state. In short, human beings cannot know that we are disabled by sin apart from the account of our sin and its effects as revealed in Scripture. In a sense, Scripture teaches us

¹⁷ For thorough analyses of Cyril's exegetical method, see Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, Interpreter of the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1952); Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology*, Yale Publications in Religion 15 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1971); Lois Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, a New Testament Exegete: His Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007).

to find our own story within it. We receive a new kind of teaching and that teaching helps to rehabilitate our damaged faculties such that we can reason out the broader implications of the story. For Cyril, the status of our rational faculties as diminished due to sin is something learned in the process of studying Scripture. That study indicates that Scripture is being received as a divine gift of revelation. The study of Scripture builds and strengthens our will to investigate and to search more deeply for the truth. That investigation and search, in turn, further rehabilitate our faculties.

Three chapters comprise Part I. Chapter 1 presents Cyril's account of the creation of human beings and the original, Edenic character of human nature. This chapter will focus on two key questions: who we are by nature, and who we are by grace. For Cyril, the distinction between the two lies in the creation of human beings in the image of God. Similarity to God is made possible by grace, whereas dissimilarity from God discloses our essential nature. These characteristics of similarity and dissimilarity refer to the original, prelapsarian state of the human creature. The end of the chapter will offer Cyril's sense of the human *telos*, the purpose or end for which humanity was created by God and to which humanity is oriented.

Chapter 2 offers Cyril's account of the first sin and its consequences. Cyril assigns blame both to the first human beings and to the serpent/devil/Satan, and presents humanity as simultaneously guilty of sin and victimized by the devil's tyranny. The shape of the *oikonomia* is tied, therefore, to humanity's status as willing victim. The consequences of the first sin fall into two main categories: existential and epistemic. In the first, humanity loses the divine image; in the second, humanity's capacity to reason is

seriously damaged. Thus whatever similarities we had with God in the beginning are lost, and those dissimilarities that existed become more extreme.

Chapter 3 lays out what we can learn about human nature as it is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. Given the Christian claim that Christ is like us in all things save sin, he gives us a clear picture of human sinlessness, albeit within the conditions of the Fall, as manifested in proper relations with God, neighbor, and self. Despite the power of the Incarnation to reveal the truth of human nature, the reality remains that the Incarnation is unique. We address a critical factor upon which Christ's own sinlessness depends, one which we do not share. And finally, the chapter concludes with Cyril's exposition of what the Incarnation reveals of our human *telos*, namely our glorification and exaltation above our nature.

1.0 EDENIC HUMANITY

Revelation in Scripture begins with the origin story of the whole of creation. This story is told in two distinct accounts with rather different structures, details, styles, and characterizations. Cyril finds nothing fundamentally problematic about the differences and even apparent contradictions between the two accounts. Rather, he quite comfortably moves between them, combining details from each as suits his purposes. For Cyril, the whole of scripture is really one grand narrative that points to, and prepares one to receive, the ultimate revelation in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, and so weaving details from disparate narratives, and even from different books of the Bible, is not only perfectly acceptable, but is actually essential to sound exegesis. We begin, then, with the revelation in Scripture of the creation of human beings.

1.1 HUMANITY'S ORIGINAL NATURE

Cyril's understanding of our humanity derives from both creation narratives. From the first (Gen 1:1-2:3), Cyril takes the creation of human beings in the image of God, the goodness of the whole of creation, and the institution of the Sabbath as an important, but shadowy image of the ultimate state of humanity. From the second (Gen 2:4-25), Cyril takes the detail about God breathing into the man the breath of life, and the command to avoid the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Cyril also relies heavily on the account of the first sin and its consequences (Gen 3:1-24): the transgression of the divine command; the role of Satan and humanity's status as willing victims of the devil; and the

impact of Adam's disobedience on the whole of humanity. Lastly, Cyril seems merely to hint at, or gesture toward, humanity's future state by reference to minor details in both accounts of creation.

1.1.1 Image and Likeness in Cyril's Thought

Cyril understands the human being to be:

an animal that is both rational and composite, of a soul, that is, and this perishable earthly flesh. When humanity was made and brought into being by God, it did not have incorruptibility or indestructibility from its own nature. These belong essentially to God alone. It was sealed by the Spirit of life, and by its relation to the divine, it gained the good that is above its own nature. "He breathed into his face," it says, "the breath of life; and the man became a living soul."¹⁸

Moreover, Cyril understands this human creature to have been made in the image of God, according to the divine likeness (κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν, Gen 1:26-27). Cyril's exegesis of the image and likeness of God relies in large part on his understanding of the relationship between images and their archetypes. This relationship is characterized first of all by an existential aspect, where the very existence of the image depends entirely upon the existence of the archetype. To illustrate this point, Cyril writes, "images are always patterned after their archetypes,"¹⁹ so the archetype is logically prior to the image, rendering the image dependent upon the archetype. The relationship is also characterized by a semiotic, and therefore epistemological, aspect. Here, the focus is on the capacity of the image to point beyond itself to what is greater: "Since the mind

¹⁸ CJ 1.9 (Maxwell 1, 62–63), Pusey 1, 138–39: "ἔστι τοίνυν λογικὸν μὲν, σύνθετον δὲ ὁμῶς ζῶον ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἐκ ψυχῆς δηλονότι καὶ τῆς ἐπικήρου ταυτησὶ καὶ γῆϊνης σαρκός. ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐπεποιήτο παρὰ Θεοῦ, καὶ παρήχθη πρὸς γένεσιν, οὐκ ἔχων ἐξ οἰκείας φύσεως τό τε ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον· μόνῳ γὰρ ταῦτα πρόσσεστιν οὐσιωδῶς τῷ Θεῷ· κατεσφραγίζετο τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ζωῆς, σχέσει τῇ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον τὸ ὑπὲρ τὴν φύσιν ἀποκερδαίνων ἀγαθόν· Ἐνεφύσησε γὰρ, φησὶν, εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοήν ζωῆς, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν."

¹⁹ CJ 5.5 (Maxwell 1, 364), Pusey 2, 84: "αἱ γὰρ εἰκόνες αἰεὶ πρὸς τὰ ἀρχέτυπα."

ascends from the image to the archetype, it forms a conception of that archetype from what it encounters.”²⁰ Frances Young casts Cyril’s presentation of the creation of human beings in the context of *mimesis*, or imitation. She explains that “humanity was a *mimema*, a copy, of the highest glory, a kind of clay statuette endowed with the living spirit so as to be a rational and immortal *zoon* (‘animal’ or ‘living being’).”²¹ More broadly, she identifies a prevailing Platonic metaphysical inheritance that informs Cyril’s exegesis in general, and especially his presentations of both the creation of human beings, and the Incarnation itself. Cyril assumes the parallel and connected existence of both sensibly and mentally perceptible realities (τὰ αἰσθητά and τὰ νοητά, and especially τὰ πνευματικά, the spiritual realities), and that the sensible realities point to the mental. God creates human beings “to incarnate the image of [the transcendent] God in the sensible world.”²² This framework will be helpful in understanding Cyril’s treatment of images and their archetypes later in the section.

Cyril is also part of a tradition in patristic exegesis that understands the image of God through the lens of Platonic notions of the one and the many, and the challenge of the simultaneous Christian commitments to both the transcendence of God and also to God’s nearness to creation. John McGuckin explains how Cyril understood “the Logos as Image of the Invisible who at once retained the full character of the divine (impassible, unchangeable, unapproachable, invisible) and yet was manifested to the creation as the revealer-God.”²³ The manner in which human beings can be understood to have been

²⁰ CJ 5.4 (Maxwell 1, 339), Pusey 2, 29: “ὥς γὰρ ἐξ εἰκότος ἐπὶ τὸ ἀρχέτυπον ἀνατρέχων ὁ νοῦς ἐκ τοῦ παρεπιπτοντος ἐκεῖνο φαντάζεται.”

²¹ Frances M. Young, “Theotokos: Mary and the Pattern of Fall and Redemption in the Theology of Cyril of Alexandria,” in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 61–62.

²² Frances M. Young and Andrew Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2010), 307.

²³ McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, 178.

created in the image of God is deeply connected to role of the Logos as divine image. Despite this heritage, Cyril's way of dealing with the Scriptural assertion that humanity is created in the image of God is idiosyncratic and represents a significant departure from the interpretive directions chosen by his predecessors. Boulnois has noted that Cyril's attention to the image of God, and especially his interpretation of Genesis 2:7 as the moment in which an extrinsic image of God is given to the first human being, is unparalleled among early Christian theologians. She places Cyril among Origen, Didymus, and Apollinaris as authors who have explicitly identified the breath of life as the Holy Spirit.²⁴

Walter Burghardt has explored the varieties of ways in which earlier Christian authors treated the terms "image" and "likeness," and has laid out his conclusions that some, including Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, see substantial distinctions while others, namely Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil, reject such distinctions. For example, Irenaeus identifies "image" as natural gifts (e.g. reason and will), and "likeness" as supernatural gifts (e.g. Word and Spirit).²⁵ Gregory of Nyssa is identified as holding that they are not different in kind, but rather only in degree.²⁶ Burghardt concludes that Cyril may be representative of a wider shift among "neo-Alexandrians" away from the kinds of distinctions promoted by Clement and Origen.²⁷ Cyril thus rejects their efforts to find significance in the presence of both terms:

If they say that "according to image" and "according to likeness" are two different things, let them show the difference! For our mind is that "according to image"

²⁴ Marie-Odile Boulnois, "Le soufflé et l'Esprit: Exégèses patristiques de l'insufflation originelle de Gn 2, 7 en lien avec celle de Jn 20, 22," *Recherches augustiniennes* 24 (1989), 30.

²⁵ Walter J. Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man According to Cyril of Alexandria*, Studies in Christian Antiquity (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1957), 2.

²⁶ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 4.

²⁷ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 6–7.

means nothing else than “according to likeness,” and conversely “according to likeness” means nothing but “according to image”: the likeness to God we obtained in our primal constitution, and we are images of God.²⁸

The fact that Cyril does not give these terms technical status will be important to remember as we investigate his interpretation of this key aspect of his anthropology. In order to highlight their status as synonyms in Cyril’s thought, I will simply refer to “similarity” so as not to impose a significance that would be inappropriate. Cyril’s rejection of terminological distinction between “image” and “likeness” allows him to move fluidly between them to make his points.

Our treatment of Cyril’s exegesis of the phrase in which God created human beings “in our image, according to our likeness” begins logically with an examination of the variety of ways one thing can be like another. The following list of possible meanings and uses of “image” (read also “likeness” or “similarity”) will serve as a paradigm according to which I will organize the variety of ways Cyril both applies this language to, and sets limits upon, humanity’s similarities to God:

The first kind of image is characterized by identity of nature in identical properties, like Abel from Adam or Isaac from Abraham. The second consists only in the likeness of imprint and the precise representation of the form, like the picture of a king on wax or made in some other way, representing him as excellently and skillfully as possible. Another kind of image is taken to refer to habits, manners, way of life and inclination toward things that are good or bad, as for example when one says that someone who does good is like Paul and someone who does not is like Cain. The fact that they are equally good or bad brings about and reasonably confers a likeness with each one. Another kind of image is that of

²⁸ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 7; DQA 3, Pusey 3, 555: “Εἰ μὲν ἕτερον καὶ ἕτερον εἶναι φασὶ τό Κατ’ εἰκόνα, καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν, διδασκέτωσαν τὴν διαφοράν. διακείμεθα γὰρ ἡμεῖς, ὥς οὐδὲν ἕτερον τό Κατ’ εἰκόνα δηλοῖ, πλὴν ὅτι Καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν, καὶ ὁμοίως τό, καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν, τὸ καὶ Κατ’ εἰκόνα· τὴν δὲ γε πρὸς Θεὸν ὁμοίωσιν ἐλάχομεν ἐν πρώτῃ κατασκευῇ, καὶ ἐσμεν εἰκόνες Θεοῦ.” This quotation comes from Cyril’s *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* that formed part of his correspondence, begun around 431–34CE, with a Palestinian deacon, then priest, named Tiberius who had expressed concern over “intruders” who championed largely anthropomorphic views. Several of the questions in this text reflect the debate over Origen and his legacy, though without explicitly naming him. See Lionel R Wickham, “Introduction,” in *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), xxviii–xxx.

dignity, honor, glory and excellence, as for example if someone were to succeed another in command and do with authority everything that is proper and fitting for the predecessor. In another sense, an image concerns some other quality or quantity of a thing, its shape and proportion (for we must keep it short).²⁹

Even though Cyril uses “image” and “likeness” as synonyms, it is clear that the kind and degree of similarity between two things can vary considerably. These distinctions matter a great deal for Cyril, even if the terminology he uses does not seem to imply precision. Cyril’s paradigm does, however, organize similarities in three main categories: likeness proper to the Son alone, natural human likeness to God, and human likeness to God dependent upon grace. Conceptually, then, Cyril appears somewhat similar to Irenaeus, insofar as Irenaeus differentiates between natural and supernatural gifts, even though Cyril rejects differentiating the terms in the way Irenaeus had.³⁰

The first description in Cyril’s paradigm applies most fittingly to the kind of image that the Son is of the Father. In this case, the image and the archetype are identical in substance even as they are distinct in personhood. The Son, as image, perfectly reveals the Father as archetype, even as the Son is not the Father. For Cyril, the relationship between archetype and image is a paradigm for his understanding of the intra-Trinitarian relations between the Father and the Son. Because the Son is begotten of the Father, it is most proper to say that the Father is the archetype and the Son is his true image. Recall

²⁹ CJ 2.8 (Maxwell 1, 152–53), Pusey 1, 339–40: “οὐκοῦν μία μὲν ἦδη καὶ πρώτη τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ταυτότητος ἐν ἀπαραλλάκτοις τοῖς ιδιώμασιν ἢ εἰκὼν, ὡς ἐξ Ἀδὰμ ὁ Ἄβελ, ἢ Ἰσαὰκ ἐξ Ἀβραάμ. δευτέρα δὲ πάλιν ἢ κατὰ μόνην τὴν τοῦ χαρακτῆρος ἐμφέρειαν, καὶ τὸ ἀκριβὲς τοῦ εἶδους ἐκτύπωμα, καθάπερ ἢ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐν ξύλῳ γραφή, ἢ καὶ καθ’ ἕτερόν τινα πεποιημένη τρόπον, ὡς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἄριστά τε καὶ ἐντεχνέστατα. εἰκὼν δὲ ἕτερα λαμβάνεται πάλιν πρὸς ἥθη καὶ τρόπους καὶ πολιτείαν καὶ θέλημα τὸ ἐπὶ τισιν ἀγαθοῖς ἢ φαύλοις, ὡς εὐκέναι λέγεσθαι τυχὸν τὸν μὲν ἀγαθοεργοῦντα τῷ Παύλῳ, τὸν δὲ μὴ τοιοῦτον τῷ Καῖν. τὸ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἴσοις ὁρᾶσθαι φαύλους τε καὶ ἀγαθοῖς, τὴν ὁμοίωσιν ἐκάστω πραγματεύεται καὶ περιτίθησιν εἰκότως. εἶδος δὲ πῶς εἰκόνος ἐστὶν ἕτερον, καὶ τὸ ἐν ἀξιώματι καὶ τιμῇ καὶ δόξῃ καὶ ὑπεροχῇ, ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις τυχὸν τήν τινος ἀρχὴν διαδέχοιτο, καὶ πάντα δρώῃ μετ’ ἐξουσίας, ἅπερ ἂν ἐκεῖνῳ προσήκοι τε καὶ πρέποι. εἰκὼν δὲ ἕτερος, ἢ καθ’ ἕτεραν τινὰ ποιότητα πράγματος ἢ ποσότητα, σχῆμά τε καὶ ἀναλογίαν· δεῖ γὰρ ἤδη συλλήβδην εἰπεῖν.”

³⁰ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 2.

the logical priority of the archetype relative to the image mentioned above. Within the Godhead, Father and Son reflect and reveal one another, but they do so in ways that retain their respective roles as archetype and image:

Now when we see the Son (as imprint) in the Father and the Father (as archetype) in the Son, we should certainly not understand that to indicate a mere similarity of substance (ὁμοιότητα τῆς οὐσίας). Rather, we hold that the Son shines forth *begottenly* (γεννητῶς) from the Father's substance and that he is and subsists on his own in and from that substance as God the Word. And we hold that the Father, in turn, is in the Son *connaturally* (συμφυῶς) as in an offspring of the same substance (ἐν ὁμοουσίῳ), and *separately* (μεμερισμένως) only because of the difference in what he is and is understood to be.³¹

Cyril's distinction between "begottenly" (γεννητῶς) and "connaturally" (συμφυῶς) preserves the fact that each person reveals the other, while never permitting their interchangeability. The persons and their respective roles remain distinct even as they engage in the same activity of revealing themselves in and through one another.

Cyril's use of the assertion in Colossians 1:15 that Christ is the image of the invisible God helps to differentiate between *being* the image of God and being *in* the image of God. Cyril identifies the Son as the only true image of the Father, which precludes our also being images of God in our own right. We cannot be images of God according to the first definition above because we do not share with God an "identity of nature in identical properties." However, because all things are created through the Son, the Son functions as the archetype according to which human beings are created.

Moreover, Cyril also argues "that we who were destined to be called sons of God had to

³¹ CJ 1.5 (Maxwell 1, 30), Pusey 1, 69: "οὐ γὰρ δήπου κατὰ μόνην τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῆς οὐσίας, ὡς χαρακτηῖρα τὸν Υἱὸν ἐν Πατρὶ θεωρήσομεν, ἢ αὐτὸ πάλιν ὡς ἀρχέτυπον ἐν Υἱῷ τὸν Πατέρα· ἀλλ' Υἱὸν μὲν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσίας γεννητῶς ἐκλάμποντα, καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς ἰδιοσυστάτως ὑπάρχοντα καὶ ὑφεστῶτα Θεὸν Λόγον παραδεξόμεθα· Πατέρα δὲ πάλιν ἐν Υἱῷ, ὡς ἐν ὁμοουσίῳ γεννήματι, συμφυῶς μὲν, κατὰ δὲ μόνην τὴν ἑτερότητα τοῦ εἶναι καὶ νοεῖσθαι τοῦθ' ὅπερ ἐστὶ μεμερισμένως."

be created in the Son's image so that the mark of sonship should be evident in us."³² The human being's likeness to God, then, is necessarily less than the Son's likeness to the Father. Burghardt makes this point in another way, focusing on the "identity of nature" to refer to the divine likeness shared by the Persons of the Trinity, and "participation in nature" to refer to the way in which human beings can be understood to image God.³³ Burghardt insists that participation is possible only where natures differ. To say that human beings are created *in* the image of God, then, must mean that whatever similarities we might share with God differ in degree from whatever similarities are shared among the Persons of the Trinity. The Son's role as archetype to the human being's image may seem to offer a difficulty in that the Son had no body when Adam was created; as such, how can our bodies conform to the image of a bodiless archetype? Cyril opposes Anthropomorphite ideas that would assign any kind of body or form to the Godhead, arguing that "our poverty of mind and speech is the real cause and occasion, therefore, of inspired Scripture's addressing us about God in bodily terms."³⁴ Thus the likeness to God is not located within the body, but rather in the soul. Cyril's consistent and unrelenting commitment to the single subjectivity of the Son, both before and after the Incarnation, implies that the pattern of Christ's body, and therefore its capacity to serve as the archetype of our own bodies, existed eternally, even if the reality of that body only came to be at the time of the Incarnation. That said, it is certainly the case that the human body

³² DQA 4 (Wickham, 199), Pusey 3, 558: "ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἡμᾶς μέλλοντας υἱοὺς ὀνομάζεσθαι Θεοῦ, κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ Υἱοῦ γενέσθαι μᾶλλον, ἢν' ἡμῖν ἐμπρέπη καὶ ὁ τῆς υἰότητος χαρακτήρ."

³³ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 10–11.

³⁴ DQA 1 (Wickham, 187), Pusey 3, 550: "αἰτία τοίνυν καὶ πρόφασις ἀληθὴς τοῦ σωματικῶς περὶ Θεοῦ τοὺς πρὸς ἡμᾶς ποιεῖσθαι λόγους τὴν θεόπνευστον γραφὴν, καὶ νοῦ καὶ γλώττης ἐν ἡμῖν ἢ πτωχεία."

is less like God than the human soul. Further discussion of this point will appear in section *1.1.3 Natural Similarity*.

The second, third, and fourth of Cyril's descriptions, taken together, comprise most aptly the creation of human beings "in the image of God." In the metaphor of the wax seal, the image and archetype are different substances, yet a perfect representation of the archetype exists in the image. This analogy illustrating how what is originally precise and clear, but becomes disfigured to the point of unrecognizability, is one of the chief ways of describing the consequences of sin on the human being. The moral or dispositional understanding of the "image" describes how the activity of the image closely follows that of the archetype, as in an apprentice following a master. This aspect features prominently in Cyril's discussions of both Christ's own actions during his earthly ministry and the expected behaviors of those who follow him. Christ's revelation of himself as archetype will be taken up in Chapter 3, while Chapters 6 and 7 will address the ways in which human imitation of Christ reflects our possession of the image of God. Finally, the kind of image that pertains to "dignity, honor, glory and excellence" corresponds to the ultimate exaltation of human beings beyond their nature and entry into the very presence of God. All three of these definitions of images appropriately fall within my category of similarities made possible by grace. The last description, which refers simply to "some other quality or quantity of a thing," is where I will locate whatever similarities to God that human beings have by nature. This category is appropriately vague and generic; after all, natural similarities between human beings and God are rather limited.

1.1.2 Dissimilarity between Human Beings and God

In addressing how humanity can be said to be like God, created in the divine image and according to the divine likeness, it will be helpful to begin by detailing some of the important ways in which human beings are not like God. There are two primary ways in which human beings differ from God. The primary dissimilarities are grounded in the kind of beings we are, while the secondary dissimilarities reside in how we function as human beings. Each of these distinctions will be identified based on a binary. At the primary level, differences arise between created versus uncreated natures, and composite versus simple natures. Simply put, human unlikeness to God is most manifest in terms of divine stability and human instability. Ben Blackwell uses the notion of derivation, namely that our existence and our nature derive from God, to express what I have identified as instability.³⁵ Because we do not exist in and of ourselves, but are contingent upon God, we always face the possibility of ceasing to exist. Beginning to exist, and possibly returning to non-existence, is the source of our instability. David Maxwell makes this point by locating Cyril within a broad tradition in early Christian thought that held that

susceptibility to change or loss is a characteristic of created beings as such. Creatures are created from nothing and are composed of parts. The fact that they are created from nothing means that they can fall back in that direction again. The fact that they are composed of parts means that they can fall apart again. As a creature, man is inherently unstable.³⁶

³⁵Ben C. Blackwell, *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 76.

³⁶David R. Maxwell, "Sin in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on John," *Concordia Journal* 31, no. 4 (October 1, 2005), 379.

While Young asserts that Cyril rarely follows Athanasius in the *De Incarnatione* by describing the fall in these terms,³⁷ Cyril displays considerable concern for the problem of returning to nothingness, as we shall see. At the secondary level, differences are highlighted between relative versus absolute good wills, and learning versus knowing. Hence at the primary level, we will address differences in ontology and nature, whereas at the secondary level, we will address differences in morality and epistemology. These secondary differences also manifest the instability of the human creature, insofar as our virtue and intellect are subject to change, whether in the form of growth or of loss.

1.1.2.1 Created vs. Uncreated: “Ontological Instability”

The first, and most fundamental, way in which human beings differ from God is that we are originate creatures, whereas God is the unoriginate Creator. Human beings were brought into existence by a cause external to ourselves, namely an act of God’s will. This emergence from non-being into being is the source of what I will call our “ontological instability.” By contrast, “It [the divine nature] does not allow turning toward anything whatsoever but maintains its utter stability.”³⁸ God exists eternally, having no beginning. God is. Hence God’s “utter stability” (τὴν στάσιν) Just as God did not begin to exist, neither will God cease to exist. In Cyril’s words, “Everything that is created is subject to decay, even if it has not yet decayed because it is preserved by God’s will. But God is incorruptible and eternal by nature. He does not obtain this by the will of someone else, like creation does; rather, he always exists in his own good properties, and this property

³⁷ Young, “Theotokos,” 61.

³⁸ CJ (Maxwell 2, 285), Pusey 2, 695: “τῆς εἰς πᾶν ὀτιοῦν παρατροπῆς οὐκ ἀνεχόμενον, ἐδραιωτάτην δὲ μᾶλλον τὴν οἰκείαν ἀποσῶζον στάσιν.”

is one of them.”³⁹ All of creation differs from God in this respect, that we “do not always exist in [our] own good properties.” God is life itself and being itself. We, on the other hand, rely on a power outside of ourselves to preserve us in both life and existence. The consequence of this ontological instability is that human beings, and all creatures along with us, lack the capacity to prevent our falling into non-being. Every creature, from the highest of the angels to the lowest speck of dust, shares in the utter dependence upon God that keeps it from returning to the very nothingness out of which it was created. All of creation shares in this fundamental quality and characteristic of ontological instability simply by virtue of its having been called into existence.

Despite the fact that human beings have the capacity to lose whatever is not natural, which is itself a manifestation of our natural instability, we do possess a form of immortality through sexual reproduction. As individuals, we do not have life in ourselves, but only as a gift, therefore we always retain the capacity to fall into non-being. Life in our species, on the other hand, is the closest we can come to similarity with God:

Since what is brought from nonbeing into being must also decay, whatever has a beginning will also have an end. Only the nature that is divine and above all things is suited to have no beginning or end. The creator deals wisely with this weakness in creatures and devises for them a kind of eternity by his skill. The perpetual succession of each creature into others like it, and the natural progression of one creature into the next generation of the same genus or species, always looking forward step by step in its course, renders the creation ever-shining and always existing with God the creator who sustains it. The strategy is that every creature that exists sows seed in itself according to its kind and likeness, as the ineffable decree of the creator says.⁴⁰

³⁹ CJ 6 (Maxwell 2, 16), Pusey 2, 124: “φθαρτὸν γὰρ πᾶν τὸ ποιηθὲν καὶ εἰ μήπω διέφθαρται τῇ θεῷ βουλήσει πρὸς τοῦτο διακρατούμενον, ἄφθαρτος δὲ καὶ αἰδιος κατὰ φύσιν Θεὸς, οὐ τοῖς ἐτέρου θελήμασιν ἀποκερδαίνων αὐτὸ καθάπερ ἡ κτίσις, αἰεὶ δὲ ὑπάρχων ἐν ἰδίῳ ἀγαθοῖς, ἐν οἷς ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ ἴδιον.”

⁴⁰ CJ 1.6 (Maxwell 1, 33), Pusey 1, 75: “μία δὲ ἡ πάντων ζωὴ χωροῦσα πρὸς ἕκαστον, ὥς ἂν αὐτῷ πρέπη, καὶ δυνήται μετασχεῖν. ἐπειδὴ δὲ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρενεχθὲν ἀνάγκη καὶ φθείρεσθαι, καὶ τὸ ἀρχὴν ὅλως ἔχον εἰς τέλος ἐπείγεται· μόνη γὰρ τῇ θεῷ καὶ τὰ πάντα ὑπερκειμένη φύσει, τὸ μήτε ἀπὸ

Human beings share in a kind of immortality. Properly speaking, human beings are mortal creatures because we do not have life in ourselves; rather, we receive life as a gift from God. Even though human beings do not have life in ourselves, and therefore cannot properly be said to be immortal, nevertheless, we receive a kind of immortality through reproduction. Even though as individuals we die, as a species we remain alive. Herein lies a critical distinction for the whole of Cyril’s presentation of the human story, namely that between human nature as a general category and human beings as discrete individuals. Human nature is what we all share, what makes us human and not some other creature. But human nature is expressed in individual people living individual lives and making individual decisions. This is a matter of differentiating between the universal and the particular, something that Cyril tends to do quite subtly. This distinction is critically important in the Christological debates, as we shall see in Chapter 2, but it is also something always to bear in mind as we move forward through this investigation into Cyril’s anthropology.

1.1.2.2 Composite vs. Simple: “Natural Instability”

In addition to the ontological instability we possess by virtue of our creation, human beings have another primary source of instability, grounded in the kind of creature we are: “human beings are composite and not simple by nature, mixed from two things—

ἀρχῆς ἢ ἤρχθαι τινος, καὶ ἀτελευτήτως εἶναι πρέπει· σοφίζεται τρόπον τινὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς πεποιημένοις ἀσθένειαν ὁ Δημιουργός, καὶ μηχανᾶται πῶς ἐκ τέχνης αὐτοῖς τὸ αἶδιον. αἱ γὰρ εἰς ἕκαστον ἀεὶ τῶν ὁμοίων διαδοχαί, καὶ τῶν ὁμογενῶν ἢ ὁμοειδῶν αἱ εἰς ἄλληλα μεταβάσεις φυσικαὶ πρὸς τὸν ἐφεξῆς ἀεὶ βλέπουσαι δρόμον, ἀειφανῇ μὲν τὴν κτίσιν ἐργάζονται, ἀεισύστατον δὲ τῷ πεποιηκότι τηροῦσι Θεῷ. καὶ τοῦτο ἄρα ἐστὶ τὸ τῶν ὄντων ἕκαστον ἐν ἑαυτῷ σπεῖρειν σπέρμα κατὰ γένος καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν, κατὰ τὴν ἄφατον τοῦ δημιουργοῦντος ἀπόφασιν.”

namely, a body with senses and an intellectual soul,”⁴¹ and therefore possess both physical and spiritual elements. The fact of our composite nature separates us even more from likeness to God, who is simple by nature. This characteristic is what I will call our “natural instability.” By contrast, God’s nature is one, and where there is one, there can be no turning between one thing and another. As mentioned above, the absence of turning is the principle of stability in God; likewise, the presence of such turning is the principle of instability in us. Because our nature is composite, the physical and spiritual elements that constitute us exist always in relation to one another. These elements can function in varying degrees of peace or conflict. Moreover, these relations have the capacity to change, again, turning from one to another. In keeping with what Lionel Wickham characterizes as Cyril’s amateur engagement with Aristotle,⁴² the physical body is associated with earth, whereas the spiritual soul is associated with heaven. And in spatial terms, the physical is associated with lower or inferior status, whereas the spiritual is associated with higher or superior status. For Cyril, the proper relationship between body and soul is one of submission, where the body yields to the soul’s lead.

Where there is one, as in the case of God’s simple nature, there can be no possibility of internal division or conflict of any kind. One could well ask how this assertion comports with a doctrine of the Trinity, where simplicity and multiplicity exist together. If there are three persons of the Trinity, might not there be a possibility of division or conflict? Cyril’s response to such a question rejects such a notion:

⁴¹ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 98), Pusey 1, 219: “σύνθετόν τι καὶ οὐχ ἀπλοῦν κατὰ φύσιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἐκ δύο κεκερασμένος, αἰσθητοῦ δηλονότι σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς νοερᾶς”

⁴² Lionel R. Wickham, review of “Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Herméneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 48, no. 1 (April 1997), 289.

After all, we will refuse to think that the holy and consubstantial Trinity ever has a disagreement among himself, nor is he divided into different opinions, nor does he somehow parcel out what seems good to each, whether it be the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit. They agree about everything because they are clearly from one divine nature. There is certainly always one and the same will in the entire holy Trinity.⁴³

But because human beings are of a dual nature, comprising both body and soul, we are open to the possibility of conflict, disorder, and change, simply by virtue of the presence of two elements rather than one. These elements can be well ordered or disordered.

Wherever conflict is possible, so too is disorder, and the movement from order to chaos and perhaps back to order again. This possibility for movement, for turning, is the root of our natural instability.

So, for human beings, the consequences of our ontological instability are that we tend toward death and decay, we tend toward returning to our original state of non-being. The consequences of our natural instability are conflict, moral instability, and sin. Conflict and disorder between body and soul lead to inflaming of the passions, which are the root of all sin.⁴⁴ These consequences, present from the moment of our creation, illustrate our fundamental dependence upon God and our status as contingent creatures.

1.1.3 Natural Similarity between Human Beings and God

We have just identified two fundamental ways in which human beings are unlike God.

First, we are created while God is not. Second, we possess a compound nature, while

⁴³ CJ 4.1 (Maxwell 1, 218), Pusey 1, 489: “οὐ γὰρ στασιάζουσάν ποτε καθ’ ἑαυτῆς τὴν ἁγίαν τε καὶ ὁμοούσιον Τριάδα νοήσομεν, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ εἰς διαφορὸν κατασχίζεσθαι γνώμας, ἢ καὶ καταμερίζεσθαι πῶς εἰς τὸ ἰδίᾳ δοκοῦν, ἢ τὸν Πατέρα τυχόν, ἢ τὸν Υἱόν, ἢ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, ἀλλὰ συμφέρεσθαι μὲν ἐφ’ ἅπασι, ὥς ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ δῆλον ὅτι θεότητος, ἐν αἰὶ πάντως καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ θέλημα ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ἁγίᾳ κεῖσθαι Τριάδι.”

⁴⁴ CJ 4.7 (Maxwell 1, 283), Pusey 1, 631.

God's nature is simple. These dissimilarities cannot be underestimated; they render human beings categorically unlike God. Furthermore, these differences are hard binaries; there is no range or spectrum along which one might move closer to, or further from, one extreme to another. These fundamental dissimilarities, between the eternal, simple being of the Godhead and the contingent, composite createdness of humanity, utterly dwarf the ways in which human beings can be said to be like God. Any similarities that we might identify between human beings and God must, therefore, be held lightly. With this important caveat, we can proceed to treat the two major aspects or elements proper to human nature that can be understood as rendering us like God.

How is it, then, that human beings can be said to be like God? At the beginning of this chapter, I identified two categories of human similarity to God: natural and graced. Natural similarities are those ways in which human beings possess in themselves, as a constitutive element, some commonality with God. Graced similarities, on the other hand, are given by God to human beings over and above whatever is proper to our nature. In terms of natural similarity, Burghardt and Blackwell locate the image or likeness within the soul, to the exclusion of the body. Such a commitment makes sense, given that the natural similarities are identified as reason and will, both of which are faculties of the soul, rather than the body.⁴⁵ We begin, then, with a study of these two main manifestations of similarity between human beings and God, namely reason and will. Discussion of similarities made possible by grace will follow in section *1.1.4 Graced Similarity*.

⁴⁵ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 20–21. Blackwell, *Christosis*, 76.

1.1.3.1 Reason

Cyril understands the human being to be a creature that possesses the capacity to think and reason, to anticipate and imagine. The intellectual faculty is intrinsic to the human creature; it is a constitutive element of our nature as created by God. Cyril explains, “Logos, after all, means definition. The logos of a human being (that is, the definition of humanity’s essence) is: a rational animal, mortal and receptive of intellect and knowledge.”⁴⁶ According to Burghardt, Cyril seems to be saying that human reason is “native to man; without it man would not be man.”⁴⁷ He goes on to argue that such a position would be an inadequate representation of Cyril’s thought. Because everything comes from God, human beings can be counted as rational only to the extent that we participate in God’s proper rationality.⁴⁸ And yet, despite Burghardt’s care in this regard, he does not sufficiently differentiate, as Cyril himself does, between the rational capacity and the possession of intellect and knowledge. We are created with an intellectual faculty, not with intellect itself. Cyril uses the image of light to make this point in his treatment of John 1:9. The divine light is interpreted as wisdom, intellect, reason. This light is proper to the divine nature, but the Word shares that light with whatever does not have light in itself, but is nevertheless receptive to light. “In other words, God the Word who gives life to everything, who is the life in all things that exist, both enlightens the rational animal and lavishes intelligence on those capable of intelligence.”⁴⁹ It is in the

⁴⁶ CJ 6 (Maxwell 2, 18), Pusey 2, 128: “δηλοῖ γὰρ ὁ λόγος τὸν ὅρον. λόγος μὲν γὰρ ὁ ἀνθρώπου, τουτέστιν ὁ ὅρος τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ, ζῶν λογικὸν, θνητὸν, νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν.”

⁴⁷ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 34.

⁴⁸ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 34.

⁴⁹ CJ 1.7 (Maxwell 1, 35), Pusey 1, 81: “καὶ διὰ τοῦτό φησι Καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τουτέστιν, ὁ τὰ πάντα ζωογονῶν Θεὸς Λόγος, ἡ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς οὐσι ζωὴ, καὶ τὸ λογικὸν φωτίζει ζῶν, καὶ τοῖς συνέσεως δεκτικοῖς τὴν σύνεσιν ἐπιδαπνιέεται.”

context of this discussion about light, and the divine giving and human receiving of that light, that Cyril clarifies how we know what is proper to our nature:

Attributes that belong to something by nature have their possession firmly rooted (ἐρριζωμένην), but attributes that are chosen by the will do not have this stability. For example, no one is made a rational human being by their own will. They have this from their nature. People do have it in their will, however, to be good or evil, and similarly they will love righteousness or its opposite by their own power.⁵⁰

Thus Cyril assigns rationality to human nature, which means that it is “firmly rooted” and therefore cannot be lost.⁵¹ This idea of rootedness is the key to identifying whatever is proper to nature. The fact that we are rational creatures means that we possess an innate similarity with God, who is perfectly rational, indeed reason itself. Nevertheless, it is also true that human rationality and divine rationality are not the same. God is perfect in all things; human beings are, of course, limited and imperfect. Furthermore, our ontological and natural instabilities outlined above impact our rationality in important ways, most notably by rendering our rational faculty unstable as well.

Instability, or change, defines creation’s fundamental difference from God. In the context of rationality, God is utterly stable. There is no development of reason, nor is there any loss or decay. Properly speaking, God does not learn, because learning is a change from not knowing to knowing. Human beings, on the other hand, are created with a capacity, a receptivity. According to Cyril, “Whatever is endowed with the power to reason and think is like a vessel most excellently fashioned by God, the master craftsman

⁵⁰ CJ 1.8 (Maxwell 1, 45), Pusey 1, 101: “τὰ μὲν γὰρ φύσει προσόντα τισὶν ἐρριζωμένην ἔχει τὴν κτήσιν· τὰ δὲ αἰρετὰ κατὰ θέλησιν, οὐ τοιαύτην ἔχει τὴν στάσιν, οἷον φέρε εἰπεῖν· οὐκ ἐκ βουλῆς τῆς ἰδίας τὸ ἄνθρωπος εἶναι λογικὸς κεκτήσεται τις· ἔχει γὰρ αὐτὸ παρὰ τῆς φύσεως· ἔξει δ’ οὖν ὅμως κατὰ θέλησιν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ, τὸ εἶναι πονηρὸς ἢ ἀγαθὸς, ἀγαπήσει τε ὁμοίως ἐπ’ ἐξουσίας τὸ δίκαιον ἢ τὸ ἐναντίον.”

⁵¹ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 2013, 1:45.

of all things, with the capacity to be filled with divine light.”⁵² God is light itself, whereas humanity is a creature receptive of that light. And if we are receptive of intellect and knowledge, of that divine light Cyril speaks of, then we must also possess the ability to lose, or even to reject, such intellect and knowledge as well. This negative potential will receive greater attention in Section 1.1.3.2 *The Will*. Our reason can experience decay just as easily as our physical bodies. With respect to reason, it is perhaps best to say only that our reason is merely analogous to God’s reason, and therefore we possess a qualified similarity to God. Our rationality is contingent and unstable and almost negligible in comparison to that perfect reason and wisdom and intellect that shine forth from God.

1.1.3.2 *The Will*

Human beings are also created with the capacity to direct our own actions in pursuit of outcomes we desire. This basic faculty is the will, and it belongs to our nature as human beings. The fact that we possess this intrinsic capacity makes us like God who is utterly self-directed in action and decision making. Cyril identifies the will as the other main way in which we can be said to have been made in the image of God, and after God’s likeness. For Cyril, the human creature “was capable of free choice and entrusted with the reins of its own will—that too is part of the image, since God has control over his own will.”⁵³ Boulnois has suggested that this way of describing the will is of Cyril’s own invention, and evokes the image in Plato’s *Phaedrus* of the chariot allegory. She has summarized Cyril’s ways of describing the human will as follows:

⁵² CJ 3.1 (Maxwell 1, 164), Pusey 1, 366: “καὶ πᾶν εἴ τι τὴν τοῦ λογικεύεσθαι καὶ φρονεῖν ἐπάγεται δύναμιν, σκεῦος ὥσπερ ἐστὶν εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι θεοῦ πληροῦσθαι φωτὸς, ἄριστα διηρτισμένον ὑπὸ τοῦ πάντων ἀριστοτέχνου Θεοῦ.”

⁵³ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell, 2:188), Pusey 2, 485: “δὲ αὐτοπροαίρετος ὢν, καὶ τὰς τῶν ἰδίων θελημάτων πεπιστευμένος ἡνίας· μοῖρα γὰρ τῆς εἰκόνος καὶ αὐτὴ κατεξουσιάζει γὰρ τῶν οἰκείων θελημάτων Θεός·”

The vocabulary used is rather rich and covers two types of lexical fields: on the one hand, that of decision-making power which includes choice (προαίρεσις, αἵρεσις) with the image of inclination (ρόπή), the will (θέλημα, βούλευμα), the power (ἐξουσία), and the decision (γνώμη); and on the other hand that of the autonomy of the acting subject, with terms indicating either his freedom (ἐλεύθερος) or his personal initiative (αὐτόνομος, αὐτόκλητος); finally, certain compound terms conjoin these two aspects as free will αὐτεξούσιον, αὐτοπροαίρετον or αὐθαίρετος.⁵⁴

God is utterly free to act, unencumbered by anything or anyone, but human beings are not entirely free, as we will see.

Just as reason in humanity and in God are not the same, so too does the will function differently in each. Once again, our ontological and natural instabilities affect the exercise of our will. Because God's nature is simple, God's will is also simple. God is good by nature, the Good itself. And God's goodness is steadfast and sure, whereas human beings have the capacity to increase or decrease in goodness. We have the capacity to direct our will for the sake of our bodies or our souls; we can choose what is better or what is worse. In short, God's goodness is absolute, but human goodness is relative. Despite this fundamental difference, Cyril insists that the human will remains free: "It is not true, therefore, that fate and one's natal situation control each person, as they think, and make man a doer of evil or a doer of good; on the contrary, everyone proceeds voluntarily to either, and whichever way anyone decides to go, there is nothing from necessity to prevent one from directing oneself."⁵⁵ This freedom to choose how to

⁵⁴ Boulnois, "Liberté, origine du mal et prescience divine," 63: "Le vocabulaire employé est assez riche et couvre deux types de champs lexicaux : d'une part, celui du pouvoir décisionnaire qui comprend le choix (προαίρεσις, αἵρεσις) avec l'image de l'inclination (ρόπή), la volonté (θέλημα, βούλευμα), le pouvoir (ἐξουσία), et la décision (γνώμη) ; et d'autre part celui de l'autonomie du sujet agissant, avec des termes indiquant soit sa liberté (ἐλεύθερος) soit son initiative personnelle (αὐτόνομος, αὐτόκλητος) ; enfin certains termes composés conjoignent ces deux aspects comme libre arbitre αὐτεξούσιον, αὐτοπροαίρετον ou αὐθαίρετος."

⁵⁵ FL 6.4 (Amidon, FC 118, 110), SC 372, 360: "Οὐκοῦν οὐχ εἰμαρμένη καὶ γένεσις, κατὰ τὸ αὐταῖς δοκοῦν ἐκάστῳ βραβεύουσαι, ἢ τῶν φαύλων ἐργάτην, ἢ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐραστὴν ἀποτελοῦσι τὸν ἄνθρωπον,

direct one's actions was from the very beginning, in Adam. Burghardt highlights this aspect of Cyril's thought through the *Glaphyra in Genesim*:

For man, from the beginning of his creation, had been entrusted with the reins of his own volitions (θελημάτων), with unrestricted movement towards his every desire; for the Deity is free (ἐλεύθερον) and man had been formed after Him. It was in this way, I think, and in no other that he could win admiration, if it was clear that he practiced virtue of his own accord, and that the purity of his actions was the fruit of judgment, not the result, as it were, of natural necessity which simply would not permit him to be borne beyond the good, even though he might wish to do otherwise. Man, therefore, had been equipped from the start with unrestricted, unimpeded movement of purpose (διανοίας) in all his actions.⁵⁶

Contrary to what Maxwell has argued, the freedom of the will does not occupy a peripheral place in Cyril's thought, nor is it merely "an ad hoc solution to the question of fate."⁵⁷ It is certainly true that Cyril rejects the idea of fate, saying it was invented by the devil so as to deceive human beings into believing they had no control over their actions and should neither fear punishment nor feel guilt and then repent.⁵⁸ Yet Cyril's commitment to free will is central to the whole paradigm of giving and receiving that structures Cyril's understanding of the relationship between human beings and God. The human will must be free to accept or to reject the grace of God in every circumstance, lest that grace be imposed or forced. Cyril's insistence on the freedom of the human will is unwavering, not least because of the role it will play in the second half of the chapter to follow. Moreover, the freedom of the human will is central to the ways in which human beings receive Christ through imitation of him, to be detailed in Chapter 4.

ἀλλ' ἐθελούσιοι πάντες ἐπ' ἅμω βαδίζουσι, καὶ ὅποιπερ ἂν ἐκάστῳ δοκῇ, τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἀπευθύνειν τὸ κωλῶν ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὐδέν."

⁵⁶ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 45 *Glaphyra in Genesim I* (PG 69, 24).

⁵⁷ Maxwell, "Sin in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on John," 383.

⁵⁸ FL 6.5 (Amidon, FC 118, 110), SC 372, 360.

The freedom of the will is one of the hallmarks of our similarity with God. However, because our nature is fundamentally different from God's nature, because we are unstable, our exercise of that freedom of will includes the possibility of acting in all manner of ways. We are able to choose good or evil,⁵⁹ to go to the right or to the left, to prefer virtue or vice,⁶⁰ simply because we are unstable creatures, capable of turning. God knows no turning, but is entirely stable. God's will is entirely free and utterly powerful. For example, God chooses to create, and creation happens immediately and in perfect accord with God's designs. The human will is free to choose, but its freedom is only partial because it cannot know or anticipate all of the relevant information or consequences of a given choice. The human will is not unhindered by competing and conflicting desires, whether internal or external. And the human will is powerful only to a limited degree. We can pursue desired outcomes, but not with guaranteed success. Moreover, even though the human will is free, albeit in a limited sense, the exercise of the will is not necessarily well formed. Nevertheless, because we possess free will, we are accountable for the exercise of that will, whether for good or evil.

Just as we saw with the growth and development of our rational faculties, our capacity to direct our actions also involves growth and development, a kind of moral formation. We direct our actions through the exercise of our will. Whether our actions are better or worse depends upon the degree to which they conform with the will of God. Put another way, our obedience to the commands of God manifests our willing reception and acceptance of God's will. Since God is the source of all good attributes, the degree to which human beings can manifest those attributes depends upon the degree to which we

⁵⁹ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 82), Pusey 1, 183.

⁶⁰ CJ 4.4 (Maxwell 1, 258), Pusey 1, 578.

participate in them through our relationship with God. This, again, is tied to turning. When we are oriented toward God, our good attributes shine forth; but when we are oriented away from God to something lower, our good attributes lose their brightness. God is by nature good. We are created with the capacity for goodness, but that goodness does not reside in our nature, but rather in our will.⁶¹ We choose to be good, or to be evil, and in varying degrees. When we choose to align our own will to the perfectly good will of God, we are good. When we choose to align our will in any other way, our goodness is diminished to the degree that our wills are out of line with the divine will. Hence, our goodness is both relative and derivative, whereas God's goodness is absolute.

1.1.3.3 Relations between Reason and Will

Certainly, the workings of human reason and will are interconnected. When someone chooses to act in a way that demonstrates a preference for what is better or higher (e.g. the wellbeing of the soul or spirit over against the desires of the body), Cyril characterizes that person as acting rationally, or in accord with reason. When the opposite is chosen, Cyril compares that person to the irrational beasts.⁶² The most egregious example of the potential discord between the will and reason, in Cyril's mind, is polytheism (πολυθεΐα), the idolatrous act of worshiping a variety of creatures rather than the one Creator.⁶³ The direction of influence is not merely one way. A person can know and understand perfectly well that an action is good and yet fail to act, or know that an act is bad and do it anyway. In short, God created human beings with the godlike

⁶¹ CJ 1.8 (Maxwell 1, 45), Pusey 1, 101.

⁶² FL 7.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 129–30), SC 392, 32.

⁶³ CJ (Maxwell 2, 154), Pusey 2, 417.

faculties of reason and will, but our exercise of these faculties remains subject to the instabilities inherent in our status as composite creatures. Despite the fact that these similarities are rather tenuous in themselves, they are, nevertheless, of critical importance in Cyril's anthropology. It is God's care and concern for the weakness of these qualities, combined with the ontological and natural instabilities discussed above, that drive the *oikonomia* as a whole.

1.1.4 Graced Similarity between Human Beings and God

Despite the fact that human beings possess a certain qualified similarity with God by virtue of our nature as rational creatures who direct our own actions, the degree of likeness that we share with God is rather minimal. This similarity is always overshadowed by the reality of our status as creatures with composite natures and the inherent instability that attends each of these characteristics. Earlier in the chapter we raised the question of interpretation of the assertion in Genesis 1 that human beings are created in the image of God and according to God's likeness. We concluded that Cyril does not follow a rigid differentiation of these terms, but nevertheless employs a conceptual distinction present in Irenaeus between those similarities that are natural and therefore permanent, and those which are supernatural and therefore ours solely by God's grace. We have traced human nature's dissimilarity from God, as well as our natural similarity to God. We turn now to our extra-ordinary and super-natural similarity to God. These similarities are not proper to our nature and are therefore not "firmly rooted" and constitutive aspects of our being; these similarities are, rather, purely the result of God's gift of grace.

1.1.4.1 The “Image of God”

Cyril’s *Commentary on John* includes extensive treatment of the creation of human beings in the image of God. It will be important to bear in mind that much of his discussion is intimately tied to the idea that the resurrection of Jesus inaugurates a new creation. Cyril routinely refers to the Son as the one through whom all things were made (Jn 1:3). John’s Gospel features the story of the risen Jesus breathing on his disciples (Jn 20:22), evoking that scene in Genesis where God breathes into the first human being the breath of life (Gen 2:7). It will also be important to recall Cyril’s paradigm of five kinds of images from earlier in this chapter. We identified the first kind of image as that between the Father and the Son within the Trinity, based on an “identity of nature in identical properties.”⁶⁴ We also assigned the fifth kind of image, the weakest and most generic variety of image, to those ways in which human beings are like God by virtue of our nature as rational and self-directed creatures. The second, third, and fourth kinds of image, grouped together into the category of graced human likeness to God, will receive treatment here.

The account of the creation of human beings found in Genesis 1 begins with the words, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness” (Gen 1:26). Within the narrative, however, there are no details or explanations as to what this phrase might mean. In order to interpret this verse, Cyril turns to the second creation story and to passage where God breathes into the newly formed man the “breath of life” (Gen 2:7). Cyril rejects the idea that human beings are naturally or properly “in the image of God,” preferring instead to argue that the image referred to is something external to the human

⁶⁴ CJ 2.8 (Maxwell 1, 152), Pusey 1, 339: “τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ταυτότητος ἐν ἀπαραλλάκτοις τοῖς ἰδιώμασιν”

creature. Daniel Keating points to Boulnois's work in highlighting the extent to which Cyril focuses on this verse: "Cyril is more interested in this text than any other ancient Christian writer, and therefore that 'we are then in the presence of a major theme in the anthropology of Cyril.'"⁶⁵ Cyril's insistence on this point that the image of God is extrinsic relies on his understanding of the variety of ways the word "image" might be used, as well as some of the limits to our understanding of how human beings can be said to be like God, especially considering the great chasm of unlikeness separating us from God.

According to Cyril, the human being is created whole and entire; only then is the divine image impressed as an added, non-essential feature. In this interpretation, Cyril deliberately counters the teachings of some of his contemporaries who argued that the breath of God became the human soul. Cyril claims that such teachers "catechize falsely."⁶⁶ He goes on to clarify his own position:

Rather, after the creature was ensouled, or rather after it arrived at the condition of its complete nature through both (I mean soul and body), then, like a stamp of his own nature, the creator fixed upon it the Holy Spirit, that is, the breath of life, through which he shaped it into its archetypal beauty. It was completed in the image of its creator and made constant in every form of virtue by the power of the Holy Spirit, who dwelt in it.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Keating, "Divinization in Cyril," 155, citing Marie-Odile Boulnois, "Le soufflé et l'Esprit," 30: "Nous sommes donc en présence d'un thème majeur de l'anthropologie de Cyrille."

⁶⁶ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 187), Pusey 2, 484: "ψευδῇ κατηχέτω"

⁶⁷ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 187), Pusey 2, 485: "ψυχωθέντι δὲ, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ πρὸς ιδιότητα τῆς τελείας φύσεως δι' ἀμφοῖν ἀφιγμένῳ, ψυχῆς δὴ λέγω καὶ σώματος, καθάπερ τινὰ σφραγίδα τῆς ἑαυτοῦ φύσεως ἐνέπηξεν ὁ Δημιουργὸς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, τουτέστι, τὴν πνοὴν τῆς ζωῆς, δι' ἧς πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον διεπλάττετο κάλλος, ἀπετελεῖτο δὲ κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος, πρὸς πᾶσαν ιδέαν ἀρετῆς δυνάμει τοῦ ἐνοικισθέντος αὐτῷ διακρατούμενος Πνεύματος."

Only when the Holy Spirit is breathed into the human being can it be said to be “in the image of God.” Keating rightly insists that the image of God is a gift that requires the recipient to guard against its loss through neglect or disdain.⁶⁸

Cyril’s argument for the non-essential character of the divine image in the human person is critical for two main reasons. The first is Cyril’s insistence, following Colossians 1:15 and Hebrews 1:3, that the only natural image of God inheres within the Trinity. Cyril repeatedly uses the image-archetype paradigm in his anti-Arian commentary on John 1:1 to argue for the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father.⁶⁹ And the language of the Son as true image of the Father recurs frequently in *Festal Letters* throughout his episcopate. He mainly does this with doxological language:

The Father therefore has begotten the Son from himself, light from light, image and impress, and radiance of his own subsistence,⁷⁰

and

the Son, being the very image, the impress of God the Father, the reflection of his glory, begotten from him by nature, distinguished by equality in every respect, coexistent and coeternal, equal in power and activity, equal in renown and sharing the same throne⁷¹

and

the Word who is the image, the reflection of [the Father’s] glory, the coeternal Son who is enthroned with him and distinguished by equality and similarity with him in every respect.⁷²

⁶⁸ Keating, “Divinization in Cyril,” 155.

⁶⁹ CJ 1.1–3 (Maxwell 1, 6–19), Pusey 1, 16–44.

⁷⁰ FL 11.8 (Amidon, FC 118, 213), SC 392, 304: “Γεγέννηκε τοίνυν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ τὸν Υἱὸν ὁ Πατήρ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, εἰκόνα καὶ χαρακτῆρα, καὶ ἀπαύγασμα τῆς ἰδίας ὑποστάσεως, καθὰ γέγραπται.”

⁷¹ FL 17.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 62), SC 434, 264: “Αὐτὸ γὰρ ὑπάρχων τὸ εἶδος, ὁ χαρακτῆρ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρός, ὁ Υἱὸς τὸ ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ φύσιν γεγεννημένος, καὶ τῇ κατὰ πᾶν ὁτιοῦν ἰσότητι διαπρέπων, συνυφεστηκώς τε καὶ συναΐδιος ἰσοσθενὴς καὶ ἰσουργός, ἰσοκλεὴς καὶ ὁμόθρονος.”

⁷² FL 27.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 171–72), PG 77, 937A: “Ὁ...Λόγος, ἡ εἰκὼν, τὸ ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, ὁ σύνθρονος καὶ συναΐδιος Υἱός, καὶ τῇ κατὰ πᾶν ὁτιοῦν ἰσότητι καὶ ὁμοιότητι διαπρέπων.”

An exception to Cyril's preference for doxological language to express the image-archetype paradigm appears in his *Festal Letter 13* (425CE), where Cyril refers to the coin in the fish's mouth (Mt 17:26-27) to argue that Christ is "the true stater, the image of the great king, the Son that is, the imprint and reflection of the Father's substance."⁷³ Clearly human beings cannot be understood to be the image of God in the same way that the Son is the image of the Father, because that first of Cyril's kinds of images that refers to the "identity of nature in identical properties,"⁷⁴ which Burghardt associates with the divine begetting.⁷⁵

The second reason Cyril argues for the super-natural character of the image of God has to do with the relative strength of inherent versus additional qualities: "When something does not arise from a nature, but instead is added on from outside, is there not always the possibility of losing it?...whatever is not stabilized by natural laws is not totally assured against loss."⁷⁶ If the divine image is added to the human being after his creation is complete, as something distinct from his proper nature, then it can be lost or removed at some later point. Koen takes issue with Burghardt's argument that Cyril's interpretation and understanding of the "image of God" derives from conflicting traditions, namely those of Irenaeus and Origen. Cyril's insistence that the image of God is lost due to sin, but is restored in Christ, puts him in line with Irenaeus' notion of recapitulation. Koen rejects Burghardt's assertion of dependence on Origen's idea that

⁷³ FL 13.3 (Amidon, FC 127, 9), SC 434, 102: "Ὁ γάρ τοι στατήρ ὁ ἀληθινός, ἡ τοῦ μεγάλου Βασιλέως εἰκών, τουτέστιν ὁ Υἱός, ὁ χαρακτήρ καὶ τὸ ἀπαύγασμα τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς"

⁷⁴ CJ 2.8 (Maxwell 1, 152), Pusey 1, 339: "τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ταυτότητος ἐν ἀπαραλλάκτοις τοῖς ιδιώμασιν"

⁷⁵ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 10.

⁷⁶ UC (McGuckin, 81), SC 97, 382–84: "Τὸ δὲ μὴ φύσει προσόν, ἔξωθεν δὲ μᾶλλον εἰσπεποιημένον, οὐκ ἀπόβλητον γένοιτ' ἂν, κατὰ γε τὸ ἐγγωροῦν;...Οὐ γὰρ ἀνύποπτον εἰς ἀποβολὴν ὃ μὴ φυσικοῖς ἐρήρεται νόμοις." Although the original context for this quote is a discussion of Christ's natural qualities and their christological implications, the principle readily applies to the first man.

the image of God cannot be lost, but only damaged.⁷⁷ Koen is correct to challenge this latter part of the argument referring to Origen; Cyril is very careful in his construction of the “image of God” to insist absolutely that the image can and was lost due to sin. I would argue that, while Cyril does seem to be heir to Irenaeus insofar as the image can be lost through sin, Cyril also insists that the restoration of the image through the return of the Holy Spirit given by Christ is only part of the process. As we shall see later, Cyril is unsatisfied with mere recapitulation; rather he insists upon a human *telos* that far surpasses the pre-Fall human condition. What is critical to Cyril’s argument for the image of God as something that can be lost is the significant role that the image (or rather, the absence of the image) plays in Cyril’s understanding of sin, to be addressed more fully in Chapter 2.

1.1.4.2 *Impact/Consequences/Purpose of the Image*

I have laid out the ways in which human nature is fundamentally unstable, first by the fact of our createdness, and second by the fact of our compound nature. This fundamental instability could only be overcome through a God-given remedy that addressed the limitations and weaknesses inherent in our nature:

A human being is an animal that is both rational and composite, of a soul, that is, and this perishable earthly flesh. When humanity was made and brought into being by God, it did not have incorruptibility or indestructibility from its own nature. These belong essentially to God alone. It was sealed by the Spirit of life, and by its relation to the divine, it gained the good that is above its nature. “He breathed into his face,” it says, “the breath of life; and the man became a living soul.”⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Lars Koen, *The Saving Passion: Incarnational and Soteriological Thought in Cyril of Alexandria’s Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1991), 45, referring to Burghardt, 154–55.

⁷⁸ CJ 1.9 (Maxwell 1, 62–63), Pusey 1, 138: “ἔστι τοίνυν λογικὸν μὲν, σύνθετον δὲ ὁμῶς ζῶον ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἐκ ψυχῆς δηλονότι καὶ τῆς ἐπικήρου ταυτησὶ καὶ γῆνης σαρκός. ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐπεποιήτο παρὰ

The gift of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit's continued indwelling, give the human creature that stability that is naturally foreign to it. God breathed the breath of life into the human being in order to make humanity similar to God in terms of divine incorruptibility and indestructibility.

Humanity is, by nature, both corruptible and destructible. The only possibility of overcoming these natural characteristics is by God's will and pleasure. The divine image was never a constitutive element of the human creature. Rather, it was a gift intended to preserve human beings in life and stability, preventing us from falling from existence back into non-existence.

With the intent that what was brought from nonexistence into being may not, by falling back into its original condition, pass into nonexistence again but rather be preserved continually—since this was the aim of the creator—God makes [humanity] a partaker of his own nature. “God breathed into his face the breath of life,” that is, the Spirit of the Son, since he is life along with the Father, holding all things in existence. The beings that are receptive of life “move and live” in him, as Paul says.⁷⁹

Because only God is unoriginate and life itself, the human being could only remain in existence through the grace of participation in God's own natural properties. The gift of the breath of life is the means by which this participation occurred.

Cyril's description of the image of God as something impressed upon the human being corresponds to the second of five kinds of images, which uses the metaphor of a

Θεοῦ, καὶ παρήχθη πρὸς γένεσιν, οὐκ ἔχων ἐξ οἰκείας φύσεως τό τε ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον· μόνῳ γὰρ ταῦτα πρόσσεστιν οὐσιωδῶς τῷ Θεῷ· κατεσφραγίζετο τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ζωῆς, σχέσει τῇ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον τὸ ὑπὲρ τὴν φύσιν ἀποκερδαίνων ἀγαθόν· Ἐνεφύσησε γὰρ, φησὶν, εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.”

⁷⁹ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 187), Pusey 2, 484: “ἵνα τοίνυν τὸ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος παροισθὲν εἰς γένεσιν μὴ πρὸς τὴν οἰκείαν ὑπονοστήσαν ἀρχὴν, πάλιν οἷχεται πρὸς τὸ μηδὲν, σώζεται δὲ μᾶλλον διηνεκῶς· οὗτος γὰρ ἦν ὁ τοῦ κτίσαντος σκοπός· μέτοχον αὐτὸν τῆς ἰδίας φύσεως ἀποτελεῖ Θεός. Ἐνεφύσησε γὰρ εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς,” τουτέστι, τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Υἱοῦ, καὶ γὰρ ἐστὶν αὐτὸς ἡ ζωὴ μετὰ Πατρός, συνέχων εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα. κινεῖται γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ τε καὶ ζῇ τὰ ζωῆς δεκτικὰ, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Παύλου φωνήν.”

wax seal. While the natures of the image and its archetype are different, as is the case between God and humanity, nevertheless, there is a precise representative likeness. The wax receives the imprint of the stamp and conforms to its characteristics. Similarly, human nature receives the image of God like a stamp and takes on the form of God, so to speak, insofar as human nature receives incorruptibility and stability that are external to our nature.

Not only does the gift of the Holy Spirit, the image of God impressed upon human nature, preserve humanity in life and stability, protecting us from death and corruption, it also preserves us in peace, wisdom, and virtue.

But since the Creator wanted him to be [imperishable and incorruptible], he engraved in the living thing, in addition to imperishability, knowledge of everything good and indeed an appetite for virtue. Then, giving him the power to do what he chose, he granted him the glory befitting beings that are free. For it was necessary, necessary indeed, that virtue should appear in us as a free choice.⁸⁰

The principle of stability in human beings is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Whatever in us is unstable or changeable is made constant through the grace of the Spirit's presence. That means that our rationality, by which we are capable of receiving and growing in knowledge and wisdom, and our will, through which we direct our own actions, are strengthened beyond their natural limitations by the Holy Spirit within us. In addition, the respective needs and desires of body and soul are held in a relationship of peace, itself a fruit of this gift of the Spirit. All of this strengthening benefit of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is possible only when it is welcomed; the Holy Spirit does not impose itself or its presence upon human beings.

⁸⁰ FL 15.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 39), SC 434, 198: "Ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ περ ὧδε ἔχειν αὐτὸν ὁ Δημιουργὸς ἤθελε, πρὸς τῷ ἀνωλέθρῳ, καὶ παντὸς εἵδησιν ἀγαθοῦ καὶ μὴν καὶ ἔφεσιν τὴν εἰς ἀρετὴν ἐνεχάραττε τῷ ζῳῳ. Εἶτα δρᾶν ἐπ' ἐξουσίαις ὅπερ ἂν ἔλοιτο διδούς, τὴν ἐλευθέρους πρέπουσαν ἐχαρίζετο δόξαν. Ἔδει γάρ, ἔδει προαιρετικὴν ἐν ἡμῖν ὀρᾶσθαι τὴν ἀρετήν."

The role of the Holy Spirit in preserving human nature in virtue seems to correspond to the third of Cyril's definitions of the image, which is characterized by "habits, manners, way of life and inclination toward things that are good or bad."⁸¹ When our manner of life, the exercise of our will, our concrete choices are aligned with the goodness of God, human beings more clearly reflect the One whose image we bear. And the reverse is also true; our capacity to image our Creator is diminished as our wills turn aside to one direction or the other.

The point of this gift is to counteract the consequences of our created nature. Whatever comes into existence tends naturally toward decay to the point of ceasing to exist. Whatever receives life from outside of itself is naturally mortal and tends toward death. The gift of the Holy Spirit makes human beings like God in ways that are supernatural: we become ontologically stable, meaning that we no longer tend toward non-existence, and we become immortal, meaning that death is no longer a menace. The gift of the Holy Spirit also strengthens our reason and our will, by preserving us in wisdom and virtue. The Holy Spirit makes us as similar to God as is possible for a creature to be. We are made stable only by grace because stability is foreign to our nature. This stability is not ours by nature, which means that it is not firmly rooted in us. It is a gift, and as such, can be lost or misused, disdained or rejected. The divine image, then, is the remedy to each aspect of weakness that is proper to our nature. And it is given because God desires the wellbeing of the human creature.

⁸¹ CJ 2.8 (Maxwell 1, 152–53), Pusey 1.339: "ἡθῆ καὶ τρόπους καὶ πολιτείαν καὶ θέλημα τὸ ἐπὶ τισὶν ἀγαθοῖς ἢ φαύλοις."

1.1.4.3 *Keeping the Image*

The last kind of image from Cyril's list that we have to address is "that of dignity, honor, glory and excellence, as for example if someone were to succeed another in command and do with authority everything that is proper and fitting for the predecessor."⁸² This kind of image suggests both a destiny and a reward. The kind of military or political succession Cyril refers to in his definition, because it is based on "excellence" and the rest, could be seen as a reward for excellent service. And yet, it also seems to gesture toward the possibility that these qualities of "dignity, honor, glory and excellence" might always have been intended for the successor, as in the case of a person who is being groomed for succession. Cyril would have had personal experience of this kind of preparation; his own uncle Theophilus had prepared Cyril to follow as bishop, just as Theophilus had been groomed for succession (though not immediately, due to Theophilus' age) by Athanasius.⁸³

In the section that follows, we will explore in greater detail the purpose for which God created humanity, its *telos*. For now, it will be enough to suggest that for a human being to be like God in terms of "dignity, honor, glory and excellence" would certainly require God's grace on our behalf, as we possess no such qualities in our proper nature. Moreover, Cyril's reference to a predecessor in such qualities gestures to the idea that surpassing our nature relies on the guidance of an exemplar and our own imitation of that figure, namely the incarnate Word. The graced likeness to God that elevates our nature

⁸² CJ 2.8 (Maxwell 1, 152–53), Pusey 1.339–40: "καὶ τὸ ἐν ἀξιώματι καὶ τιμῇ καὶ δόξῃ καὶ ὑπεροχῇ, ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις τυχὸν τήν τινος ἀρχὴν διαδέχοιτο, καὶ πάντα δρώῃ μετ' ἐξουσίας, ἅπερ ἂν ἐκεῖνῳ προσήκοι τε καὶ πρέποι."

⁸³ Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, The Early Church Fathers (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 4–6.

beyond itself is the culmination of what it means to have been created in the image of God. Not only do we persist in existence and in life, not only do we excel in wisdom and virtue, but we are raised to the heights of glory and honor proper only to the godhead. Such elevation is not ours by right. It is ours only by the grace of God freely received and accepted and kept by the person who loves God over all else.

At the conclusion of the creation of the first man and the giving of the image, God issues a prohibition and a warning. All of the trees are available for food, with the sole exception being the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The penalty for disregarding the prohibition is death (Gen 2:16–17). Put another way, God offers the condition for retaining the image, along with the consequence of its loss. “Thus God, the most excellent craftsman, after he completed the earthly rational creature, gave him the saving command. He was in the garden, as it is written, still keeping the gift, and was illustrious in the divine image of his maker through the Holy Spirit who dwelt in him.”⁸⁴ As we saw earlier, it was absolutely critical for Cyril to identify the “image of God” as something extrinsic to human nature, because only those things that are added can also be subtracted. The loss of the image of God is how Cyril frames the first transgression and its consequences. Such loss is possible because it is never the case that the presence of the Holy Spirit is forced upon humanity. The human will is always free to receive or not to receive that gift. So long as human beings freely choose to receive and keep the gift, the Holy Spirit remains as a welcome guest and bestower of its attending benefits.

Because humanity does not have life in itself, but is preserved in life through the stability

⁸⁴ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 81), Pusey 1, 183: “οὕτω τὸ ἐπὶ γῆς λογικὸν ἐξαρτίσας ζῶον ὁ ἀριστοτέχνης Θεὸς, ἐντολὴν ἐδίδου τὴν σώζουσαν· καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ, καθὰ γέγραπται, διαφυλάττων ἔτι τὸ δοθὲν, καὶ τῇ θείᾳ τοῦ πεποιηκότος διαπρεπῆς εἰκόνι διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικισθέντος Ἁγίου Πνεύματος·”

of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, the loss of the image does, indeed, result in the loss of life. And because the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the grace by which human beings share in God's incorruptibility and indestructibility, the human being must preserve the gift of the Holy Spirit in order to keep the image of God clear and distinct.

1.2 THE HUMAN *TELOS* AS REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE

The Genesis narratives offer few details as to God's purpose for human beings. In the first account, God creates each physical feature and its respective flora and fauna in an orderly fashion and declares that all of creation is "very good" (Gen 1:31). At the conclusion of the creation of human beings, God blesses them and enjoins them to exercise dominion over creation. This account closes with God's rest and God's hallowing of the Sabbath day. Apart from specific reference to the Incarnation, Cyril's discussions of the purpose for which God created human beings generally focus on the twin themes of dominion and Sabbath rest.

1.2.1 Dominion

As mentioned earlier in section *1.1.1 Image and Likeness in Cyril's Thought*, I have interpreted Cyril's definition of image as "dignity, honor, glory and excellence"⁸⁵ as referring to some kind of eschatological exaltation. Burghardt offers a different interpretation that refers rather to human dominion or sovereignty over creation.⁸⁶ Given

⁸⁵ CJ 2.8 (Maxwell 1, 153), Pusey 1, 339.

⁸⁶ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 52.

God's proper and ultimate sovereignty, and God's command to the first human being to rule over creation, Burghardt sees dominion as an important category of human similarity to God. His interpretation presents a challenge; on the one hand, dominion is given via God's command in Gen 1:28, and so implies a supernatural, extrinsic quality, but on the other hand, Burghardt groups dominion alongside reason and will, thereby implying a natural, constitutive quality. He appears to base this grouping on a brief quote from Cyril's *Letter to Calosirius*: "Therefore, it is inasmuch as he is a rational animal, a lover of virtue, and earth's sovereign (ἀρχικόν) that man is said to have been made in God's image."⁸⁷ I contend that dominion must be a similarity made possible by grace, first, because rule over creation is given to human beings by God in the context of a blessing and a command, and second, because dominion can be lost, thereby revealing its unrootedness.

For Cyril, dominion or sovereignty as a likeness to God is connected to the will and forms part of his argument against fate; if human beings have been given dominion over the earth, surely we can exercise dominion over our own lives and choices. In this regard, Burghardt's characterization of dominion as a similarity to God is correct. However, Wickham points out that this reference to human sovereignty appears also in Cyril's *Answers to Tiberius*, where it is explicitly implicated in loss. Cyril writes that such "likeness to God existed at the beginning, because it has been given to man to rule the inhabitants of the earth" but that those who live sinful lives "threw away that

⁸⁷ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 53. Pusey 3, 605: "οὐκοῦν κατὰ τὸ εἶναι ζῷον λογικὸν καὶ καθὸ φιλάρετον καὶ ἀρχικὸν τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἐν εἰκόνι Θεοῦ πεποιῆσθαι λέγεται." Wickham offers that this letter is difficult to date, but links it to Cyril's *Answers to Tiberius* and *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* (431–434) through common subject matter. Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*, xxx–xxxī.

distinctive and august beauty.”⁸⁸ Moreover, Cyril refers to humanity’s subjection to the devil after the Fall, and to Satan’s albeit temporary title of “ruler of this world.”⁸⁹ In Chapter 2, we will delve into Cyril’s understanding of the first transgression and its consequences, one of which is the loss of humanity’s rule over creation and the devil’s usurping of that dominion. It will be helpful to bear in mind that Burghardt’s discussion of dominion includes minimal discussion of the role of Satan, a feature that occupies a significant place in Cyril’s thought. Because I view dominion as a graced similarity, and therefore as an aspect of the “image of God,” I argue that humanity’s rule over creation in Eden is a type of a greater rule yet to come. Indeed, such a suggestion may be implied in Genesis 1:26, where God’s decision to create human beings intimately links the image and likeness language to that of rule over the creatures of sea, air, and land.

1.2.2 Sabbath Rest

The origin story of the Sabbath observance offers a mere gesture toward a divine purpose for human beings. It is in this first account of creation that we encounter the notion of God creating human beings in the image of God. There is a hint, then, that if God works for six days in creation, rests on the seventh day and hallows it, then human observance of the Sabbath may be an image of the divine pattern. Human work, therefore, is neither futile, nor incessant. In the second account of creation, God makes the first human being

⁸⁸ AT 10 (Wickham, 167), Pusey 3, 593–94: “τὸ ἀρχικὸν τὴν ὁμοίωσιν τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν ἐνεῖναι... τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ. δέδοται γὰρ αὐτῷ τὸ ἄρχειν ἀπάντων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς... ἀποβαλεῖν τὸ οὕτω σεπτὸν καὶ ἐξαίρετον κάλλος.”

⁸⁹ See for example CJ 10.1 (Maxwell 2, 209), Pusey 2, 531: “ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου,” and CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 254), Pusey 2, 625: “Ἀρχοντα... τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου.”

and then places him within the garden to cultivate and care for it. The image of cultivation suggests the agricultural cycle of preparing soil, planting seed, caring for plants, and finally harvesting the crops. This imagery reinforces the role of rest, both for the earth and for the gardener. Again, this way of presenting the first human being suggests that his work will bear fruit and will end in a period of rest. The creation narratives themselves offer little beyond these hints.

Cyril spends considerably more attention on the re-institution of the Sabbath observance as found in the book of Exodus. In *Festal Letter 6* (418), Cyril takes up the commandments regarding the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8–11 and Deut 5:12–15) and presents two spiritual interpretations of the literal requirements for Sabbath observance. He begins, not with the commandment to keep Sabbath itself, but with a discussion of the reason for the commandment. Cyril explains that the period of Israelite residence in Egypt was characterized by forgetfulness. The Israelites “did not retain even the memory, as is not surprising, that they were of Hebrew stock and descended from Abraham. They forgot their ancestral customs, denied the piety of their forebears, and went over to the false worship of the natives.”⁹⁰ This movement into idolatry necessitated correction, and Cyril explains that observance of the Sabbath was meant to remind the Israelites that the sun, moon, and all the other objects of their worship had been created, and that there was, therefore, a single Creator. God commands the Israelites “to conform themselves to the Creator” by keeping Sabbath.⁹¹

⁹⁰ FL 6.11 (Amidon, FC 118, 119), SC 372, 384: “ὅτι μὲν Ἑβραῖοι τὸ γένος εἰσὶ, καὶ τῆς Ἀβραὰμ ἐξέφυσαν ρίζης, οὐδὲ ἐν μόναις ἔτι, κατὰ τὸ εἶκος, διέσφζον μνήμαις. Ἐπιλαθόμενοι δὲ τῶν πατρίων ἐθῶν, καὶ τὴν προγονικὴν εὐσέβειαν ἀρνησάμενοι, πρὸς τὰς τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ψευδολατρίας ἐτράποντο.”

⁹¹ FL 6.11 (Amidon, FC 118, 119–20), SC 372, 386: “συσχηματίζεσθαι κελεύει τῷ Δημιουργῷ”

The second, and more significant, interpretation in Cyril's mind refers to the eschatological rest of the saints. And here is where we find Cyril's understanding of God's purpose for human beings, at least insofar as it is revealed in Scripture. In short, human beings were created for eternal fellowship with God in the heavenly Jerusalem: "The Sabbath inactivity, then, and the putting aside of the work itself, signifies the repose of the saints at the end. When indeed they have shaken off their labor, washed off the perspiration of the contests, and leaped up to the city above, the heavenly Jerusalem, they will pass all their time in rest and enjoyment."⁹² In his *Commentary on John*, Cyril expresses nearly the same idea, making more explicit the connection between the Sabbath introduced in the Creation story and the eschatological Sabbath: "[The saints] too then, in imitation of the creator who rested and ceased from the labors (so to speak) of creation, will rest from the toils of this life, ascending to the enjoyment that will be given by Christ at the end of the ages."⁹³

For Cyril, each of the details about prohibited activity that appear throughout the Old Testament (physical labor, leaving Jerusalem, traveling, cooking food, carrying burdens) offers a piece of truth in type. So, for example, preparing food in advance of the Sabbath points to a person's last reception of the Eucharist before death (*euodion*),⁹⁴ while staying within the gates of Jerusalem signifies the ultimate stability that will prevent a subsequent fall into sin and keep a person within the heavenly city. This idea

⁹² FL 6.11 (Amidon, FC 118, 120), SC 372, 386: "Σημαίνει τοίνυν ἡ κατὰ τὸ Σάββατον ἀργία καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων ἀπόθεσις τὴν ἐσομένην ἐπὶ τέλει τῶν ἀγίων κατάπανσιν· ὅτε δὴ πόνον ἀποσεισάμενοι, καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τοῖς σταδίοις ἰδρώτας ἀπονισάμενοι, πρὸς τε τὴν ἄνω πόλιν ἀναπηδήσαντες, τὴν ἐπουράνιον Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἐν ἀναπαύσει καὶ τρυφῇ τὸν ἅπαντα διοίσουσι χρόνον·"

⁹³ CJ 4.6 (Maxwell 1, 278), Pusey 1, 620: "καταλύσαντα τοίνυν, καὶ μονονουχὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ δημιουργίᾳ πόνων καταλήξαντα τὸν Δημιουργὸν ἀπομιμούμενοι καὶ αὐτοὶ, τῶν ἐν τῷδε τῷ βίῳ καμάτων ἀποπαύσονται, πρὸς τρυφὴν ἀναβαίνοντες τὴν ἐπὶ τέλει τῶν αἰώνων δοθησομένην παρὰ Χριστοῦ."

⁹⁴ Amidon, *Festal Letters*, 1–12, 120n59.

appears also in the *Commentary on John*, where Cyril refers to the instruction to remain in one's tent standing in for remaining within Jerusalem.⁹⁵ And finally, Cyril counters those who argue against an eschatological rest by appealing to Hebrews 4 and its references to Sabbath as instituted in creation and as referenced in the entry of the Israelites into Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. The rest promised by God is not merely the historical Promised Land of the Exodus narrative, but rather that which the Promised Land signifies, namely the “respite to be given to the saints at the time when the Savior of all will come from heaven in the glory of his Father, as is written, and will give the saints their gifts.”⁹⁶ It is here that Cyril's fifth kind of image, that of “dignity, honor, glory and excellence” is seen most plainly in terms of reward.

Without explicit reference to Christ, perhaps the most that we can say about how Cyril understands the *telos* of the human being is to say we will become like God in a way that is made permanent, in contrast to that original likeness that could be lost. That seems to mean, in part, that we will cease from our earthly labors and enjoy the Sabbath rest of heaven. That rest can be eternal only because our participation in it must be superior to whatever rest was enjoyed in Eden. Cyril's interpretation of the instructions to remain in one's tent or within the gates of Jerusalem indicates that he discerns a difference between the Edenic state and an eschatological one. In that original Edenic state, humanity's receipt of the Holy Spirit, and therefore of the Spirit's stability, seems to have been provisional, or otherwise incomplete. At the end, however, that original state must be surpassed, that receipt of the Holy Spirit must be made permanent, must

⁹⁵ CJ 4.6 (Maxwell 1, 279), Pusey 1, 623.

⁹⁶ FL 6.11 (Amidon, FC 118, 122), SC 372, 390–92: “καὶ τῆς κατ’ ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ τοῖς ἁγίοις δοθησομένης ἀναπαύλης, καθ’ ὃν ἂν ὁ πάντων Σωτὴρ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ παραγένηται ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, καθὼς γέγραπται, καὶ διαδίδωσι τοῖς ἁγίοις τὰ γέρα.”

become “rooted,” so that humanity might not fall again into sin. In Chapter 3, we shall examine how Cyril understands the human *telos* as revealed in the Incarnation of the Son of God. Now we turn to Cyril’s thought on fallen human nature.

2.0 FALLEN HUMAN NATURE

This chapter investigates how Cyril understands the first transgression, its causes, and its impact. The problem of sin and its origin is itself an important question. Indeed, Boulnois has taken up this question as it appears especially in Cyril's *Glaphyra* on Genesis and *Against Julian*. Boulnois highlights the problems raised by the narrative, including God's creation of Eve, who is credited with Adam's downfall, God's command to keep away from the source of knowledge, and God's jealous reaction of casting the first couple out of the garden. Cyril also adds to these objections from the perspective of those who presume the goodness of God and therefore the impossibility of God's being the source of evil.⁹⁷ As we shall soon see, the possibility of sin is located primarily in the kind of creature we are, inherently unstable and yet self-directing. In short, Adam fell because he freely chose to incline in the direction of disobedience rather than obedience, a turning that is possible because human nature is ontologically and naturally unstable. Indeed, Boulnois concludes,

This oscillation, the source of sin, is explained by the instability which derives from the very status of a creature and constitutes the fundamental difference between man and God. The transcendent Being possesses goodness by nature; or rather its nature is Good, so that it is firmly rooted in it. On the contrary, man is

⁹⁷ Boulnois, "Liberté, origine du mal et prescience divine," 62–63.

not fixed immutably in the good, since the latter is the fruit not of its nature, but of its choice.⁹⁸

After accounting for the possibility of sin, we will turn to the consequences of sin as Cyril understands them, namely God's cursing of the first couple and their expulsion from the garden of Eden, which in turn fully exposed them to the assaults of the devil. Yet, despite these grave consequences, Cyril highlights God's mercy toward fallen humanity. This mercy is expressed through the gift of revelation, first in the Scriptures, taken up in the last section of this chapter, and finally in the Incarnation, to be addressed in Chapter 3. In no way does Cyril conceive of the *oikonomia* as a divine response to human sin; rather, it was in place from the very beginning of creation, anticipating and preparing for the eventuality of the human fall into sin. Cyril sees this plan revealed throughout the Scriptures, though in type and shadow.

2.1 THE TRANSGRESSION NARRATIVE AND CYRIL'S EXPOSITION

For Cyril, the command that God gives to stay away from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a "saving command" (ἐντολὴν τὴν σώζουσιν), one given for the sake of the wellbeing of the first human beings: "Thus God, the most excellent craftsman, after he completed the earthly rational creature, gave him the saving command. He was in the garden, as it is written, still keeping the gift, and was illustrious in the divine image of his

⁹⁸ Boulnois, "Liberté, origine du mal et prescience divine," 74: "Cette oscillation, source du péché, s'explique par l'instabilité foncière qui provient du statut même de créature et qui constitue l'écart fondamental entre l'homme et Dieu. L'Être transcendant possède la bonté par nature; ou plutôt sa nature est le Bien, de sorte que celle-ci est enracinée en lui de manière stable. Au contraire, l'homme n'est pas fixé immuablement dans le bien, puisque celui-ci est le fruit non de sa nature, mais de son choix."

maker through the Holy Spirit who dwelt in him.”⁹⁹ The command is saving because keeping it was the means by which human beings retained the image of God, and enjoyed the stabilizing and strengthening power of the Holy Spirit. Keating has chosen to render ἐντολὴν τὴν σώζουσαν as “the commandment that preserves” for a two-fold reason. First, keeping the commandment preserves the human beings in life and incorruptibility because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And second, it highlights the human agency required in preserving the gift through “moral capacity and responsibility.” Keating summarizes the image of God as a gift that “requires an ethical preservation lest it be squandered.”¹⁰⁰ For the first couple, this ethical preservation takes the shape of obedience to the command. By the free submission of their own will to the will of God, they would demonstrate that their inclinations were oriented toward what is highest and best, namely God. Disobedience to the command, the free disregard of the will of God, would demonstrate inclination toward that which is necessarily lower and worse because it is not God. The consequence of disobedience was death (Gen 2:17, Gen 3:3); by implication, the reward for obedience was preservation in life and stability, and the opportunity for development of reason and will.

Cyril’s interpretation of this passage relies on his conviction that God is not the origin of evil. Because God is good, everything that God creates is necessarily good. And everything was created for good as well, claiming, “God did not create humanity in the beginning for evil.”¹⁰¹ And so the origin of evil is an important precursor to any

⁹⁹ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 81–82), Pusey 1, 183: “οὕτω τὸ ἐπὶ γῆς λογικὸν ἐξαρτίσας ζῶον ὁ ἀριστοτέχνης Θεὸς, ἐντολὴν ἐδίδου τὴν σώζουσαν· καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ, καθὰ γέγραπται, διαφυλάττων ἐπὶ τὸ δοθὲν, καὶ τῇ θεΐᾳ τοῦ πεποιηκότος διαπρεπὴς εἰκὼν διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικισθέντος Ἁγίου Πνεύματος.”

¹⁰⁰ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 24–25.

¹⁰¹ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 309–10), Pusey 3, 10: “ἔκτισε γὰρ οὐκ ἐπὶ κακίᾳ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἀρχαῖς.”

discussion of the story of the first transgression. The story suggests that the crafty serpent is the source of the temptation, the one whose argument leads the first couple to disobey the divine command. Cyril believes that the serpent is none other than Satan, the devil himself. And he frames the argument in terms of deception, the deliberate effort to manipulate the will and reason of the human creatures. In order to present the transgression as the fruit of the devil's deception, Cyril must first account for Satan's own origin story and the source of his vicious behavior.

According to Cyril, Satan was one of the angels, a spiritual being created by God. As such, he is like us as a fellow rational and self-directed creature. He is unlike us insofar as his nature is spiritual, while ours is both spiritual and physical. As such, Satan's own ontological instability accounts for the possibility of his sin. Cyril explains how Satan came to assault the first couple:

He [Satan] paid no attention at all to the need to be ardent in correcting his own attitude but fervently remained in an unshaken state of perversity. And when the first man was formed by God, according to the book of Moses, and was in paradise, still keeping the command that was given to him (I mean the one about the tree), Satan first began to burn with envy. Those first-formed humans indicted him, in a sense, for his own transgression and disobedience, since they were still keeping the command given to them, so he concentrated on dragging them away into disobedience with his tangled deceptions. Knowing what would be brought forth if they disregarded the orders of the great King, he persuaded them to do this and wrapped extreme tribulations around those who had done him no harm. After all, the very nature of the case will teach us that the transgression of Adam was a work of the devil's deception and envy, and so was the death that pounced upon him as a result of it.¹⁰²

¹⁰² CJ 6 (Maxwell 2, 3), Pusey 2, 97–98: “βλέπων μὲν οὐδαμῶς εἰς τὸ χρῆναι γοργῶς τὴν οἰκείαν γνώμην ἐπανορθοῦν, ἐν ἀκλονήτῳ δὲ ὥσπερ τῆς δυστροπίας διαμεῖναι σπουδάζας. ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐπλάσθη παρὰ Θεοῦ κατὰ τὴν Μωυσέως συγγραφὴν, καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἔτι ἐντολὴν φυλάττων, τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ ξύλῳ φημί, πρῶτος εἰς φθόνον ὁ σατανᾶς ἀνεκαύθη, ἐλεγχομένης δὲ ὥσπερ τῆς αὐτοῦ παραβάσεώς τε καὶ παρακοῆς τοῖς πρωτοπλάστοις, ὅτε τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἐντολὴν ἐφύλαττον ἔτι, πολυπλόκοις ἀπάταις αὐτοὺς εἰς παρακοὴν ἐξέλκειν ἠπείγετο. εἰδὼς δὲ ὅτι τέζονται παρ’ οὐδὲν ποιησάμενοι τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως τὰ προστάγματα, καὶ τοῦτο δρᾶν ἀναπεῖθει τοὺς οὐδὲν ἀδικήσαντας τοῖς ἐσχάτοις περιβάλλον κακοῖς. ὅτι γὰρ διαβολικῆς ἀπάτης καὶ φθόνου γέγονεν ἔργον ἢ ἐν Ἀδὰμ παράβασις, καὶ ὁ δι’ αὐτῆς ἐπιτηδῆσας θάνατος, καὶ αὕτη μὲν ἢ τοῦ πράγματος διδάξει φύσις.”

Satan's downfall was not so much in his own transgression, but in his refusal to receive God's correction. Indeed, Cyril identifies Satan as "the first to rear his head against God's correction, [who] went on to lie and deceive, [and] finally committed murder because of envy."¹⁰³ He did not receive God's rebuke by repenting, but rather committed more fully to his own wounded pride. Envy entered as a result of both his intense longing "for what was above his own nature,"¹⁰⁴ and of seeing the elevation of the human creatures to a likeness to God that surpassed his own. This elevation was made possible by the gift of the divine image and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Unchecked pride and envy lay at the root of Satan's decision to attack the first human beings. Satan knew that he could not prevail against God and seize divine power for himself, so he freely chose "to wage war on us."¹⁰⁵ His strategy was to turn us away from worshiping God and to convince us to worship him instead. If he could not seize power from God, at least he could steal the honors that belonged to God by right.

With this understanding of Satan's character in mind, the serpent can easily be cast as the villain with malicious intentions. It is also important to bear in mind that, at this point in the narrative, the man and woman possess the image of God. They are stabilized by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The fact that Cyril frames the encounter with the serpent in terms of deception suggests that the man and woman must have been relatively weak where reason is concerned. Deception is an attack against reason, intellect, and wisdom. Cyril believes that Satan's strategy is always to discern the weakest point and seek to exploit that weakness, like a general whose siege weapons

¹⁰³ CJ 6 (Maxwell 2, 3), Pusey 2, 97: "πρῶτον μὲν εἰς ἐλέγχους τοὺς παρὰ Θεοῦ τραχηλιῶντα τὸν σατανᾶν, εἶτα καὶ ἀπατήσαντα καὶ ψευδάμενον, καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον διὰ φθόνου φονεύσαντα."

¹⁰⁴ CJ 6 (Maxwell 2, 3), Pusey 2, 97: "τῶν ὑπὲρ φύσιν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ."

¹⁰⁵ FL 10.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 176), SC 392, 188: "εἰς τὸν καθ' ἡμῶν ἐτράπετο πόλεμον."

target the weakest point in a wall.¹⁰⁶ Certainly the presence of the Holy Spirit serves to strengthen the human beings in both reason and will. However, we can surmise from the story itself, and from Cyril's interpretation, that the time period during which human beings possessed and preserved the gift must have been quite short, too short, it seems, for significant development of reason or will.¹⁰⁷ In support of this idea is that the human beings possessed likeness to God through the image that they had been given, yet they failed to recognize that fact. They were as much like God as any creature on earth could be, and yet the serpent's deception invited them to think otherwise, or perhaps to forget. Moreover, the enticement of the serpent to eat and thereby become godlike in wisdom can be cast as an attack on the will. Food is a desire of the body, while wisdom is a desire of the soul. Neither desire is evil in itself. However, Satan convinced the human beings to pursue those desires at the expense of obedience to God's command and to the very life that depended on that obedience. Satan was able to blind the first couple to the fact that wisdom and life find their source in God, and not in any created thing like a piece of fruit. In short, the serpent convinced the first couple to exercise their wills in an unreasonable or irrational manner.

We have seen at several points thus far the dynamic of giving and receiving at play. A variation on that idea would include taking and losing. So, for example, God gave the Holy Spirit to preserve human beings in stability and life; they received it by holding it precious. God gave all of the trees save one as food sources; humanity received this abundant generosity by eating what was offered. God gave the command to avoid the excluded tree; human beings received it by freely obeying. Contrast this with the

¹⁰⁶ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 130), Pusey 2, 368–69.

¹⁰⁷ CJ 5.5 (Maxwell 1, 350), Pusey 2, 53.

behavior of the devil. He became jealous of the gift given to humanity and sought to take what had not been given to him. This is manifest in the devil's longing for "what was above his nature"¹⁰⁸ as noted earlier. Taking is an action proper to God as source and giver of all things, and is just as much a divine prerogative as giving. The devil's taking, therefore, is a usurpation of divine prerogative. The devil sought to take power and glory and honor that did not belong to him. And we can see that his temptation of the first couple involved inciting them to join Satan in this act of taking what did not belong to them and had not been given to them. In so doing, they disdained the gifts that had been given. The first transgression, then, can be seen as a disruption in the fundamental relationship between divine giver and created recipient.

2.2 SIN AND ITS POSSIBILITY

It is clear that Cyril assigns blame for that first human disobedience to both the human beings and to Satan, the human beings because they were the ones commanded and the transgression was their free choice, and Satan because he goaded them into the act.¹⁰⁹ This blame is grounded in the curse that God addresses to the serpent, the woman, and the man.

The narrative of the first transgression raises the question of how such an event is even possible. If God is good and creation is therefore good, how can sin exist or occur? We have seen Cyril's account of the fall of Satan from the angelic host through his own

¹⁰⁸ CJ 6 (Maxwell 2, 3), Pusey 2, 97: "τῶν ὑπὲρ φύσιν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ."

¹⁰⁹ It is interesting to note that Cyril assigns blame predominantly to Adam, and very rarely to Eve. An exception to this general pattern appears in his commentary on the account of Mary Magdalene meeting the risen Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane (Jn 20:11–18). This episode will be treated in Chapter 3.

transgression and refusal to accept correction. And yet assigning the origin of sin to Satan does not answer these questions in a satisfactory or convincing way. Cyril's reflection offers a response that is rooted at the heart of our being.

In Chapter 1, I identified the two fundamental differences between God and humanity: first, we were created while God is unoriginate; and second, we possess a composite nature, made of both body and soul, while God's nature is simple. These differences comprise what I call ontological and natural instabilities, respectively. We are unstable because of change and turning. We first changed or turned from non-existence to existence when God created us. These inherent characteristics of the human creature are very important to Cyril because they account for the possibility of sin. Cyril explains, "All sin originates from a turning from what is better to what is not. It is brought forth in those who have a natural capacity for turning and who are susceptible to changing into what they should not change into."¹¹⁰ And as composite creatures, we have the capacity, and indeed the freedom, to incline toward the physical or the spiritual aspects of ourselves, and, by extension, toward the earthly or the heavenly realities.

Turning (παρατροπή) is the dynamic that drives Cyril's understanding of the transgression narrative. Before the serpent arrived, the man and woman were oriented toward God, freely accepting the gift of the divine image and preserving it within themselves through obedience to the saving command. But when the serpent arrived, their attention turned. When the serpent spoke, they heard a second voice that now competed with the divine voice. They now had two voices, rather than one, to navigate.

¹¹⁰ CJ 6 (Maxwell 2, 5), Pusey 2, 102: "ἅπαντα μὲν γὰρ ἁμαρτία ἐκ παρατροπῆς τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ βελτίονος ἐπὶ τὸ μὴ οὕτως ἔχον λαμβάνει τὴν γένεσιν, ἐντίκτεται δὲ τοῖς τρέπεσθαι πεφυκόσι, καὶ ἀλλοιώσεως τῆς ἐφ' ἧ μὴ προσῆκε δεκτικοῖς."

What had been simple became complex and the possibility of turning from one to the other presented itself. God's voice told them not to eat, lest they die; the serpent's voice told them to eat, so that they might not die but rather become wise. Life and wisdom are good things for the first human beings to desire. The man and woman chose to turn toward the serpent, receiving his empty promises rather than turning toward God and holding fast to the divine promises. Put another way, they turned their attention and obedience away from God and toward the serpent, away from the higher toward the lower, away from the heavenly toward the earthly.

Human beings are not alone among creatures in the capacity to sin. Despite being more stable than we are because of their nature, the varieties of angels are ontologically unstable because they are creatures, but they are more stable than we are because they possess only a simple, spiritual nature.

For the angels, even though they are far removed from our condition and have a more stable position with respect to virtue, have not kept "their own position." Because some of them have been completely torn from there and have fallen into sin, the entire nature of rational creatures is convicted of being receptive to sin and of being powerless to avoid sharing in the turn toward the worse.¹¹¹

This discussion of angels is important for Cyril because of the ways in which he writes about the devil and his role in humanity's transgressions. Cyril understands the devil to be an angel whose jealousy and pride drove him to rebel against God and to assault human beings in various ways. The fall of Satan is considered far greater than the fall of Adam, in no small part because of the relative instability of each. In short, Adam's fall is mitigated by his greater instability; while Adam and Satan share in ontological instability

¹¹¹ CJ 5.5 (Maxwell 1, 350), Pusey 2, 53: "ἄγγελοι μὲν γὰρ καίτοι κατὰ πολὺ τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς διαλλάττοντες, καὶ στάσιν ἔχοντες ἐδραιωτέραν τὴν εἰς ἀρετὴν, οὐ τετηρήκασιν 'τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχήν·' διὰ γὰρ τὸ κατεσπᾶσθαι τινὰς ὅλως ἐκεῖθεν καὶ πεσεῖν εἰς ἀμαρτίαν, ὅλη κατηγορεῖται τῶν λογικῶν κτισμάτων ἡ φύσις ὡς ἀμαρτίας δεκτικὴ, καὶ τροπῆς τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ἀμοιρεῖν οὐκ ἰσχύουσα."

as fellow creatures, Adam is also naturally unstable, insofar as he is was created with a composite nature. On the other hand, Satan's fall is aggravated by his manipulation and exploitation of Adam's weaker position in this regard.

While our ontological and natural instabilities provide for the possibility of falling into sin, our nature as rational and self-directed creatures also contributes insofar as we make decisions that accord more or less with reason. The interplay between reason and will is central to Cyril's understanding of how sin works. We saw in Cyril's interpretation of the transgression narrative that the desire for both food and wisdom played a key part in the decision to disregard God's command and choose to take the fruit. Genesis says that the woman "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise" (Gen 3:6). Desires and their fulfillment overtook reason. And this is exactly how Cyril generalizes the pattern:

If we examine the nature of our affairs, we will find that pleasure precedes all sin. Some burning lust will call us to sin, always preceding the act itself. It first seizes the mind's judgment and so persuades us to come by a smooth road to the attainment of what we have chosen... Do you see then how the birth of evil is first shaped in desire for things and how the seed of sin is first conceived in foreign pleasures?¹¹²

The fact that the relationship between reason and the will is disordered points to the weakness of each.¹¹³ The narrative continues with God confronting the first couple about

¹¹² CJ 4.7 (Maxwell 1, 282–83), Pusey 1, 631: "τὴν τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς πραγμάτων διευκρινησάμενοι φύσιν, ἀμαρτίας ἀπάσης προβαδίζουσιν ἡδονὴν εὐρήσομεν· καὶ καλεῖ τις ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸ πλημμελεῖν ἐπιθυμία θερμὴ τῆς ἐνεργείας αἰεὶ προανίσχουσα, καὶ τὴν τῆς διανοίας σύνεσιν προαρπάζουσα, πείθουσά τε οὕτω λοιπὸν ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν αἰρεθέντων διεξαγωγὴν διὰ λειοτάτης ἔρχεσθαι τῆς ὁδοῦ... ὁρᾷς οὖν ὅπως ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις ταῖς ἐπὶ τισιν ἢ τῆς φαυλότητος προδημιουργεῖται γένεσις, καὶ ἐν ἐκτόποις ἡδοναῖς τὰ τῆς ἀμαρτίας προκυφορεῖται σπέρματα;"

¹¹³ These faculties appear not to have been fully developed but relied upon the Holy Spirit's strengthening and stabilizing presence. Nevertheless, based on Cyril's insistence on the freedom of the human will, we can surmise that the Holy Spirit would not prevent the human being from exercising the will; such an act would destroy the freedom of the will entirely and would render human beings mere pawns. The assistance of the Holy Spirit is never imposed but is available to the one who seeks it. In the story, neither the man nor the woman appears to have expressed a desire or a need for divine assistance.

their transgression, cursing the serpent, woman, and man, and expelling them from the garden of Eden (Gen 3:8–24). The fact that each of the actors is cursed by God makes clear that each is culpable. Each bears responsibility for the consequences that follow. The next section will focus on the consequences of the transgression for the first couple and for the rest of humanity.

2.3 CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

As far as the narrative goes, God questions the first couple and each admits to having eaten the fruit. Each also assigns blame to another; the man blames the woman and the woman blames the serpent. God’s first response is to curse each of the three guilty parties: the serpent, the woman, and the man. The aspect of the curse that captures Cyril’s attention is the final line, “you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3:19). Secondly, God expels the couple from the garden of Eden. We shall investigate the consequences of the first transgression in the same order, beginning with the curse.

2.3.1 The Curse

Prior to the transgression, the first couple had been blessed by God and given dominion over all the creatures of the earth (Gen 1:28). We saw how God bestowed on the first human beings the breath of life and the image of God, both of which were gifts freely given. Cyril identifies both the breath of life and the image of God with the Holy Spirit who dwelled within them. So long as they were in possession of the breath of life and the image of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they were preserved in existence

and in life. This state of affairs would persist so long as they continued to keep both life and the image as gifts. But in the moment of transgression, in the moment of deciding to obey the word of the serpent rather than the word of God, the first couple disdained the gift that had been given them. God had warned that transgression would mean death (Gen 2:17):

But when he [Adam] was punished because of his transgression, he justly heard, “Earth you are, and to earth you will depart,” and in so hearing he was stripped of grace. The breath of life, that is, the Spirit of him who says, “I am the life,” departed from the earthly flesh, and the living being fell into death through the flesh alone. The soul was preserved in immortality since the words “earth you are, and to earth you will depart” were addressed only to the flesh.¹¹⁴

Because they failed to receive the commandment of God and keep it, but set it aside and received instead the serpent’s promise, God took back the gift of the Holy Spirit. Or rather, the Spirit fled from the first couple, in a sense taking itself back. With the Spirit’s departure, the human creature naturally tended toward its lifeless nature. No longer did they host the breath of life within themselves. Their bodies would return to dust because they did not have life in themselves but relied on the breath of life to sustain them.

Against the Origenist idea that pre-existent souls “fall” into embodiment as punishment, Cyril stresses that the body *receives* the curse; the body itself is not “a form of punishment, nor is it a payment for our primeval sin.”¹¹⁵ Cyril also makes clear that the curse is addressed to the body alone and not to the soul. This allows for the idea that the soul remains immortal because it has not been cursed. The curse, therefore, was really

¹¹⁴ CJ 1.9 (Maxwell 1, 63), Pusey 1, 139: “ἐπειδὴ δὲ διὰ τὴν παράβασιν ἐκολάζετο, τό ‘Γῆ εἶ καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύση,’ τότε δικαίως ἀκούων ἀπεγυμνώθη τῆς χάριτος· ἀπανίστατο δὲ τῆς γῆνης σαρκὸς ἡ πνοὴ τῆς ζωῆς, τουτέστι, τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ λέγοντος Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ζωὴ, καὶ πίπτει τὸ ζῶον εἰς θάνατον διὰ μόνῃς τῆς σαρκὸς, σωζομένης ἐν ἀθανασίᾳ τῆς ψυχῆς, ἐπεὶ καὶ πρὸς μόνην εἴρητο τὴν σάρκα ‘Γῆ εἶ καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύση.’”

¹¹⁵ CJ 1.9 (Maxwell 1, 57), Pusey 1, 126: “οὐ τρόπος ἄρα τιμωρίας τὸ σῶμά ἐστιν, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ἀρχαίας ἡμῶν ἀμαρτίας ὀνώνιον.”

little more than a statement of the reality of the human creature apart from God's grace; devoid of life in itself, the human body will naturally tend toward death and decay, a return to the dust from which it was made. And the demise of the body necessarily involves the separation of soul from body, a return to the parts that comprised our nature.

Not only did the curse highlight the loss of the breath of life, but it also initiated the loss of the image of God. While the loss of the breath of life seems to have been immediate, the loss of the image of God seems to have had a more gradual character:

But when he was led astray by the deception of the devil, he despised the creator. He trampled on the law that was marked out for him and grieved his benefactor. The benefactor took back the grace that was given to him. For the first time, the one who came to life heard, "Earth you are, and to earth you will return," the likeness to God was then marked with a false stamp through the sin that rushed in, and the engraving was no longer distinct. It became more obscure in him, so to speak, and darkened by the transgression. When the human race reached a great multitude and sin ruled over all of them, it thoroughly plundered the soul of each one, and nature was stripped of the original grace. The Spirit also departed completely, and the rational creature fell into utter irrationality, not even recognizing the creator himself.¹¹⁶

Using that description of "image" in which a wax seal is impressed with a stamp, Cyril describes how the transgression damaged the image of God that had been given to the first human beings. Over time and through additional transgressions, that damage became increasingly severe such that the original image was no longer discernible. It is only at this point that the Holy Spirit is said to have "departed completely." Even though Cyril does not explicitly identify the passage, Maxwell argues that Genesis 6 is the basis for

¹¹⁶ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 81), Pusey 1, 183: "ἐπειδὴ δὲ ταῖς τοῦ διαβόλου παρατετραμμένος ἀπάταις κατεφρόνει τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ, καὶ νόμον τὸν ὀρισθέντα πατήσας ἐλύπει τὸν εὐεργέτην, τὴν αὐτῷ δοθεῖσαν ἀνεπράττετο χάριν, Ἦ εἰ καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύσῃ" τότε πρῶτον ἀκούσας ὁ γεγονώς εἰς ζωὴν, παρεχαράττετο δὲ ἤδη καὶ ἡ πρὸς Θεὸν ὁμοίωσις διὰ τῆς ἐπεισδραμούσης ἁμαρτίας, καὶ ἦσαν μὲν οὐκέτι λοιπὸν οἱ χαρακτηρὲς λαμπροὶ, ἀμυδρότεροι δὲ πῶς ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐσκοτισμένοι διὰ τὴν παράβασιν. ἐπειδὴ δὲ εἰς πληθὺν ἀριθμοῦ κρείττονα τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἐξετείνετο γένος, κατεκράτει δὲ πάντων ἡ ἁμαρτία, πολυτρόπως τὴν ἐκάστου ληϊζομένη ψυχὴν, ἀπεγυμνοῦτο μὲν χάριτος τῆς ἀρχαίας ἡ φύσις· ἀπανίσταται δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα παντελῶς, καὶ πίπτει πρὸς τὴν ἐσχάτην ἀλογίαν ὁ λογικὸς, καὶ αὐτὸν ἀγνοήσας τὸν κτίσαντα."

Cyril's case for the progressive loss of the image of God.¹¹⁷ Maxwell sees Genesis 6 as the place where humanity's increase in both number (Gen 6:1) and in sinfulness (Gen 6:5) reaches to such an extent that the Holy Spirit's departure is complete. Certainly the moment of transgression was definitive as the breach that initiated the loss, but that loss appears to have taken some time. The central fact, though, is that the image of God is utterly lost, and the Holy Spirit has become totally foreign to the human creature. Lars Koen highlights that Cyril's presentation is quite different from other patristic accounts of the fall. Where other authors preferred to focus on "the loss of original justice," Cyril's presentation of the fall is "expressed in a rare manner," and his insistence that the fall resulted in the loss of the Holy Spirit and the image of God is "unique."¹¹⁸ Keating agrees that this aspect of Cyril's thought is "unusual" and summarizes Cyril's presentation of creation and fall in terms of "the acquisition and forfeiture of the Holy Spirit."¹¹⁹

The meaning or significance of the loss of the Holy Spirit, specifically in terms of the image of God, can be expressed through two main categories. First, graced likeness to God is lost. The image of God had given ontological and natural stability to human nature. But because that image was a gift from God, and an expression of God's grace, it was not rooted within human nature and was therefore not permanent. Returning to dust is the natural process of decay, the inherent tendency of all things that begin to exist. No longer would humanity benefit from the Spirit's stabilizing power, holding them in existence and in peace between body and soul. Instead, they would be allowed to tend toward decay, and to suffer inner confusion, conflict, and disorder. Second, the flight of

¹¹⁷ Maxwell, "Sin in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on John," 378.

¹¹⁸ Koen, *The Saving Passion*, 42.

¹¹⁹ Keating, "Divinization in Cyril," 155.

the Holy Spirit results in the loss of its strengthening and supporting benefit to human beings. The natural likeness to God that human nature enjoys, located within the reason and will, is nevertheless weak and imperfect and limited. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit preserved and increased humanity's intellect and willpower, making them more like God, whose wisdom and power is perfect. The suggestion is that this divine presence and power would help the human creature to grow and develop in both wisdom and virtue. But Cyril suggests that the devil's deception and the human transgression followed so quickly after the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Spirit and the divine image that these faculties hardly had time to develop.¹²⁰ No longer would they receive strengthening of will or of reason; without the Holy Spirit, the first couple could rely solely on their own natural faculties and capacities, weak and undeveloped as they may have been. Death and decay, ignorance and vice, are consequences of the first transgression and humanity's rejection of the divine gifts through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. While the immediate effect of the loss appears limited to physical death, the gradual loss of the Holy Spirit corresponds to the gradual loss of knowledge and virtue. These gradual losses take place under the devil's domination, so treatment of them will appear in Section *1.2.3.3 The Tyranny of the Devil*.

2.3.2 Expulsion from Eden

The Genesis narrative identifies the protection of the tree of life as the motive for expelling the first couple from the garden of Eden (Gen 3:22–24), and yet the tree of life does not figure in Cyril's interpretation. Instead, Cyril focuses on the impact on humanity

¹²⁰ CJ 5.5 (Maxwell 1, 350), Pusey 2, 53.

of their expulsion from the garden. Most important to Cyril is humanity's loss of conversation with God. Within the garden of Eden, God spoke directly with human beings, and they spoke freely with God. That access allowed the first couple to have knowledge of God—imperfect knowledge, but significant knowledge nonetheless. Cyril refers to the deception of the devil as having “led astray [the first couple] from that original divine guidance, as if uprooted from its foundation.”¹²¹ Outside of Eden, however, that “freedom of speech with God” was lost.¹²² No longer could human beings enjoy minimally mediated discourse, no longer could they receive directly the divine teaching and guidance. This loss, coupled with the loss of the Spirit's strengthening effects on reason, proved deleterious to the human intellect, especially in the knowledge of God. Such knowledge gradually diminished over time; it was not long before human beings so forgot God that they fell into polytheism (πολυθεΐα).

Not only did their expulsion from Eden separate human beings from God as the source of wisdom and intellect, but it also separated them from God as the source of safety and protection. Cyril refers to “the sacred divine sheep pen, I mean the precincts of paradise,”¹²³ as a place of divine protection. Outside of Eden, the human beings “fell prey to wolves that were truly bitter and implacable.”¹²⁴ Outside of Eden, human beings were especially vulnerable to the assaults of the devil and his efforts to exploit and exacerbate that separation. Cyril goes on to say that Satan sought to gather the sheep into the fold of

¹²¹ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 310), Pusey 3, 10: “παρατετραμμένη δὲ πρὸς φαυλότητα ταῖς ἀνοσίοις τοῦ διαβόλου μηχαναῖς, καὶ τῆς ἀρχαίας ἐκείνης καὶ θεοφιλοῦς ἀγωγῆς καθάπερ τινὸς ἰδίας ἐκμεμοχλευμένη κρηπίδος.”

¹²² FL 13.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 4), SC 434, 88: “τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν παρρησίαν.”

¹²³ CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 63), Pusey 2, 223: “τῆς ἱερᾶς τε καὶ θείας αὐλῆς, τῶν τοῦ παραδείσου περιβόλων φημι.”

¹²⁴ CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 63), Pusey 2, 223: “πικροῖς ὄντως καὶ ἀγοητεύτοις κατεσαγηνεύθη λύκοις.”

Hades, giving humanity over to the shepherd that is death.¹²⁵ Subjection to Satan becomes the final consequence of the first transgression, even though the Genesis narrative does not include any such explicit detail. This consequence may be most obviously tied to the expulsion from Eden, but Cyril would argue that human beings gave themselves over to the tyranny of the devil. In the moment of decision, the first couple freely chose to heed the word of the serpent to the exclusion of the word of God. That choice indicated their preference for the serpent's promises over God's promises, the serpent's rule over God's rule. The natural human similarity to God in terms of the will requires that the human will be respected, lest interference, even divine intervention, render the human will non-existent. God therefore handed the first couple over to death and the devil, to live under Satan's rule.

2.3.3 The Tyranny of the Devil

Without the protection of Eden and the strength and stability of the Holy Spirit, human beings "appeared as prey to the devil's tyranny, not daring for an instant to lift our eyes on high, wretches that we were."¹²⁶ Cyril maps out the strategy by which the devil gathered all of humanity under his dominion and power. That strategy began in Eden and continued in earnest outside the garden. The serpent used deceptive argumentation to attack the reason of the first couple and to convince them to direct their will toward disobedient action. Cyril writes that Satan expanded this deception to all of humanity, describing it in terms of clouds, mist, and darkness. Cyril's ways of speaking about the

¹²⁵ CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 63), Pusey 2, 224.

¹²⁶ FL 21.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 110), PG 77, 852B: "τῆς διαβολικῆς τυραννίδος ὥφθημεν θήραμα, οὐδὲν πρὸς τὰ ἄνω ἐπιβλέπειν τολμῶντες οἱ δειλαιοί."

impact of the devil's attack on human reason are dominated by images that evoke a diminished capacity to see. And it is through wounding the reason that the devil is able to manipulate human beings into enacting their wills in vicious or unrighteous ways: "Everything was held fast in mist and darkness, and the many-headed dragon, Satan, had spread a wintry gloom, as it were, over the whole earth under heaven. And chilling to death the mind of each person, he rendered those upon earth willing workers of unholy deeds."¹²⁷ For Cyril, these "unholy deeds" have at their root a disordered relationship between body and soul. We saw above that his understanding of the mechanics of sin, or of "unholy deeds," begins with bodily desires that influence reason such that the satisfaction of those desires, the attainment of the pleasures they promise, seems a sound choice.¹²⁸ This strategy works to exacerbate the weakened state of human reason and will, rendering human beings increasingly sinful and therefore increasingly separated from God and more tightly grasped in the devil's clutches.

For Cyril, the chief evidence for the wounded state of human reason under the rule of Satan is polytheism (πολυθεΐα). Cyril charges those who worship whatever is not God with falling into "utter irrationality."¹²⁹ Recalling the image/archetype paradigm from earlier in the chapter, Cyril believes that human reason is capable of perceiving the beauty of creation and reasoning to the existence of the Creator. That seems to be the most basic task for human reason to accomplish. Under the tyranny of the devil, however, human reason suffers such injury that even this train of thought becomes impossible.

¹²⁷ FL 16.3 (Amidon, FC 127, 46), SC 434, 222: "Ἀγλύϊ μὲν γὰρ καὶ σκότῳ τὰ πάντα κατεῖληπτο· καὶ ὥσπερ τινὰ χειμῶνος κατήφειαν ἀπάσης, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, κατεσκεδάσε τῆς ὑπ' οὐρανὸν ὁ πολυκέφαλος δράκων, τοῦτέστιν ὁ Σατανᾶς· καὶ ἀποψύχων εἰς νέκρωσιν τὸν ἐκάστου νοῦν, ἀνοσίων ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἐθελουργοὺς ἀπετέλει τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς."

¹²⁸ CJ 4.7 (Maxwell 1, 283), Pusey 1, 631.

¹²⁹ CJ 2.9 (Maxwell 1, 81), Pusey 1, 183: "τὴν ἐσχάτην ἀλογίαν."

Cyril writes that human beings “went on in the world wrapped in spiritual mist, with neither the knowledge of piety nor any other of the supernal goods in our mind and heart. We did not see the way of justice, nor even recognize the very one who is God by nature and in truth, but in our error, we even worshiped creatures, deprived as we were of the intelligence befitting even human beings.”¹³⁰ This attack on human reason was gradual, with each generation of humanity drifting further and further into the epistemic darkness spread by the devil.

Cyril offers Cain and Abel as an example of a good beginning, albeit one that ends badly. They are the first post-transgression generation. Even though they lived under the conditions of the curse outside of the garden of Eden, nevertheless, they worshiped God by offering their sacrifices of produce and livestock. But it was not long before that practice disappeared:

Since our race, however, kept deteriorating little by little, and was suffering from the illness of a vice far worse than that preceding, the law which had been sown in nature [i.e. to honor God] perished utterly and was trampled, even as it kept urging recognition of the one and only God. But the error of polytheism was devised before all other evils: a frightful doctrine, my brothers, and the one which holds the fullest measure of the devil’s bitterness. For he thought he ought not only to expel us from friendship with God by means of the sin which was introduced, but render us as well reviled and repulsive when we were suffering the sickness of deprivation of true knowledge.¹³¹

¹³⁰ FL 19.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 96), PG 77, 833A–B: “ἀγλὺν ἔχοντες τὴν νοητὴν διετελοῦμεν ἐν κόσμῳ, οὐκ εἶδισιν εὐσεβείας, οὐχ ἕτερόν τι τῶν ἄνωθεν ἀγαθῶν εἰς νοῦν καὶ καρδίαν εἰσοικισάμενοι· οὐ τὴν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὁρῶντες ὁδὸν, ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ αὐτὸν τὸν φύσει τε καὶ ἀληθῶς ὄντα Θεὸν ἐπιγινώσκοντες· πλανώμενοι δὲ καὶ κτίσει τὸ σέβας ἀναπέμποντες, καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πρεπούσης ἔρημοι φρενός.”

¹³¹ FL 9.4 (Amidon, FC 118, 163), SC 392, 146: “Κατὰ βραχὺ δὲ τοῦ γένους αἰεὶ πρὸς τὰ χεῖρω διολισθαίνοντος, καὶ πολὺ τῆς προλαβούσης αἰσχίονα νοσοῦντος κακίαν, ὁ μὲν τῇ φύσει κατεσπαρμένος διωλῶλει τε καὶ πεπάτητο νόμος, καίτοι Θεὸν ἀναπαίθων εἰδέναι τὸν ἓνα καὶ μόνον. Προσεξεύρητο δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασι κακοῖς καὶ ἡ πολύθεος πλάνη, μάθημα δεινόν, ὃ ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, καὶ τῆς τοῦ διαβόλου πικρίας λήξιν ἔχον τὴν ἀνωτάτω. Ὡς γὰρ δεῖν οὐχὶ μόνως ἡμᾶς τῆς πρὸς Θεὸν ἐξῶσαι φιλίας διὰ τὴν εἰσποίητον, ἀμαρτίαν ἀλλὰ καὶ γνώσεως ἀληθοῦς νοσοῦντας τὴν ἐρημίαν, βδελυροὺς ἀποφῆναι καὶ διεπτυσμένους.”

By impairing our reason and intellect, the devil was able to distract us from repentance. The devil impaired our understanding because he feared that we might return to God, and might “choose to run back to the original beauty of our own nature.”¹³² We saw earlier that Satan’s own fall was tied to his refusal to receive correction. In the story of Cain and Abel, God offers correction to Cain when he began to feel angry at God’s lack of regard for his offering (Gen 4:5ff). Cain refused that correction and went on to murder his brother Abel, presumably out of jealousy. This dynamic parallels the story Cyril tells of Satan’s own fall. Just as we saw Cyril include similarity in virtue as one of his possible definitions of “image,” here we see that similarity in vice applies as well. Cyril calls Satan the father of Cain because “Satan was the first to rear his head against God’s correction.”¹³³ Thus preventing repentance, preventing human reception of divine correction, is a deeply important aspect of the devil’s strategy. Moreover, this deception renders human beings co-conspirators with the devil in his attempts to steal honor and dignity away from God. Cyril accuses such human beings:

In giving their veneration, some to the sun and others to the moon, they deprived the nature that is sovereign over all of the prerogatives that are most fitting to it, and to it alone. Still others, who offered their worship to earth, water, air, and fire, descended quickly to such a degree of stupidity that they arrived at the final measure of evil and presented the honor and glory of divinity even to insensate pieces of wood.¹³⁴

¹³² FL 9.4 (Amidon, FC 118, 163), SC 392, 146: “πρὸς δὲ τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς ἑαυτῶν φύσεως ἀναθεῖν ἐλώμεθα κάλλος.”

¹³³ CJ 6 (Maxwell 2, 3), Pusey 2, 97: “πρῶτον μὲν εἰς ἐλέγχους τοὺς παρὰ Θεοῦ τραχηλιῶντα τὸν σατανᾶν.”

¹³⁴ FL 13.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 6), SC 434, 94: “Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἡλίῳ τὸ σέβας, οἱ δὲ σελήνῃ δωρούμενοι τὴν τῶν ὄλων βασιλίδα φύσιν, τῶν αὐτῇ καὶ μόνη πρεπωδεστάτων ἐξέπεμπον γερῶν· ἕτεροι δέ, γῇ καὶ ὕδατι, καὶ ἀέρι, καὶ πυρὶ προσάγοντες τὴν προσκύνησιν, εἰς τοῦτο κατὰ βραχὺ κατώλισθον ἀμαθίας, ὥστε καὶ ἐπ’ αὐτό που τὸ λοῖσθον διεληλάκασιν τῶν κακῶν, καὶ μέχρι τῶν ἀναισθήτων κατακομίζοντες ξύλων τὴν τῆς θεότητος τιμὴν τε καὶ δόξαν.”

Not only did the devil seek to divert human worship away from God, Satan also desired that some worship be directed toward himself:

Of old the inventor of sin plundered the human race. And leaving no sort of scheme untried for his villainies, he duped those on earth, and, dreaming of the glory of divinity, bade them build him altars and sanctuaries, and ordered them to honor him with sacrifices of oxen and incense. And, leading those deceived wherever he wanted, he persuaded some to venerate the sun, and others the moon and stars. Not only that, but he proceeded to even worse crimes than these: he brought about the consecration of forms of irrational beasts, insulting the divine dignity, in my view, daring to carry off the glory of the substance that is above all others, and thinking fit in his villainy to liken to it these most worthless things, and those of no account at all. For the beast is always terrible, of boundless audacity.¹³⁵

In addition to the error of polytheism, Cyril credits Satan with the invention of the idea of fate. If fate were real, human beings would not feel responsible for their actions, neither would they fear punishment. Fate would destroy any feelings of guilt, thereby dismantling the possibility of repentance and return to God.¹³⁶ The introduction of the notion of fate also aids the devil in his efforts to dominate human beings. If they do not believe themselves to be able to direct their own actions, to have free will as is proper to human nature, then it is that much easier for the devil to take control. Cyril describes the state of affairs: “Satan is terribly accustomed, once he has captured people and brought them under his power, to command them to carry out at once their evil deeds and to force

¹³⁵ FL 16.6 (Amidon, FC 127, 54–55), SC 434, 242–44 “Πάλαι μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον κατεληίζετο γένος ὁ τῆς ἀμαρτίας εὐρετής· καὶ τρόπον ἐπιβουλῆς οὐδένα μένειν ἔων ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ δυστροπίαις ἀνεπιτήδευτον, πεφενάκιε τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ τὴν τῆς θεότητος δόξαν ὀνειροπολῶν ἀναδείμασθαί οἱ βωμοὺς καὶ τεμένη προστέταχε, βουθυσίαις καὶ λιβανωτοῖς καταγεραίρειν ἐκέλευεν. Αποκομίζων δὲ τοὺς πεπλανημένους ἔφ’ ὅπερ ἂν βούλοιτο, τοὺς μὲν ἡλίῳ τὸ σέβας, τοὺς δὲ σελήνῃ καὶ ἄστροις ἀνάπτειν ἀνέπειθεν. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἔτι τούτων αἰσχίουσιν ἐνείεις ἐγκλήμασι, καὶ κτηνῶν ἀλόγων ἀφιεροῦν ἐποίει μορφάς, τὸ θεῖον, οἷμαί που, περιωβρίζων ἀξίωμα· καὶ τῆς ἀνωτάτῳ πασῶν οὐσίας τὴν δόξαν ἀποκομίζειν ἀποτολμῶν, καὶ μέχρι τῶν οὕτως εὐτελεστάτων, καὶ τὰ ὧν οὐδεὶς ἂν γένοιτο λόγος, φιλαπεχθημόνως αὐτῇ παρεικάζειν ἀξιῶν. Δεινὸν γὰρ αἰεὶ καὶ πάντολμον τὸ θηρίον.”

¹³⁶ FL 6.5 (Amidon, FC 118, 110), SC 372, 360.

them without any delay, even against their will, to do what he wants.”¹³⁷ The whole of humanity, then, is rendered powerless to fight against the assaults of the devil through their natural faculties alone. And that powerlessness was grounded in ignorance of the truth of the human condition. Through deception, the devil led all of humanity into slavery to sin and death and decay. Cyril laments that “there was no one left untouched by [the devil’s] arrogance, but all were in sin, no one being restrained by shame, but aspiring to do every frightful deed as though achieving the greatest renown thereby (for everyone’s goal was to outdo in malice both those who had gone before and those to come after, and our glory was in our shame, as Paul says).”¹³⁸ The impact of Satan on the whole of humanity was devastatingly oppressive.

2.4 GOD’S MERCY: GIFT OF REVELATION IN SCRIPTURE

At the beginning of the chapter, we highlighted Cyril’s apparent circular argument regarding the revelation of human nature in Scripture and the epistemological weakness that human beings suffer. Cyril believes that human beings cannot know the truth of their state apart from Scripture because Scripture was God’s gift to enlighten the minds of those who had been living under the darkening and confounding influence of Satan. They could not reason their way to the truth, and so needed it to be presented from the outside.

¹³⁷ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 133), Pusey 2, 375: “δαινός γάρ ό σατανᾶς εις τὸ τοῖς ἅπαξ ἁλοῦσι καὶ ὑπ’ αὐτὸν γεγονόσι προστάττειν εὐθὺς ἐξανύειν τὰ πονηρὰ, καὶ μελλήσεως ἀπάσης δίχα τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτῷ κατεργάζεσθαι καὶ οὐχ ἐκόντας ἀναγκᾶσαι.”

¹³⁸ FL 4.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 80), SC 372, 270: “καὶ λοιπὸν ἦν οὐδεὶς τῆς ἐκείνου πλεονεξίας ἀπείραστος, πάντες δὲ ἦσαν ἐν ἁμαρτίαις, αἰσχύνῃς μὲν οὐδένα ποιοῦμενοι λόγον, ἐφ’ ἅπασιν δὲ τοῖς δεινοῖς, ὥς ἐπὶ μεγάλαις εὐκλείαις φιλοτιμούμενοι (ἐκάστῳ γὰρ ἦν ὁ σκοπὸς πλεονεκτεῖν ἐν φαυλότῃ, καὶ τὸν ἤδη προγεγονότα, καὶ τὸν ἔσεσθαι προσδοκώμενον, καὶ ἦν ἡμῖν ἐν αἰσχύνῃς ἡ δόξα, καθάπερ ὁ Παῦλός φησι).”

The Law of Moses disclosed the oneness of God, in correction to the error of polytheism. The creation stories make clear that there is one creator of all that exists, and that therefore no object of worship that found its place in the sky, or on land, or under the sea could rightly be understood as worthy of that worship. The Law of Moses also exposed the sinfulness of humanity. Cyril relies on Paul's argument that without the law, there is no transgression of the law, and therefore no sin. Part of the impact on humanity of the reign of the devil was our inability to recognize sin as such, and so the gift of the Law provided tools for discernment.

We saw in Chapter 1 that the human will, the human freedom and capacity to direct our own actions, is one of the two main characteristics that render us like God by nature. This freedom is very important for Cyril; we have seen it appear in his refutation of the idea of fate, in his insistence that human beings are accountable for sin, and in his commitment to the idea that "virtue should appear in us as a free choice."¹³⁹ If the human will is not ultimately free, then human likeness to God in that regard is a fiction. Divine respect for the human will seems to have been manifest in the Genesis narrative insofar as God did not intervene to prevent the transgression. In keeping with that idea, Cyril portrays God's mercy toward humanity's suffering under the tyranny of Satan as a response to humanity's cries for help rather than a unilateral intervention that could be seen as forced.

The dynamic of giving and receiving continues to be operative. Divine mercy came in the form of the gift of divine revelation, a gift that could be received or rejected. For Cyril, the revelation that God offers comes in a two-fold manner: first is the word of

¹³⁹ FL 15.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 39), SC 434, 198: "Ἐδει γάρ, ἔδει προαιρετικὴν ἐν ἡμῖν ὁρᾶσθαι τὴν ἀρετήν."

God given in the revelation of the law and the prophets, and second is the Word of God given hypostatically in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ: “the law, after all, is also the word of God, though not hypostatic like the Son is.”¹⁴⁰ While the modes of revelation are distinct, it is important to emphasize that there is one, coherent, revelation. The second mode will be the focus of Chapter 3. The first mode of revelation in Scripture is necessary because of the impact of two of the consequences of the first transgression discussed earlier. The first consequence is the expulsion from the garden of Eden. Within the garden, the first couple enjoyed direct discourse with God, but outside the garden, human beings no longer possessed that freedom. They became separated from the divine guidance. The second consequence is the satanic effort to manipulate and cloud the human intellect and rational faculty. Because human reason was so gravely wounded, a new form of divine guidance became necessary. Steven McKinion sees in Cyril’s treatment of Scripture a two-fold purpose; the first is prescriptive, which deals with morality and how human beings should live, while the second is revelatory, which deals with God’s own self-disclosure.¹⁴¹ I agree that Cyril’s view of Scripture includes a two-fold purpose, but I would prefer to use a slightly different paradigm, chiefly because what McKinion calls “prescriptive” is itself revealed, due to humanity’s damaged capacity to reason how to live well. Instead, I see Scripture as revelation that has two roles: the first remedial, the second preparatory.

¹⁴⁰ CJ 4.4 (Maxwell 1, 254), Pusey 1, 569: “ῥῆμα γὰρ Θεοῦ καὶ ὁ νόμος ἦν, εἰ καὶ μὴ ἐνυπόστατον, ὥσπερ οὖν ἐστὶν ὁ Υἱός.”

¹⁴¹ Steven A. McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ: A Reconstruction of Cyril of Alexandria’s Christology*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 55 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 24.

2.4.1 Remediation

God's gift of the Mosaic Law was an expression of mercy and pity toward creatures who had sunk deep into sinfulness. As such, it offered a partial remedy to human suffering. This suffering was due, in large part, to the profound injury inflicted upon human reason and the impact of that injury on the human will. As we saw earlier, the devil relied on deception as a means of attacking human beings and manipulating them to incline toward vice rather than virtue. The human intellect was weak and that weakness could be exploited. The image-archetype paradigm operative in Eden no longer functioned because the image had been gradually defaced and disfigured. With the flight of the Holy Spirit, humanity ultimately lost the image of God, and in the absence of the Holy Spirit, that weakness was all the more apparent and acute. Without the image, human beings could no longer see themselves or one another as revealing something of their archetype. No longer could they observe the created order and discern the Creator, and in so discerning, offer their Creator the honors and worship that were fitting. The devil's strategy was to cloud the human mind so that it could no longer recognize God as the Creator, nor discern good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice.

The Scriptures conveyed God's gift of revelation adapted to these epistemic frailties. The first frailty to need healing was the human inability to recognize or to remember the truth. Cyril offers his exegesis of the commandments regarding circumcision as a means of addressing this problem. He challenges the requirement for circumcision, arguing that the merely historical reading of the text is highly problematic. The command to remove something applies only to human beings. Such a command suggests that there is a part of a human being that is superfluous, and if superfluous, then

created imperfectly.¹⁴² That, in turn, suggests that God was careless or mistaken in creating human beings in this manner. This problematic conclusion leads Cyril beyond the simple narrative toward a deeper interpretation.¹⁴³ He asks what must be cut off in order for human beings to enjoy a covenant relationship with God. Cyril concludes:

The mind, then, which is in us, is by nature the most fertile of all things, having in itself the seeds of every virtue, and furnishing continually from its own movements, as from a spring, the desires for what is best in every case. For thus has it been made by the Creator. But forgetfulness spreads over it like a veil, creeping out as from an innate root, that forgetfulness which is the source of all impurity. It covers, mist-like, the impulse to what is better, and devours it, and, by overshadowing the memory that we ought to act well, produces in us an earthly mentality instead of a spiritual one, and thus displays man as full of every impurity.¹⁴⁴

Cyril likens the foreskin to the forgetfulness that has characterized the human experience under the oppression of the devil. The beginning of the covenant relationship with God is the removal of that veil that obscures the human memory.¹⁴⁵ In short, the first remedy of

¹⁴² Removal of a body part is distinct from the loss of the image of God. The human body and the human soul together form a human being, and therefore the body is a constitutive element of the person. The image of God, by contrast, is given after creation and is therefore extrinsic. Because it is not part of human nature but is superadded, it can be lost.

¹⁴³ As an exegete, Cyril is committed to the notion that all of Scripture is true and edifying; if its truth is not immediately apparent at the literal level (*historia*), one ought to investigate where the truth might be found at a spiritual level (*theoria*). Cyril is never one to indulge in fanciful interpretations. Rather he seeks always to discern how a given passage reveals something of the *oikonomia*. His method is deeply Christological and sees Christ as the *telos* of all Scripture. Russell has compared Cyril to other early Christian exegetes, noting that his approach to *theoria* differed from Christian Platonists like Origen and Gregory of Nyssa who tended to focus on the soul's allegorical ascent to God. See Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 16. Alexander Kerrigan identifies Didymus as the most likely source for Cyril's conception of these two senses of Scripture. See Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, Interpreter of the Old Testament*, 34.

¹⁴⁴ FL 6.8 (Amidon, FC 118, 113–14), SC 372, 368–70: “Νοῦς τοιγαροῦν ὁ ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ πάντων ἐστὶ τῇ φύσει γονιμώτατον, ἀρετῆς μὲν ἀπάσης ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ σπέρματα, καὶ τὰς ἐφ’ ἐκάστῳ τῶν καλλίστων ἐπιθυμίας, καθάπερ ἀπὸ πηγῆς, ἐξ οἰκείων κινήματων αἰεὶ χορηγούμενος· πεποιήται γὰρ οὕτω παρὰ τοῦ κτίσαντος. Ἐπιτρέχει δὲ αὐτὸν ὥσπερ τι κάλυμμα, καθάπερ ἐμφύτου ρίζης ἐξέρπουσα λήθη, ἣ καὶ πάσης ἐστὶν ἀκαθαρσίας τροφός. Καὶ τὴν μὲν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀμείνοσιν ἔφεσιν, ἀγλῦος δίκην ἐκτεινομένη καταβόσκειται· τὴν δὲ, ἐπὶ τῷ χρῆναι τὰ βέλτιστα δρᾶν ἐπισκιάζουσα μνήμην, τὸ γεῶδες ἡμῖν ἀντὶ τοῦ πνευματικοῦ πραγματεύεται φρόνημα, οὕτω τε πάσης ἀκαθαρσίας ἀνάπλεω δεικνύει τὸν ἄνθρωπον.”

¹⁴⁵ In his analysis of Cyril's treatment of circumcision in the Old Testament commentaries, Jonathan Morgan includes a brief discussion of the effect on those who have received spiritual circumcision as having “transformed minds” and the ability to “see God,” and notes that “the etymological connection between circumcision and seeing God was part of the exegetical tradition by Cyril's time.” See Jonathan

the Scriptures is to remind human beings of everything they had forgotten, to allow the human mind to begin to recognize the truth of God's word rather than to accept blindly the lies and deceptions of the devil.

The chief outcome of these deceptions was that human beings gradually forgot what they knew of God. They lost the capacity to recognize God, and so fell into polytheism. Cyril pointed to this practice as evidence of the "utter irrationality" that humanity had fallen into. The restoration of memory and the power of recognition were at the heart of the first commandment.

It was fitting—it was fitting to start at that time to decree beneficial laws and to preinitiate the people with teaching leading to the knowledge of God once they had devoted themselves to service and obedience to God. For the knowledge of God is the root of all virtue and faith is the foundation of piety. So he revealed himself and made himself manifest, as if were, by saying, "I am the Lord your God," and through knowledge he cultivated faith in them.¹⁴⁶

With the errors of forgetfulness excised, the gift of the law reminds human beings of God's identity. This self-revelation reminds human beings of the oneness of God and therefore of the fallacy of polytheism. In addition, the stories of creation remind human beings that the heavenly bodies, the irrational beasts, and the inanimate objects are all fellow creatures and therefore unworthy to be worshiped or afforded the names of gods.

Finally, the revelation of the law identifies the problem of human sinfulness. In the Genesis narrative, the serpent promises the first couple that their eating from the forbidden tree would enable them to know good and evil (Gen 3:5). In truth, the first

Morgan, "Circumcision and Soteriology in Cyril of Alexandria's Old Testament Commentaries," *Perichoresis* 12:2 (2014): 207.

¹⁴⁶ CJ 4.6 (Maxwell 1, 277), Pusey 1, 618–19: "ἔδει γὰρ ἔδει τῆς τῶν συμφερόντων νομοθεσίας ἐντεῦθεν ἀπάρχεσθαι, καὶ τοῖς εἰς θεογνωσίαν μαθήμασι προμυσταγωγεῖν τοὺς ἅπασι παραστήσαντας ἑαυτοὺς εἰς δουλείαν καὶ ὑπακοὴν τῷ Θεῷ. ῥίζα γὰρ ἀπάσης ἀρετῆς ἡ θεογνωσία, καὶ κρητὶς εὐσεβείας ἡ πίστις. ἐπιδείξας τοιγαροῦν ἑαυτὸν, καὶ οἰονεῖ φανερόν καταστήσας ἤδη, διὰ τοῦ εἰπεῖν 'Εγὼ εἰμι Κύριος ὁ Θεός σου, καὶ προγεωργήσας ἐν αὐτοῖς τὴν διὰ γνώσεως πίστιν."

couple experienced the deep loss of the ability to discern good and evil. Cyril characterizes their experience of life outside of Eden as one of confusion and reversal, so that excellence was measured by outdoing one another in malice.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, because of the devil's introduction of the idea of fate, human beings no longer had reason to feel responsible for their actions, whether for good or ill. They had no reason to fear punishment or to hope for reward. Cyril writes, "For the law exhibited the sin, and was established by God as a sort of proof of the weakness afflicting us all."¹⁴⁸ In another place he writes, the law "continually showed us to be deserving of punishment... The law too used to give grace to humanity by drawing the deceived away from the worship of idols and calling them to a knowledge of God. In addition, it pointed out evil and taught good—not perfectly, but profitably nevertheless, the way a schoolmaster does."¹⁴⁹ Perhaps the most important aspect of the gift of the law as revealed in Scripture is its limitation. Cyril follows Paul's argument that the law is good and indeed necessary, but that it is only part of the remedy for the problem of human sinfulness. The law has tremendous diagnostic power, but it is unable to cure, or even to treat, the disease. And so humanity is left to face its own helplessness.

¹⁴⁷ FL 4.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 80), SC 372, 270.

¹⁴⁸ FL 19.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 96), PG 77, 833B: "Παρέδειξε γὰρ ὁ νόμος τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, καὶ τῆς ἀπάντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενείας ἔλεγχος ὥσπερ τις τέθειτο παρὰ Θεοῦ."

¹⁴⁹ CJ 1.9 (Maxwell 1, 69), Pusey 1, 152: "καὶ κολάσασιν ἡμᾶς ἐνόχους ὄντας ἐδείκνυνεν... καὶ χάριν μὲν ἀνθρώποις καὶ ὁ νόμος ἐδίδου, καλῶν ὅλως εἰς θεογονσίαν, καὶ τῆς τῶν εἰδώλων λατρείας ἐξέλκων τοὺς πεπλανημένους, καὶ προσέτι τούτῳ καὶ τὸ φαῦλον ὑποδεικνύς, καὶ διδάσκων τὸ ἀγαθόν, εἰ καὶ μὴ τελείως, ἀλλὰ παιδαγωγικῶς καὶ χρησίμως."

2.4.2 Preparation

Rather than being a grim consignment to despair, human helplessness in the face of the power of sin has the effect of prompting human beings to look outward, beyond themselves, for help. Cyril believes that rescue from the grip of the devil is a key component of the cure for human sinfulness. Again, God's respect for the human will requires that human beings desire God's rescue; it will not be imposed upon them. And so Cyril sees the role of the law as moving "those on earth to the point of needing finally to thirst for the grace that comes through faith in Christ."¹⁵⁰ In this way, the law functions as preparation to receive the divine assistance. God's plan of salvation requires the consent of those to be saved, and if they are to accept it, they must be made ready to receive it.

There is a sense in which part of the preparatory function of the law is simultaneously remedial. Because the image-archetype paradigm had broken down through the loss of the divine image in human beings, revelation became the new mode by which human beings could return to the contemplation of God. Through receiving the revelation given in the law, human beings could experience a certain restoration of the image-archetype dynamic. This time, however, the Scriptures are full of images that are intended to direct the reader or hearer to their archetype, namely the coming of the Incarnate Word. The revelation mediated through Moses tells story after story of rescue and deliverance. Cyril writes that these stories are the truth in type and shadow (image), whose purpose is to help human beings recognize when the reality (archetype) presents

¹⁵⁰ FL 19.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 97), PG 77, 836A: "τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς πρὸς γε τὸ χρῆναι λοιπὸν τὴν διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ διψῆσαι χάριν."

itself. Those who discern the pattern given in the Scriptures and recognize that pattern in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ are prepared to receive him as the one sent for their sake, to rescue them.

To make this point, Cyril routinely offers the story of the Exodus. He interprets the narrative as addressing, not only the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt under the Pharaoh (*historia*), but also and especially the slavery of all human beings under the rule of Satan (*theoria*). In one example, Cyril focuses on Pharaoh's refusal to allow the Israelites to go to the wilderness in order to worship God (Ex 5:2). He says that the Israelites must go out into the wilderness because they cannot worship God while remaining under the domination of the Pharaoh. Pharaoh stands for Satan, the realm of Egypt signifies his sphere of influence, and the compulsion to make bricks means the coercion to sin and the devil's works. To go out into the wilderness means to leave the realm of Egypt, to move beyond the reach of Satan and to enter the place of freedom. After having suffered several plagues, the Pharaoh relents and allows the Israelites to worship God, but in Egypt rather than the wilderness (Ex 8:25). Cyril explains that this corresponds to the devil's efforts to divide human loyalties. But he argues that people cannot truly worship God so long as they remain under the tyranny of the devil. And Cyril puts the words of Jesus from Matthew's Gospel onto the lips of Moses, who rejects Pharaoh's grudging concession, saying "For no one can serve two masters" (Matt 6:24).¹⁵¹ The patterns established in the Scriptures, and especially the patterns of Moses as mediator between God and the Israelites, serve as images according to which those who encounter Jesus might recognize that he is the archetype to which all of the

¹⁵¹ FL 10.2 (Amidon, FC 118, 182), SC 372, 204.

Scriptural images and paradigms point. Cyril reminds his audience that Moses promised that God would raise up a prophet like him.¹⁵² The task is to discern the identity of that promised prophet through the recognition of familiar patterns, and then to accept that prophet's mediation.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to lay out Cyril's account of the human story from the first transgression and its consequences to the gift of divine revelation in the form of the Law and Prophets. Over the course of this phase of the project, several important features of Cyril's anthropology have emerged. The first is that Cyril portrays the human creature as fundamentally unstable, and this instability renders us vulnerable to death and decay. Second, Cyril's understanding of the image of God is quite idiosyncratic. He insists that the image of God is extrinsic to human nature and is given when God breathes into the first human being (Gen 2:7). Its purpose is to counteract the inherent instability of the human creature and preserve it in life and incorruptibility. The extrinsic character of the image of God is necessary to Cyril's account of the fall as the loss of that image through disobedience. Third, Cyril affords a very high value to the freedom of the human will as one of the ways in which human beings can be understood as similar to God. Cyril insists that human beings have this freedom, which ensures that whatever gifts God offers are never forced upon humanity but may be freely accepted or rejected. This freedom coupled with our instability account for the possibility of sin. Fourth, Scripture is given

¹⁵² CJ 1.10 (Maxwell 1, 73), Pusey 1, 161.

by God with the twin functions of remediation and preparation. The remedial aspect rehabilitates reason, restores the image-archetype paradigm, and exposes sin, but it cannot provide any cure. The preparatory aspect of Scripture is primarily to lead human beings to seek outside of themselves for rescue, and chiefly to help humanity to recognize the rescuer who was to come. And finally, Cyril points to God's purpose in creating human beings for the ultimate enjoyment of eternal rest in the heavenly Jerusalem, indicating that the Edenic state was a beginning, not an end to the human story.

3.0 HUMAN NATURE AS REVEALED IN CHRIST

If it is the case, as I will argue, that the Incarnation of the Word of God reveals to humanity our true nature, both in its original and its ultimate states, then it stands to reason that the divine act of becoming human should disclose something new, something unique, something that could not be learned either from the natural capacities of human beings to think and reason, or from earlier revelations in Scripture. In Chapters 1 and 2, we assembled from various passages in Cyril's works images of human nature, both in its originally created state and as it is under the conditions of the Fall. We also noted a glimpse into the human *telos*, the purpose and destiny for which human beings were created by God. These images relied on Scripture as revelation, which was offered to humanity as an act of God's mercy, both as a partial remedy for the damage done by sin to our rational faculties, and as a means of preparing human beings to receive the coming of Christ.

In Chapter 3, we turn to the Incarnation as the revealed archetype of human nature, both in its sinless present reality, as well as in its exalted and glorified future reality. Cyril writes both that Christ "has revealed in himself the nature of man possessed of sinlessness"¹⁵³ and that "he thought it good to be made man and in his own person to reveal our nature honored in the dignities of the divinity."¹⁵⁴ In this chapter, we use Cyril's descriptions and characterizations of Jesus Christ in order to identify precisely

¹⁵³ UC (McGuckin, 111), SC 97, 458: "καταδείξας ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸ ἀπλημμελὲς ἔχουσιν τὴν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν."

¹⁵⁴ UC (McGuckin, 55), SC 97, 316: "Πλὴν ἐνανθρωπῆσαι κρίναντα, καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ μόνῳ τοῖς τῆς θεότητος ἀξιώμασιν ἐκπρεπῆ τὴν ἡμῶν ἀποφῆναι φύσιν."

what Christ's own person reveals of human nature, both now and in the perfection of our *telos*. Discussion of the work of Christ, in a soteriological sense, will be the focus of Chapters 4 and 5.

The first part of the chapter dealing with the present reality will move through three sections: the first will focus on humanity's proper relationship to God; the second on humanity's proper relationship with neighbor, including specifically within the Christian community; and the third will focus on relations within oneself, given the composite nature of the human creature. The second part of the chapter dealing with humanity's exalted and glorified future reality will comprise two sections: the first addressing the Incarnation as divine descent into human experience and the union of human and divine in Christ as a kind of archetype of eschatological union between human beings and God; the second addressing the ascent of Christ into heaven as the clearest image and indication of our *telos*. We saw in Chapter 1 only a glimpse into this eschatological reality; here, in Chapter 3, we shall discover how the Incarnation reveals human destiny.

While it is certainly the case that the bulk of Cyril's writings included in this investigation have sought to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is truly God and Son of God, in opposition to Arian/neo-Arian understandings, the task at hand is to glean from those very writings Cyril's understanding of Jesus Christ as truly human and entirely free from sin. Looking to Jesus as the only instantiation of sinless humanity is necessary because of the epistemological deficits that prevent our reasoning from functioning properly. Just as we learn about God's identity and attributes by looking to Jesus Christ, in the same way we learn about our own identity and attributes.

3.1 CYRIL'S CHRISTOLOGICAL COMMITMENTS

For Cyril, Jesus acts and speaks as one single subject. He is always the Word Incarnate. That means that Jesus is always God the Son who descended into human life and experience, taking human nature to himself and making it his own. He is very careful to clarify that the Word does not turn into a human being in such a way that he ceases to be God. Neither does the Word assume a discrete human being, lest the notion of “Two Sons” become a possibility. Nor does the Word dwell within a human being. And finally, the Word does not simply assume a human body, but rather complete human nature, both body and soul. Each of these formulations rejected by Cyril highlights an aspect of Christian faith or practice that is at stake, and that the unsatisfactory Christologies undermine. When Cyril rejects interpretations of John 1:14, “the Word *became* flesh,” as meaning a change from one thing into another, he does so because God is by definition unchangeable.

For there is one Son both before the incarnation and after the incarnation, and we will not consider his body to belong to someone other than the Word. For this reason he says that the Word, who came down from heaven above, is also the Son of Man. He became flesh, after all, according to the blessed Evangelist; he did not come into the flesh by a change (since he is unchangeable and immutable as God), but he dwelt in his temple (I mean the one from the virgin) and truly became human.¹⁵⁵

And in another place he makes the same point: “It seems that they [Nestorians] are of the opinion that the term ‘became’ inevitably and necessarily signifies change or

¹⁵⁵ CJ 4.3 (Maxwell 1, 246), Pusey 1, 550–51: “εἷς γὰρ Υἱὸς, καὶ πρὸ τῆς σαρκώσεως καὶ μετὰ τὴν σάρκωσιν, καὶ οὐκ ἀλλότριον τοῦ Λόγου τὸ ἴδιον αὐτοῦ λογιούμεθα σῶμα· διὰ γάρ τοι τοῦτο καὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου φησὶ τὸν ἄνωθεν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καταφοιτήσαντα Λόγον· σὰρξ γὰρ ἐγένετο, κατὰ τὸν μακάριον Εὐαγγελιστὴν, καὶ οὐκ εἰς σάρκα μεταχωρήσας ἐκ παρατροπῆς· ἄτρεπτος γὰρ καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος κατὰ φύσιν ἐστίν, ὡς Θεός· ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐν ἰδίῳ κατοικήσας ναῶ, τῷ ἐκ παρθένου φημι, καὶ ἄνθρωπος γεγωνὸς κατὰ λόγον ἀληθινόν.”

alteration.”¹⁵⁶ When he rejects the idea that the Word takes a unique individual to himself, he does so because that human person effectively becomes an “assistant” to the Word, and that it is this other one who dies, rises, ascends into heaven, and is seated on the throne of God.¹⁵⁷ Cyril argues that such an arrangement would mean that the assumed man “has become the personal property of the one assuming,”¹⁵⁸ which negates the claim in Philippians 2:7 that the Son himself took on the form of a slave by becoming human. And if what is by nature free did not enter the limits of slavery, then the slaves cannot hope to share in the Son’s own freedom.¹⁵⁹ When Cyril rejects the idea that the Word dwells within a human being, this is because divine indwelling is a pattern already established with prophets and saints and therefore renders the Incarnation not at all unique.¹⁶⁰ And finally, when Cyril rejects the Word’s assumption merely of a human body rather than body and soul, he concludes, “The Word of God, then, united to himself the entire nature of a human being in order to save the whole person. For what is not assumed is not healed.”¹⁶¹ Thomas Weinandy offers a helpful way of understanding how Cyril conceives of the union of humanity and divinity in the Incarnation.

¹⁵⁶ UC (McGuckin, 53), SC 97, 312: “Οἶονται γάρ, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὡς ἐξ ἀφύκτου τε καὶ ἀναγκαίου λόγου, τροπῆς τε καὶ ἀλλοιώσεως σημαντικὸν εἶναι τὸ «ἐγένετο.»”

¹⁵⁷ UC (McGuckin, 74), SC 97, 364.

¹⁵⁸ UC (McGuckin, 75), SC 97, 366: “Οὐκοῦν, καθ’ ἔνωσιν ἀδιάσπαστον ἴδιον γεγονὸς τοῦ λαβόντος τὸ ληφθὲν νοοῖτ’ ἂν εἰκότως, ὡς καὶ Θεὸν εἶναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ Θεοῦ τοῦ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν Υἱόν, ἓνα τε καὶ μόνον, ὡς ἐκ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς Λόγον, γεννηθέντα μὲν θεϊκῶς πρὸ παντὸς αἰῶνος καὶ χρόνου, ἐκ ἐσχάτοις δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος καιροῖς, τὸν αὐτὸν κατὰ σάρκα ἐκ γυναικὸς. Οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἐτέρου τινός, ἀλλ’ αὐτοῦ γέγονεν ἢ τοῦ δούλου μορφῇ.”

¹⁵⁹ UC (McGuckin, 75–76), SC 97, 366–68.

¹⁶⁰ See for example CJ 4.4 (Maxwell 1, 257–58), Pusey 1, 576–77; FL 17.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 63), SC 434, 266–68; FL 20.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 102), PG 77, 840D–841B.

¹⁶¹ CJ 8:fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 106), Pusey 2.318: “ὅλην τοίνυν τὴν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἦνωσεν ἑαυτῷ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος, ἵνα ὅλον σώσῃ τὸν ἄνθρωπον. ὃ γὰρ μὴ προσεῖληπται, οὐδὲ σέσωσται.” Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 390/1) asserted the same idea when he wrote, “That which [Christ] has not assumed, he has not healed; but that which is united to his Godhead is also saved.” *Ep. 101* in Edward R. Hardy, ed., *Christology of the Later Fathers*, Library of Christian Classics (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1954), 218.

No longer is the incarnational union the compositional or organic union of natures (similar to the soul/body), but rather the incarnational act is seen as the one person of the Son taking on a new manner or mode of existence—that is, as man. This is why Cyril could legitimately stress, against Antiochene accusations, that the natures are not merged or mixed and thus not changed. They are not transformed because the manner of the union is no longer on the level of natures, as is the soul/body, but rather on the level of the person of the Son assuming a new existence as man. Thus what the Son eternally is (God) and what he has become (man) are in no way jeopardized. Actually, conceiving the incarnational act as personal/existential establishes, and so guarantees, that it is truly the one person of the Son who is man, and that it is truly as man that the Son exists.¹⁶²

Cyril's conclusion is that the positive explanation for how the union of divinity and humanity takes place is mysterious and indescribable. He is content to say that the Word assumes complete human nature to himself and makes it his own forever. This is a way of asserting that whatever is proper to divinity is Christ's, just as whatever is proper to humanity is Christ's.

Cyril insists that there is one Christ; whatever distinctions might be made between Christ's own humanity and divinity are strictly conceptual, even as humanity and divinity in themselves are obviously quite different. Cyril makes these distinctions fairly regularly and routinely, especially in his *Commentary on John*. It is in the context of a Gospel narrative of the actions and words of Christ that we see Cyril combat the proof-texting of his opponents (mainly Arians/Eunomians, Jews, pagans, and others). Cyril's way of discussing how one ought to read and interpret and understand passages of Scripture that either describe Christ doing things that only God can do (e.g. calming a storm), or doing things God could never do (e.g. dying), is primarily through his use of the word "as" (ὡς). For example, Cyril appeals to the story of the raising of Lazarus to illustrate how both divine and human characteristic are present and operative in the one Christ. Cyril

¹⁶² Thomas G Weinandy, *Jesus: Essays in Christology*, Faith & Reason (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2014), 89.

explains, “That is why, you know, he is often presented not knowing as man (ὥς ἄνθρωπος) what he knows as God (ὥς Θεός).”¹⁶³ The same strategy appears in *Festal Letter 8* (420CE), when Cyril interprets John 10:37-38, where Jesus urges belief in his works, Cyril writes, “For he did not ask that what concerned him be assessed from the way he appeared as man (ὥς ἄνθρωπος) to those who saw him, but from the works he performed as God (ὥς Θεός).”¹⁶⁴ Despite this distinction, Cyril always maintains a single subject.

Because Cyril’s overall argument is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, it is easier for him to make his case by pointing to the “God-befitting” actions like healing or exorcising demons; it is more challenging for him to assert that Jesus is divine when the Scriptures speak of human limitations and forms of suffering. However, this is where Cyril refers to the Word *as Incarnate* suffering hunger or grief. It is never the Word *as Word* who suffers these things; rather it is because the Word assumed the entirety of human nature, making it truly his own, that it is proper to say that the Word suffered *in the flesh*. In short, the Word is always the subject, whether “naked” (γυμνός) before the incarnation, or “in the flesh” (ἐν σαρκί) after the Incarnation.

3.2 THE INCARNATION AS REVELATION

We saw in Chapter 2 that humanity’s rational faculties were profoundly damaged by sin.

The image-archetype dynamic that had been operative before the Fall, whereby one could

¹⁶³ CJ 5:5 (Maxwell 1, 348), Pusey 2, 50: “διὰ γάρ τοι τούτων πολλάκις, καὶ ἅπερ οἶδεν ὥς Θεός, ἀγνοεῖν ὥς ἄνθρωπος σχηματίζεται.”

¹⁶⁴ FL 8.4 (Amidon, FC 118, 146), SC 392, 90–92: “Οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ὧν ὥς ἄνθρωπος τοῖς ὀρῶσιν ἐφαίνετο, δοκιμάζεσθαι τὰ καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἡξίου, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ὧν ὥς Θεός εἰργάζετο.”

look to any part of creation and reason to the Creator, became ineffective. Cyril cites the emergence of polytheism as evidence of this rational failure. This means that human beings could no longer look to themselves as images and reason to their divine archetype. Because of this failure, and because of the expulsion from the garden of Eden and the loss of freedom of speech with God, a new means of communication was required. This came in the form of Scriptural revelation, especially in the giving of the Law. And that gift had two primary functions: a partial remediation of human sin through exposing sin and revealing righteousness, and preparation to receive the One who would bring salvation. The promised Savior appeared in the Incarnation of the Word.

The revelation through Moses to the Israelites was concerned with getting human beings to turn away from false gods and toward the one true God, thus reversing the original deception of Satan. But this revelation was only a partial one. It revealed that there is only one true God, but it did not reveal the identity of that one true God. This part of the revelation required the Incarnation. The one true God is the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But how could humanity know that God was Father without a Son? Or how could they know that God was Son without a Father? In the Incarnation the true Son of the true Father became human so as to appear safely to humanity,

for it was impossible for anyone to encounter the naked, untempered glory of the divinity. As he says, ‘No one will see my face and live.’ For if no one can take in the brightness of the sun’s rays with the eyes of the body (since the power of the sense of sight is thwarted and overcome by the overwhelming assault of the light), how would it be possible to bear it if the Son came to us in the naked glory of his divinity?¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ FL 27.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 172), PG 77, 937B: “οὐ γὰρ ἦν δύνασθαί τινα γυμνῇ καὶ ἀκράτῳ τῇ τῆς θεότητος δόξῃ προσβαλεῖν. «Οὐδεὶς γὰρ ὄψεται, φησὶν, [ιδεῖν] τὸ πρόσωπόν μου καὶ ζήσεται.» Εἰ γὰρ τῆς ἡλίου βολῆς τοῖς τοῦ σώματος ὀφθαλμοῖς οὐκ ἂν τις λάβοι τὸ σέλας (ἐγκόπτεται γὰρ ἡ τῆς ὀπτικῆς αἰσθήσεως δύναμις, καὶ παραχωρεῖ τὸ νικᾶν ταῖς τοῦ φωτὸς ἀφορήτοις ἐμβολαῖς), πῶς ἦν ἐνεγκεῖν γυμνῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφιγμένον τῇ τῆς θεότητος δόξῃ τὸν Υἱόν;”

The Incarnation makes the naturally invisible God visible to human eyes without danger of instant death. In this way, God could speak and interact with humanity in a way that humanity could receive. In Christ, humanity is truly “taught by God.”

In the Incarnation, the image-archetype dynamic was reestablished. Cyril explains how the progression of knowledge or understanding works: “We must first learn, as far as possible, what the Son is by nature. Then in this way, we will have a good understanding of the archetype from its image and exact imprint. That is because the Father is seen in the Son, and he appears in the nature of his own offspring as in a mirror.”¹⁶⁶ The image leads to the archetype. When we rightly receive and understand the image, we learn how to receive and understand the archetype. If the Father is the archetype of the Son as image, and the Son is archetype of the human being as image, then the idea is that we are meant to see ourselves as image and then learn about our archetype, namely the Son, who then leads us through his own image to the archetype of the Father.

On the one hand, this arrangement of images leading to archetypes highlights Christ’s role as mediator between God and humanity, being both God and human. In the image-archetype, Christ is both image of God and archetype of humanity. And yet, his place in between God and humanity does not indicate a subordinationist Trinitarian doctrine in which the Son is in any way less than the Father. We must recall our earlier discussion of how Cyril conceives of the revealing and reflecting dynamic within the Trinity, as discussed in Chapter 1. The first kind of image in Cyril’s paradigm was based in generation, so the Son is the image of the Father because the Son is begotten of the

¹⁶⁶ CJ 5:2 (Maxwell 1, 325), Pusey 1.728: “δεῖ γὰρ πρότερον ἡμᾶς τί κατὰ φύσιν ἐστὶν ὁ Υἱὸς, κατὰ γὰρ τὸ ἐγχωροῦν, ἐκμαθεῖν, εἶθ’ οὕτως ὡς ἐξ εἰκότος καὶ χαρακτηρὸς ἀκριβεστάτου συνεῖναι καλῶς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον. ὁρᾶται γὰρ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν Υἱῷ, καὶ καθάπερ ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ τῇ τοῦ ἰδίου γεννήματος φύσει διαφαίνεται.”

Father. And yet, because Father and Son are consubstantial and coeternal, they mutually reveal and reflect one another. All through his life and public ministry, Jesus reveals the Father, because he is the imprint of the Father as archetype. He also reveals himself as the Son, by the works that he does that only God can do, and by the words he speaks that are God-befitting rather than human. Finally, he reveals human nature, both as it is without sin, and also how it is invested with divine attributes, as a foretaste of what we will become.

While Cyril's early Christological focus tends to emphasize how Christ's divinity is revealed, in opposition to Jewish and Arian/neo-Arian theologies,¹⁶⁷ here we attempt to demonstrate how those works also disclose important insights into our humanity as revealed through the Word's becoming a human being. There are two main categories of Christ's revelation of human nature. First, Cyril establishes in a variety of ways that Jesus Christ is truly and fully human. For example, Cyril explains that Jesus is born because all human beings are born and not being born would diminish Christ's humanity: "And what would suit the flesh especially, and indeed most of all, is birth from a mother."¹⁶⁸ Second, and more importantly for our purposes, Cyril explains how the words and actions of Jesus give a clear illustration of what a sinless human life looks like. For example, when Christ

¹⁶⁷ Russell notes that Cyril seems to carry on the Athanasian elision of Jews and Arians. Both groups were of concern in Alexandria and the wider Church. See Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 21–22. Wilken points to Alexandria as a city where groups within the Jewish community "actively worked against Christians. For example, they sometimes joined with Arians in opposing the consecration of Nicene bishops. See Wilken, "Augustine's World and the World of Cyril of Alexandria," *Augustinian Studies* 43:1/2 (2012): 32. Maxwell characterizes the *Commentary on John*, Cyril's earliest Christological work, as anti-Arian, alongside his *Thesaurus* and *Dialogue on the Trinity*. See Maxwell, "Translator's Introduction," xvii. Boulnois suggests that *Festal Letter 12*, with its sustained attack on Eunomian claims, may represent evidence of an Arian resurgence in Alexandria. See Boulnois, "The Mystery of the Trinity," 76–77. It is not clear whether Cyril's elision simply reflects theological convention or instead signals actual Jewish and Arian groups challenging the Nicenes.

¹⁶⁸ FL 17.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 65), SC 434, 272: "Πρέποι δ' ἂν μάλιστα σαρκί, καὶ πρό γε τῶν ἄλλων, ἢ διὰ μητρὸς ἀπότεξις."

prays to God, it is not because he has any need, but rather that “he fashions for us, then, a pattern for prayer.”¹⁶⁹ In short, Cyril’s strategy is always to ascribe both God-befitting words and actions and human words and actions to the one Christ who is Son and Word. Whatever is human is “for us” insofar as it shows us who we are to be and how we are to live. We are the beneficiaries of the Word’s truly human experience and example.

Cyril uses words like “example” (ὕπογραμμός), “model” (παράδειγμα), “pattern” (ὕπόδειγμα), “type” (τύπος), and “image” (εἰκών),¹⁷⁰ to lay out the ways in which Christ’s words or actions reveal what is truly and perfectly human. He offers his own qualities and behaviors as concrete and visible illustrations of all that it is to be a human being. Each of these illustrations is a revelation to us, as well as an invitation to imitate whatever has been revealed. This dynamic of revelation and imitation is a more specific enactment of the broader dynamic of giving and receiving that has permeated Cyril’s works. Whatever example Christ sets out for us is offered freely; we may freely receive that gift by seeking to follow that example, or we may freely reject it by continuing to live according to our own devices and desires. In short, the entirety of Christ’s life reveals most fully what it means to be truly human.

¹⁶⁹ CJ 11:3 (Maxwell 2, 269, Pusey 2.659: “τύπος οὖν ἄρα προσευχῆς εἰς ἡμᾶς τὸ πραττόμενον.”

¹⁷⁰ Examples include: “Our Lord Jesus Christ is clearly presenting himself as a type, as it were, and an example of holy conduct...he is an example to those who are his” CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 227), Pusey 2, 568: “φαίνεται τοίνυν ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός, **τύπον** ὥσπερ τινὰ καὶ τῆς εὐαγοῦς πολιτείας **ὕπογραμμὸν** ἑαυτὸν ἡμῖν παραθεῖς... ἐν **παράδειγμασι** τοῖς καθ’ ἑαυτὸν;” “he became an example of humility,” CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 123), Pusey 1, 277: “ταπεινοφροσύνης **ὕπόδειγμα** γέγονεν;” “having the Lord of all as a type and image” CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 119), Pusey 2, 345: “**τύπον** ἔχοντες καὶ **εἰκόνα** τὸν ἀπάντων Κύριον.”

3.3 CHRIST REVEALS SINLESS HUMAN NATURE

Jesus Christ reveals to us two fundamental things about human nature: who we are entirely free from sin, and who we were created to become. In terms of the revelation of sinless humanity, we follow the outline of our investigation in Chapter 1 of human nature as originally created. That description was based upon a number of inherent instabilities. The first was “ontological instability” and derives from our having been created. Because we began to exist, we may also cease to exist. This instability points to our relationship with God. The second was “natural instability” and derives from our possessing a composite nature, both body and soul. This instability is characterized by the potential for conflict by virtue of multiplicity rather than simplicity. It points to our relationships in community and our relationships within ourselves between body and soul. Each of these relationships has suffered under the burden of sin to the point that human beings are no longer capable of recognizing, much less cultivating, proper relationships. In the Incarnation, we see the one living example of human nature unmarred by sin. Jesus Christ reveals everything that is proper to human nature. This includes birth and death; it includes relations between body and soul, as well as the emotions and their appropriate limits. And finally, the Incarnation reveals human nature as properly oriented toward God and in holy and righteous relationships with God, their neighbors, and within themselves.

The second truth that Christ reveals is the human *telos*. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Scriptural accounts of the human *telos* are rather spare, offering little more than a gesture or suggestion. We saw Cyril appeal to the Sabbath commandments and a few agricultural images of work and rest as possible indications of what might lie ahead for humankind. It is in the Incarnation that we receive the fullest presentation of humanity’s

purpose. As we will see, God created human beings for eternal, familial, union and fellowship with God in heaven. What this means for Cyril is that his definition of the *oikonomia* includes, but does not end with, the salvation of humanity from sin and its restoration to its Edenic state. For Cyril, the *oikonomia* extends beyond salvation and restoration; it culminates in the exaltation and glorification of human beings beyond their proper nature. This aspect of revelation is located within the ascension of Christ into heaven.

Cyril is fond of citing the Christ hymn of Philippians 2 as a way of framing his understanding of the whole *oikonomia*. Within the passage, we see the primary movement of the divine from natural glory into willingly appropriated human lowliness and then the secondary movement from human lowliness into heavenly exaltation. Hence the first part of the hymn constitutes a descent, while the second an ascent. In the Incarnation, the “destination” of that descent is a full human life and experience, complete with all of the weaknesses and temptations that contribute to the human experience. What we receive in the Incarnation, then, is the archetype of human nature, the one according to whom human beings were originally created. Christ “has revealed in himself the nature of man possessed of sinlessness.”¹⁷¹ This revelation discloses the proper and fitting ways in which human beings are to live and relate with God, with their neighbors, and within their own composite selves.

¹⁷¹ UC (McGuckin, 111), SC 97, 458: “καταδείξας ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸ ἀπλημμελὲς ἔχουσιν τὴν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν”

3.3.1 Relations with God

3.3.1.1 *Worship*

Cyril often cites 1 Corinthians 4:7, which asks, “What do you have that you did not receive?”¹⁷² He takes this question to mean that everything human beings have, especially our very lives and existence, has been given to us by God. Because of this profound divine generosity, and human poverty, the most appropriate act in which we can engage is worship of God. This is the fundamental relationship between human beings and God. And we saw earlier in Chapter 2 how sinful humanity fell into the egregious error of offering that worship, not to God, but to various created things. Indeed, the gift of the Law began its remedial work by directing human beings away from polytheism and toward the worship of the one true God. This work of the Law is evident in the accounts of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness that appear in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. In each story, the devil attempts to get Jesus to worship him; and in both cases, Jesus refuses, citing Deut 6:13: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” While these stories depict Jesus refusing to participate in polytheism (according to Cyril’s understanding as worshipping a creature), they do not describe him in the act of worshipping God.

The story to which Cyril turns in order to present an example of Christ as worshiper is that of the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:1-42). In this passage, Jesus meets a woman at Jacob’s well in Sychar. They have an extended conversation that begins about drawing water, both literal and spiritual, and then moves into a discussion

¹⁷² The Scripture Index in the *Commentary on John* lists nine citations or allusions to this verse.

about where and how God is properly worshiped.¹⁷³ Jesus is able to lead the Samaritan woman to a fuller understanding of God as Trinity through his reference to worshipping the Father. By calling God “Father,” he invites the woman to contemplate his own identity as Son.¹⁷⁴ The critical statement in this passage appears in verse 22: “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know.” In explaining this statement, Cyril differentiates between Jews and Samaritans and their respective worship by assigning greater knowledge and understanding to Jewish worship. This relies on Jewish receipt of revelation through the gift of the law and prophets, and especially of the fact that “from them salvation, namely, himself, will be revealed.”¹⁷⁵

Cyril is careful to point out that Jesus deliberately includes himself in the worship of God through his use of the word “we” (ἡμεῖς).¹⁷⁶ Cyril explains,

As a human being, he classifies himself among those who worship, even though he is worshiped with God the Father both by us and the holy angels. Since he put on the form of a servant, he carries out the worship that is fitting for a servant without ceasing to be God and Lord and the object of worship. He remains the same even though he also became human and even though he preserves in every way the character of the *oikonomia* with the flesh.¹⁷⁷

By including himself in the duty to worship, the Word is appropriating to himself this most basic human activity, and simultaneously setting the example of human humility in relation to God. Because of his condescension, as summarized in Philippians 2, Christ’s

¹⁷³ Indeed, it is this portion of the story that forms the basis of Cyril’s early dialogue, *Worship in Spirit and in Truth* (PG 68, 132–1125).

¹⁷⁴ CJ 2.4 (Maxwell 1, 123).

¹⁷⁵ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 126), Pusey 1, 276: “ἐξ ὧν καὶ ἀναδειχθήσεσθαι τὴν σωτηρίαν, ἑαυτὸν”

¹⁷⁶ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 126–27), Pusey 1, 284: “Ὑμεῖς προσκυνεῖτε ὃ οὐκ οἶδατε, ἡμεῖς προσκυνούμεν ὃ οἶδαμεν.”

¹⁷⁷ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 123), Pusey 1, 276–77: “ἐν δὲ τοῖς προσκυνούσιν ἑαυτὸν κατατάττει πάλιν ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ὃ μετὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς, πρὸς τε ἡμῶν καὶ τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων προσκυνούμενος. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τὸ οἰκετικὸν περιεβάλετο σχῆμα, τὴν οἰκέτην πρέπουσαν ἀποπληροῖ λειτουργίαν, οὐκ ἀπολέσας τὸ εἶναι Θεὸς καὶ Κύριος καὶ προσκυνητός· μένει γὰρ ὁ αὐτὸς εἰ καὶ γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, ἀποσώζων δὲ πανταχὶ τῆς μετὰ σαρκὸς οἰκονομίας τὸν λόγον.”

humility in becoming human invites our imitation. Cyril concludes, “Worship (προσκύνησις) is an act that is most fitting for human beings. It is placed in the category of a debt, and it is offered by us to God. Therefore, he worships as a man since he became human, but he is always worshiped with the Father since he was, is and will be true God by nature.”¹⁷⁸ In fact, Cyril classifies the act of worship as “a sort of gate and road for service by works since it is the beginning of servitude toward God.”¹⁷⁹

This whole discussion of worship forms part of Cyril’s refutation of Arian claims that the Son’s participation in worship proves his status as creature. Worship is an expression of relative status, whereby the worshipper acknowledges the superiority of the one who is worshipped:¹⁸⁰ “By falling down before someone, we confess that we must think of his nature as superior and above all.”¹⁸¹ Cyril insists that it is only in the Incarnation that the Son worships the Father *as man*; prior to the Incarnation, there is no Scriptural evidence that the Son worshiped the Father *as Word*.¹⁸² Cyril goes on to explain how the half-shekel temple tax (Ex 30:13) teaches in type that human beings owe to God their worship. And in the Gospel passage where Peter and Jesus are challenged to pay the half-shekel (Mt 17:24–27), Cyril sees Christ revealing what it means to “worship in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:23), namely by ceasing to offer outward and corruptible

¹⁷⁸ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 124), Pusey 1.277: “πρᾶγμα δὲ ἀνθρώποις πρεπωδέστατον ἡ προσκύνησις, ὡς ἐν ὀφλήματος τάξει κατατιθεμένη τε καὶ προσαγομένη πρὸς ἡμῶν τῷ Θεῷ. οὐκοῦν προσκυνεῖ μὲν ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ὅτε γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, προσκυνεῖται δὲ αἰεὶ μετὰ Πατρός, ἐπεὶ Θεὸς ἦν ἐστὶ τε καὶ ἔσται κατὰ φύσιν καὶ ἀληθινός.”

¹⁷⁹ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 126), Pusey 1.283: “πύλη γὰρ ὥσπερ τις ἐστὶ καὶ ὁδὸς τῆς ἐν ἔργοις λατρείας ἡ προσκύνησις, ἀρχὴν ἔχουσα δουλείας τῆς ὡς πρὸς Θεόν.”

¹⁸⁰ This is one reason that what Cyril calls “polytheism” (the worship of creatures rather than the Creator) is so egregious. It is a failure to recognize that all creatures share an equal status insofar as they are created and therefore no creature is worthy of a fellow creature’s worship.

¹⁸¹ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 124), Pusey 1, 278–79: “τῷ γὰρ ὑποπίπτειν ἡμᾶς οἶεσθαι δεῖν τὴν ὑπερκειμένην καὶ ἐπάνω πάντων ὁμολογοῦμεν φύσιν.”

¹⁸² CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 126), Pusey 1, 283).

gifts¹⁸³ and offering instead a virtuous life.¹⁸⁴ Worship, therefore is absolutely essential, and indeed prerequisite, to a sinless human relationship with God. And so it is fitting that Jesus, as the one instantiation of human sinlessness, should engage in that most human of activities—the worship of God—and to do it in spirit and truth through his perfect self-offering of a virtuous life. Through his own action, he offers to all human beings a model of reverence grounded in self-knowledge.

3.3.1.2 *Thanksgiving*

The act of giving thanks for what one has received is grounded in the fundamentally receptive character of humanity as expressed in 1 Corinthians 4:7 cited earlier. Again, giving thanks depends upon the human awareness that God is the giver of all things, and the act is a sign of human humility before God. Cyril points to two stories in John's gospel to illustrate Christ's own example of thanking God. The first story is that of the feeding of the five thousand in John 6, and the second is the raising of Lazarus in John 11. Jesus receives the five barley loaves and two fish from a boy in the crowd, gives thanks for them, and then distributes them to everyone. After the crowd was satisfied, the disciples gathered twelve baskets of fragments. In reference to this sign, Cyril writes, "He gives thanks as a type for us and a model of the reverence that we ought to have. As man, he ascribes to the divine nature the power of the miracle. This was his custom. He helped, by his example of reverence, those to whom he was revealed as a teacher of excellent

¹⁸³ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 126), Pusey 1, 282).

¹⁸⁴ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 127), Pusey 1, 284–85.

truths.”¹⁸⁵ Jesus gives thanks for the generosity of the boy in offering his food, as well as to God for the sign that was given to the crowd.

Just before commanding Lazarus to come out of his tomb, Jesus looks up and says, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me” (Jn 11:41-42). Here again is an example of Christ doing and saying things that are simultaneously human and God-befitting. To offer thanks is human, and he does so as a human being; to raise someone from the dead is divine, and he does so as Word. Cyril interprets this instance of giving thanks in a way that differs from the plain sense of the gospel text. There, Jesus gives thanks for God’s attention, but in Cyril’s explanation, Jesus “offers thanks to the Father not for Lazarus alone but for the life of all... When the Lord gives thanks, however, he does this as an example to us, honoring the Father.”¹⁸⁶ The offering of thanks is the most fitting response to receiving some good thing from another, especially from the generosity of God.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ CJ 3.4 (Maxwell 1, 185), Pusey 1.416: “Εὐχαριστεῖ μὲν εἰς τύπον ἡμέτερον, καὶ τῆς ὀφειλοῦσης ἡμῖν ἐνυπάρχειν εὐλαβείας ὑπογραμμὸν. ἀνατίθησι δὲ πάλιν, ὡς ἄνθρωπος, τῇ θεῖα φύσει τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ παραδόξῳ δύναμιν. κατεῖθισται γάρ πως οὗτος ὁ τρόπος αὐτῷ, καὶ ὠφελοῦντι πρὸς ὑπογραμμὸν εὐλαβείας, καθάπερ εἰρήκαμεν, τοὺς ἐφ’ οἷς ἀναδειχθῇ τῶν καλλίστων εἰσηγητῆς”

¹⁸⁶ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 92), Pusey 2, 286: “καὶ ἀναφέρει τῷ Πατρὶ τὴν χάριν οὐχ ὑπὲρ Λαζάρου μόνον, ἀλλ’ ὑπὲρ τῆς πάντων ζωῆς... πλὴν εὐχαριστεῖ ὁ Κύριος, καὶ τοῦτο ποιεῖ πρὸς ὑπογραμμὸν ἡμῶν, τιμῶν τὸν Πατέρα.”

¹⁸⁷ It is interesting to note that none of the key texts in this study includes reference to 1 Corinthians 11:23–26, in which Paul relates Christ’s institution of the Eucharist with the offering of thanks. Only one reference to the Lukan account (Lk 22:15–20), in which Jesus “gave thanks” (ευχαρίστησας), appears in the *Commentary on John*, but does not focus on thanksgiving. Cyril’s preferred word for the Eucharist is “blessing” (εὐλογία). See Ezra Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing: An Inquiry into the Eucharistic Doctrine of Cyril of Alexandria* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1977), 54.

3.3.1.3 *Obedience*

We saw that the creation narratives include God’s “saving command” to stay away from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God was revealed as the giver of commands, while human beings are meant to receive of those commands. The transgression of Adam demonstrated the impact of disregarding and disobeying the divine command. Where the first Adam was disobedient, Jesus, as the second Adam, reveals that human beings are most expressive of their proper nature when they are obedient to the divine commands. Cyril’s understanding of the Incarnation relies quite heavily on the Christ hymn of Philippians 2:5–11. For our discussion of obedience, verse 8 is central: “he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.” For Cyril, the entire self-emptying process by which the Word became incarnate is an act of obedience by the Son to the Father, even though he is quick to clarify that receiving commands does not render the Son inferior to the Father.¹⁸⁸ Instead, he argues that such obedience demonstrates a unity of will. And yet, the most compelling demonstration of the boundless extent of Christ’s obedience comes in his suffering and death.

Through the examples of Satan and Adam, we saw how disobedience (and, in Satan’s case, disregard for God’s correction) manifested the first sins. Cyril has defined sin in terms of turning, and therefore locates the possibility of sin in the fundamental instabilities of all creatures. He further explains, “After all, the origin of sin is found in not keeping the divine commands.”¹⁸⁹ We saw earlier in this chapter how Christ is without sin, and his sinlessness is manifested in his perfect obedience to the divine

¹⁸⁸ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 72), Pusey 2, 244–45.

¹⁸⁹ CJ 10 (Maxwell 2, 195), Pusey 2, 501: “ἐν γὰρ τῷ μὴ τηρῆσαι τὰς θείας ἐντολὰς ἢ τῆς ἀμαρτίας εὐρίσκεται γένεσις.”

commands. Through his willing acceptance of crucifixion and death, in the Scriptural language, having “learned obedience through what he suffered” (Heb 5:8), Jesus reveals to human beings

that he who was truly and naturally the Son, and eminent in the glories of the Godhead, should bring himself to such abasement as to undergo the abject poverty of the human state. Yet the beautiful and helpful example of this action was for our sake, as I have said. It was meant so that we should learn something from it, an easy lesson, that we must not hurry down another path when the occasion calls for courage.¹⁹⁰

This courage refers to Christ’s actions in the garden on the eve of his trial, namely his refusal to be overcome by fear and flee despite his prayer, sweat, and tears. In all things, God’s commands are for our good, because God is by nature good. Christ’s obedience even unto death was willed by him insofar as it benefits all of humanity. Through his own obedience, Christ teaches that “when each of us fulfills our commanded service and carries out God’s commands to their completion, we surely glorify him by our works, not as though we were giving him something he did not have (since the divine and ineffable nature is full of glory), but we cause those who see the works and benefit from them to praise him.”¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ UC (McGuckin, 103), SC 97, 436: “ὅτι φύσει τε καὶ ἀληθῶς ὑπάρχων Υἱός, καὶ τοῖς τῆς θεότητος αὐχίμασιν ἐμπρεπής, καθῆκεν ἑαυτὸν εἰς ταπείνωσιν, ὡς τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης πτωχείας ὑπελθεῖν τὸ μικροπρεπές.”

¹⁹¹ CJ 11.6 (Maxwell 2, 275), Pusey 2.672: “τὴν τεταγμένην αὐτῷ λειτουργίαν ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἀποπληρῶν, καὶ διεξάγων εἰς τέλος τὰ κεκελευσμένα παρὰ Θεοῦ, τότε δὴ πάντως αὐτὸν διὰ τῶν ἰδίων δοξάζει κατορθωμάτων, οὐχ ὡς μὴ ἔχοντι προστιθεῖς· πλήρης γὰρ δόξης ἡ θεία τε καὶ ἄρρητος φύσις· ἀλλ’ ὅτι πρὸς τῶν ὁρώντων τε καὶ ὠφελουμένων δοξολογεῖσθαι ποιεῖ.”

3.3.1.4 Prayer

In his accounts of Christ's praying activity, Cyril offers examples of prayer for oneself and prayer on behalf of others. The chief episode in which Christ prays for himself is his agony in the garden. While this story does not appear in John's Gospel, Cyril nevertheless includes reference to it in his *Commentary on John* in a section dealing with the question of whether the suffering on the cross was willed or unwilled by Christ. When the passion was imminent, Christ

began a dialogue with God in the form of a prayer, saying, 'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will but as you will.' Since the Word was God, immortal and incorruptible, and he was life itself by nature, he could not cringe before death... Since he has come to be in the flesh, however, he yields to enduring what is proper to the flesh, and he allows himself to cringe before death when it is at the door so that he may show himself truly human.¹⁹²

Similarly, in his later work, *On the Unity of Christ*, Cyril appeals to this same passage from Matthew's Gospel. Here, he goes a bit further in identifying Christ's prayer as a specifically and properly human activity in anticipation of what he knew would be a terrible ordeal. Cyril writes:

The shameful of his Passion was nonetheless a burden for him, and when the time came when it was necessary to endure the cross on behalf of the life of all, he approached it in a way befitting a man, in the fashion of prayer. This was to show that he did not look forward to the passion, and thus he said: 'Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me; but not my will but yours be done' (Mt 26:39).¹⁹³

¹⁹² CJ 4.1 (Maxwell 1, 217), Pusey 1.487: "τάς πρὸς Θεὸν ἐποιεῖτο διαλέξεις, ὡς ἐν προσευχῇς δηλονότι σχήματι λέγων «Πάτερ, εἰ δυνατόν, παρελθέτω ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο· πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω, ἀλλ' ὡς σύ·» ὅτι μὲν γὰρ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος ἀθάνατός τε καὶ ἀδιάφθορος, καὶ αὐτὸ κατὰ φύσιν ζωῇ, καταπτῆσαι οὐκ ἔδει τὸν θάνατον, πᾶσιν οἶμαι προδηλότατον· ἐπιτρέπει γεμὴν ὡς ἐν σαρκὶ γεγονώς ὑπομένειν τὰ ἴδια τῇ σαρκί, καὶ γεγονότα λοιπὸν ἐπὶ θύραις ὑποπτῆσαι τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα φαίνεται κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἄνθρωπος·"

¹⁹³ UC (McGuckin, 125–26), SC 97, 494: "Ἄλλ' ἢν αὐτῷ φορτικὸν τὸ ἐν τῷ παθεῖν δυσκλεές. Καὶ γοῦν ἐνστάτος καιροῦ καθ' ὃν ἔδει τὸν ὑπὲρ γε τῆς ἀπάντων ζωῆς ὑπομεῖναι σταυρόν, ἵνα τὸ παθεῖν ἀβούλητον ἀποφῆνῃ, ἀνθρωποπρεπῆ τὴν πρόσδοδον καὶ ὡς ἐν σχήματι προσευχῇς ἐποιεῖτο λέγων· «Πάτερ, εἰ δυνατόν, παρελθέτω ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο. Πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω, ἀλλ' ὡς σύ.»"

Christ's own instruction to his disciples in teaching them to pray includes the phrase, "And do not bring us to the time of trial" (Lk 11:4). In effect, his own prayer in advance of the Passion was a rephrasing of these very words.

Cyril highlights two places where Jesus prays on behalf of others. The first is his prayer for his disciples just prior to his arrest, that they may become united (Jn 17:21). The second is in the presence of God, where Christ exercises his ministry as high priest and offers prayers for all humankind. There is a sense in which the first example is an image of the second, so that it is fitting that Cyril should spend less attention on the prayer for the few and more on the prayer for all. The first prayer, even though it is offered ostensibly on behalf of the twelve, offers a glimpse into the purposes of God in creating humanity:

What then does he pray? "That they may be one," he says. "As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us." He asks, then, for the bond of love and agreement and peace to bring the believers together in spiritual unity, a unity of agreement in all things and of inseparable harmony of their souls, so that they may imitate the imprint of the natural and essential unity that we see in the Father and the Son. But the bond of love in us and the power of concord will not completely prevail to the point of being unchangeable, as the Father and the Son are, since they preserve their unity by the identity of their essence. Their union is natural and true and may be seen in the definition of their being, but our unity imitates the form of their true unity.¹⁹⁴

The prayer that Christ offers is fundamentally an expression of his desire that those who follow him might share in the divine life, insofar as that is possible for creatures. It is,

¹⁹⁴ CJ 11.11 (Maxwell 2, 302), Pusey 2, 731–32: "τίς οὖν ἢ ποῖος ὁ τῆς αἰτήσεως τρόπος; ἵνα φησὶν ἐν ὧσι καθὼς σὺ Πάτερ ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν σοὶ ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν ἐν ὧσιν· ἀγάπης οὖν ἄρα καὶ ὁμονοίας καὶ εἰρήνης σύνδεσμον ἀπαιτεῖ, συγκομίζοντα πρὸς ἐνότητα τὴν πνευματικὴν τοὺς πιστεύοντας, ὡς τῆς φυσικῆς τε καὶ οὐσιώδους ἐνότητος, πρόδηλον δὲ ὅτι τῆς ἐν Πατρὶ τε καὶ Υἱῷ νοουμένης, ἀπομιμείσθαι τοὺς χαρακτῆρας, τὴν ἐν συναινέσει τῇ κατὰ πάντα καὶ ἀδιατμήτοις ὁμοφυ χίαις εἰς ἐνότητα συνδρομήν. καὶ οὐ δῆπου πάντως φιλονεικῆσει τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν ἀγάπης ὁ σύνδεσμος καὶ τῆς ὁμονοίας ἢ δύναμις εἰς τὸ οὕτως ἔχειν ἀπαρallάκτως, ὡς ἂν εἶεν ὁ Πατήρ τε καὶ ὁ Υἱός, ἐν τῇ τῆς οὐσίας ταυτότητι τὸν τῆς ἐνότητος ἀποσώζοντες τρόπον. ἡ μὲν γὰρ νοεῖται φυσικῇ τε καὶ ἀληθῆς καὶ ἐν τῷ τῆς ὑπάρξεως λόγῳ θεωρουμένη· ἡ δὲ τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἐνότητος ὑποκρίνεται σχῆμα."

therefore, an eschatological prayer, one that is suggestive of what will be revealed in his ascension into heaven, to be addressed in the final section of the chapter, *3.3.3 Exalted and Glorified Human Nature*.

The second description of Christ's prayer on behalf of others emerges from his role as high priest. This image comes from Hebrews and its reference to the paradigm of temple worship prescribed by the Law. Even though this prayer takes place within the heavenly sanctuary, it is offered by Christ as a human being. Indeed, it is because the Word became a human being that he functions as the mediator between God and humanity, since he is both in himself. "Since, as we have often said, all things are brought about from the Father through the Son in the Spirit, he fashions a request for blessings for us, as a mediator and high priest, even though he is a cobenefactor and cosupplier with his begetter of divine and spiritual gifts."¹⁹⁵ In his own offering of prayer on our behalf, Jesus also serves as a model: "In his capacity as mediator, high priest and Paraclete, he brings supplications to the Father on our behalf. He himself is our boldness to address the Father. We should pray, then, 'in the name' of Christ our Savior, for then the Father will most readily grant our prayers and give blessings to those who ask him, so that we may receive them with joy."¹⁹⁶ Again, Cyril writes: "He once more mediates as a human being, the reconciler and mediator between God and human beings. And as our truly great and all-holy high priest, he appeases the wrath of his Father by his prayers,

¹⁹⁵ CJ 11.4 (Maxwell 2, 271), Pusey 2.664: "ἐπειδὴ δὲ, καθὰ πολλάκις εἰρήκαμεν, πάντα τελεῖται παρὰ Πατρὸς δι' Υἱοῦ ἐν Πνεύματι, πλάττεται τῶν ἀγαθῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς τὴν αἴτησιν, ὡς μεσίτης καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς, καίτοι συνδοτὴρ καὶ συγχωρηγὸς ὑπάρχων τῷ ἰδίῳ γεννήτορι τῶν θείων τε καὶ πνευματικῶν χαρισμάτων. διαιρεῖ γὰρ κατ' ἰδίαν βούλησιν τε καὶ ἐξουσίαν οἷσπερ ἂν ἐθέλοι τὸ Πνεῦμα Χριστός."

¹⁹⁶ CJ 11.2 (Maxwell 2, 263), Pusey 2, 646: "ἡ δὲ μεσίτης καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ παράκλητος ὀνομάζεται, προσκομίζει τῷ Πατρὶ τὰς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἱκετείας· αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ πάντων ἡμῶν παρρησία πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα. ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ τὰς δεήσεις ποιητέον· προχειρότατα γὰρ οὕτω κατανεύσειεν ἂν ὁ Πατήρ, ἐπιδώσει δὲ τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτὸν τὰ ἀγαθὰ, ἵνα λαβόντες χαίρωμεν."

sacrificing himself for us.”¹⁹⁷ Certainly, the atoning self-sacrifice of Christ as high priest is central; that work will receive attention in Chapter 4. For now, the activity of Christ in offering prayer, in humbly asking for God to provide some benefit, is efficacious in itself because of Christ’s own sinlessness, and as an example for fitting human behavior.

3.3.2 Relations with Neighbor

Cyril’s annual *Festal Letters* close with the announcement of the date of Easter and its related feasts and fast. Immediately before this announcement comes an ethical exhortation whereby Cyril encourages his people to the keeping of a holy Lent. Christians ought to engage in acts of charity toward their neighbors in need as a fitting response to the compassion expressed by God in offering to humanity salvation in Christ. We saw in Chapter 1 that God’s mercy toward humanity was the basis for the giving of the Scriptures. Indeed, within the Scriptures are contained the divine commandments to love God and to love one’s neighbors as oneself. Cyril interprets the arrangement of the Ten Commandments as following this pattern. He explains further that the arrangement also illustrates the need for both right faith and good works, and that it is faith, not works, that justifies, explaining “that is why before the commands concerning the reverent way of life, grace has entered by faith as the immediate neighbor of the good things for which we hope [namely, the eschatological Sabbath rest].”¹⁹⁸ In short, love for neighbor is the summary of all the laws governing relations between human beings.

¹⁹⁷ CJ 11.8 (Maxwell 2, 282), Pusey 2, 688: “ΜΕΣΙΤΕΥΕΙ πάλιν ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ὁ Θεοῦ τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων διαλλακτῆς καὶ μεσίτης, καὶ ὁ μέγας ὄντως καὶ πανάγιος ἡμῶν ἀρχιερεὺς, ταῖς παρ’ ἑαυτοῦ λιταῖς τὴν τοῦ ἰδίου γεννήτορος ἐκμειλίσσεται γνώμην, ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἱερουργῶν.”

¹⁹⁸ CJ 4.6 (Maxwell 1, 278), Pusey 1, 621: “διὰ τοῦτο πρὸ τῶν νόμων τῆς κατ’ εὐσέβειαν πολιτείας, γείτων εὐθὺς τῇ πίστει τῶν ἐν ἐλπίσιν ἀγαθῶν ἢ χάρις εἰσβέβηκε.”

3.3.2.1 “Love your neighbor as yourself”

To demonstrate this love for neighbor, Cyril points to two episodes. In the first, Jesus meets Mary of Bethany after Lazarus has died (Jn 11:28-37). Cyril notes an important difference between their conversation and that between Jesus and Martha in v. 17-27. Both sisters said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (Jn 11:21, 32). Martha, however, continued by saying, “But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him” (Jn 11:21). This encounter will feature again in Chapter 4, where Cyril will differentiate between the two sisters and their responses. Cyril ascribes to Mary a more developed faith, and to Martha an expression of duplicity, which is why he calls Mary’s statement “more accurate and more intelligent” than Martha’s, and suggests that this is why their conversation is so much shorter. He writes,

He does not correct Mary, who of course is intoxicated with grief, for saying, “If you had been here” to the one who fills all creation. He does this as an example for us, so that we do not correct those who are in the throes of mourning. Rather, he condescends to her and reveals his human nature by weeping and being troubled when he sees her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping.¹⁹⁹

Such is the compassion of Christ, who shares in the grief of those who mourn. In the second illustration of love for neighbor, Cyril points us to Jesus on the cross, with his mother and the beloved disciple standing nearby (Jn 19:25-27). When Jesus entrusts his

¹⁹⁹ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 89), Pusey 2, 279: “τῇ λύπῃ μὲν τοι μεθύουσαν τὴν Μαρίαν οὐκ ἐλέγχει, εἰποῦσαν τό Εἰ ἦς ὧδε, τῷ πληροῦντι τὴν ἅπασαν κτίσιν· πρὸς ἡμέτερον ὑπόγραμμον καὶ τοῦτο ποιῶν, ἵνα μὴ τοὺς ἐν ἀκμῇ τῶν θρήνων ὄντας ἐλέγχωμεν· συγκαταβαίνει δὲ μᾶλλον, τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν ἀπογυμνῶν, δακρύει δὲ καὶ συγγεῖται, ἰδὼν αὐτὴν κλαίουσαν καὶ τοὺς συνελθόντας αὐτῇ Ἰουδαίους κλαίοντας.”

mother to the care of the disciple, Cyril sees the act as a clear example of obedience to the divine command to honor one's parents:

How could it not be fitting that such an illustrious command be confirmed by the decree of the Savior? And since the perfect form of every blessing and virtue proceeds first from him, why should this one not be on equal footing with the others? Surely honoring one's parents is a very precious kind of virtue. How, tell me, could we learn not to make light of love for them even when we are overwhelmed by intolerable calamities, except by the example of Christ first of all, and through him?²⁰⁰

Both of these stories illustrate Christ's compassion, love, and care for his neighbors, and thus illustrate how human beings ought to relate to one another. And yet, these stories do not express the fullest extent of the love we ought to show toward one another. For that image, Cyril turns toward the Last Supper and the "new commandment" that Jesus gives to his followers, and which he himself lives out as an example to them and to humanity in general.

3.3.2.2 *"Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another"*

At the Last Supper, Jesus says to his disciples, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (Jn 13:34). He offers this command following his demonstration of that love in washing the feet of the disciples. The new commandment simultaneously looks backward and forward. It looks backward insofar as it takes the foot washing as an example of Christ's love in the form of humble service toward his neighbors. And it looks forward to the ultimate

²⁰⁰ CJ 12 (Maxwell 2, 348–49), Pusey 3, 92: "εἴτα τοσαύτην τοῦ νομοθέτου τιμὴν ἀπονέμεσθαι δεῖν διατεταχότος παρ' ἡμῶν τοῖς φύσαισι, πῶς οὐκ ἔδει τὴν οὕτω διαβόητον ἐντολὴν καὶ ταῖς τοῦ Σωτῆρος κρατύνεσθαι ψήφοις, καὶ ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ἀπάσης ἀρετῆς ἰδέα διὰ πρώτου κεχώρηκεν αὐτοῦ, τί μὴ ταῖς ἄλλαις συνέθει καὶ αὐτῇ; τρόπος γὰρ ὄντως ἀρετῆς ὁ τιμαλφέστατος ἢ εἰς γονέας τιμή. τὸ δὲ μὴ πάρεργον ποιεῖσθαι τὴν εἰς αὐτοὺς ἀγάπην, κἂν ἀφόρητοί τινες ἡμᾶς περικλύζωσι συμφοραὶ, πόθεν ἦν εἰπέ μοι μαθεῖν, εἰ μὴ ἐν πρώτῳ καὶ διὰ πρώτου Χριστοῦ;"

sacrifice of his life for the sake of others. Cyril sees in Christ's washing of his disciples' feet an example of humility and even temperament, and an admonition against pride. In this form of service, Jesus taught the disciples "that they should think of themselves as so inferior to others in glory that they must have the rank of slave and not shrink from performing duties that belong to servants. He taught them this by washing his brothers' feet and wrapping a towel around himself for that act."²⁰¹ Cyril even takes care to include Judas Iscariot among those whose feet Jesus washed. Including his betrayer in this act of humble service demonstrates the extent of Christ's love, patience, and forbearance, and also heightens Judas' own wickedness in freely choosing to betray Jesus.²⁰²

Another example of Christ's love toward his neighbors comes in the form of his response to insult and injury. Where one might expect human beings to defend themselves against attack, or to seek some form of retribution for a wrong suffered, Jesus stands as an example of non-violence, and thereby of the refusal to cause harm to a neighbor. So, for example, when the soldiers and police confront Jesus in the garden, armed and ready to arrest him, Jesus gives himself up to them (Jn 18:3–12). Cyril writes that Jesus could easily have used his divine power to avoid capture and to punish those who would do him harm. Instead, he chose "to teach us the utmost forbearance and present himself as a type of perfect tranquility. That is why he said, 'Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart.'"²⁰³ Shortly after, the soldiers and police deliver Jesus to

²⁰¹ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 119), Pusey 2, 345: "τοσοῦτον οἶεσθαι τῶν ἄλλων ἡττᾶσθαι κατὰ τὴν δόξαν, ὡς καὶ ἐν δούλῳ τάξει κατατάττεσθαι δεῖν, οὐδὲ αὐτὴν καταφρίττοντα τὴν οἰκέτη πρέπουσαν λειτουργίαν ἀποπληροῦν, διὰ τοῦ καὶ ἀπονίζειν τῶν ἀδελφῶν τοὺς πόδας, καὶ λέντιον περιθέσθαι διὰ τὴν χρείαν."

²⁰² CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 122), Pusey 2, 351.

²⁰³ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 316), Pusey 3.23: "μᾶλλον δὲ τῆς εἰς ἄκρον ἡμῖν ἀνεξικακίας γενέσθαι διδάσκαλος, ἀοργησίας τε τῆς ἀπασῶν ἀνωτάτω καταστῆναι τύπος. διὸ καὶ ἔλεγε 'Μάθετε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ὅτι πρῶός εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ.'"

Caiaphas for questioning. When an officer slaps Jesus in the face (Jn 18:23), Jesus responds only with a question. Cyril explains,

Yet he does nothing and does not repay those who wronged him with instant punishment. He is not weak like us, or tyrannized by anger or resentment, or overcome by the weight of their insult, but he gently puts his opponent to shame by saying that it is not right for him to strike one who has said nothing wrong. He does not forget his own characteristic behavior when he is seized by circumstances that seem terrifying.²⁰⁴

In each of these cases, the behavior and posture of Jesus in the face of danger is completely non-violent, both in action and in speech. Moreover, in addition to refusing to employ violence, Cyril describes Jesus, in loving response to abuse and insult, as offering “the word of salvation in return.”²⁰⁵

Of course, the most dramatic revelation of Christ’s love comes in his suffering and death on the cross. It is his own embodiment and enactment of the new commandment to his disciples. He tells them, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13). It is the ultimate expression of love for others exceeding love for oneself. Cyril writes:

Do you see what is new about his love for us? The law commanded us to love our brother as ourselves. But our Lord Jesus Christ loved us more than himself. Otherwise he would not have descended to our humble state when he was in the form of and equal to God the Father, nor would he have undergone such a bitter death of the flesh for us, nor would he have endured the buffeting of the Jews, the shame, the derision, and all the rest (lest we extend our discourse to an interminable extent by enumerating everything that happened to him). Nor would he have become poor when he was rich if he did not love us very much, even more than himself.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 323), Pusey 3.39: “καὶ δρᾷ μὲν οὐδέν, ἀντεπάγει δὲ τῶν ἀδικούντων οὐδενὶ τὴν παραχρῆμα κόλασιν, ἐπεὶ μηδὲ ἐστὶ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἀσθενής, ἢ ὀργαῖς ἢ λύπαις τυραννούμενος, ἢ τῷ τῆς πλεονεξίας βάρει νικώμενος, δυσωπεῖ δὲ πρῶως τὸν ἐφεστηκότα, τὸν οὐδὲν ἐκτόπως λαλήσαντα μὴ χρῆναι παῖειν εἰπών, καὶ αὐτοῖς δὲ τοῖς δοκοῦσιν εἶναι δεινοῖς ἐναποληφθεὶς τῶν οἰκείων ἐπιτηδευμάτων οὐκ ἀλογεῖ.”

²⁰⁵ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 238), Pusey 2, 592: “τὸν...σωτήριον ἀνέκαμψα λόγον.”

²⁰⁶ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 139, Pusey 2, 386: “ὁρᾷς τὸ καινὸν τῆς εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀγαπήσεως; ὁ μὲν γὰρ νόμος ἀγαπῆσαι δεῖν τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἐκέλευσεν ὡς ἑαυτόν· ὁ δὲ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς ἡγάπησεν ἡμᾶς

Cyril includes the whole *oikonomia* in his description of Christ's love, but we are focusing on that aspect of neighbor love revealed by the Word *as a human being*. Divine love for all of creation permeates the whole of Cyril's corpus, but it is the expression of human love toward fellow human beings that is of interest here.

3.3.2.3 *Love for Neighbor Specific to the Christian Community*

Most of what we have learned thus far from the example of Christ in his demonstrations of love for neighbor has been generally applicable to all of humanity. However, there are a few instances where Cyril explicitly highlights Christ's own behaviors and patterns as correctives to what he sees as problematic behaviors and practices within the Church. Continuing with the theme of non-violence, Cyril appeals to the story of Simon Peter cutting off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave (Jn 18:10-11). Through this brief passage, Cyril highlights the potential for excessive zeal in devotion to Christ: "This event serves as a type that forbids us to draw a sword out of devotion to Christ or to pick up stones against anyone or to strike our opponents with a stick...It is far better for others to be corrected for their sins against us by him who judges justly than for us to make excuses for our blood guilt by citing our piety as a pretext."²⁰⁷ But Cyril goes on to

ὕπερ ἑαυτόν· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐν μορφῇ καὶ ἰσότητι τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς ὑπάρχων πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν κατέβη ταπεινώσιν, οὐδ' ἂν ὑπέστη πικρὸν οὕτως ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὸν τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατον, οὐδ' ἂν ἠνέσχετο ῥαπισμάτων Ἰουδαϊκῶν, αἰσχύνης καὶ γέλωτος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων, ἵνα μὴ ἕκαστα τῶν εἰς αὐτὸν γεγονότων ἐξαριθμοῦμενοι, πρὸς ἀπέραντον τὸν λόγον ἐκτείνωμεν· ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἂν ἐπτόχευσε πλούσιος ὢν, εἰ μὴ πολὺ λίαν ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς ὑπὲρ ἑαυτόν. ξένον οὖν ἄρα τῆς ἀγάπης τὸ μέτρον."

²⁰⁷ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 316), Pusey 3, 22: "οὐ γὰρ δὴ σίδηρον ἀνατείνειν, ἢ λίθους ἐξαίρειν κατὰ τινων, ἡγουν ξύλῳ παίοντας τοὺς δι' ἐναντίας, τῇ εἰς Χριστὸν εὐσεβείᾳ συναθλεῖν ὁ τοῦ πράγματος ἡμᾶς ἐφίησι τύπος...πολὺ γὰρ δὴ τι τὸ ἄμεινον, ὑπὲρ τῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀδικημάτων ἑτέρους εὐθύνεσθαι παρὰ τοῦ τὰ δίκαια κρίνοντος, ἥπερ οὖν ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς τὸν ἐφ' αἵμασιν ἐξαίτεϊσθαι λόγον, πρόφασιν ποιουμένους τὴν εὐσεβειαν."

explain how Peter's actions, although blameless according to the law, nevertheless fell short.²⁰⁸ Cyril portrays Jesus rebuking Peter's action "for not accomplishing what is truly good. The perfect good is found not in repaying in kind but in the utmost forbearance."²⁰⁹

This is a striking rejection of sectarian violence, given the context of fifth-century Alexandria and its deep tensions and conflicts among pagans, Jews, and Christians. Russell notes heightened tensions in the period following the Theodosian laws of 391CE, and the 416CE change in Judaism's legal status from *religio* to *superstitio*.²¹⁰

Nevertheless, Cyril insists that Christian love for neighbor must extend even to "our murderers" (φονῶσι), and that violence in the name of devotion is never acceptable.²¹¹

A second, though far less dramatic, aspect of Church life in need of correction is the spreading of the faith and the instruction of new believers. Sound and sufficient catechesis is the goal that Cyril sought in writing his *Commentary on John*.²¹² And that catechesis is itself a form of love for one's neighbor. Cyril's definition of what is "sufficient" seems to have differed considerably from some of his contemporaries. He raises concern at the haste with which neophytes come to participate in the Eucharist, and worries that they have not been adequately prepared. And he is especially concerned at

²⁰⁸ Here Cyril refers to Exodus 21:23–25 ("If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." Peter drawing his sword is taken as commensurate with the armed band who came to arrest Jesus. CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 316), Pusey 3, 23–24.

²⁰⁹ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 316), Pusey 3, 24: "ὥς οὐκ ἔχουσι τελείαν τοῦ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἀγαθοῦ τὴν κατόρθωσιν. οὐ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἰσῶν ἀντεπαγωγαῖς τὸ τελείως ἐστὶν ἀγαθόν, ἀνεξικακίαις δὲ μᾶλλον ταῖς ἀνωτάτω διαφαίνεται."

²¹⁰ Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, The Early Church Fathers (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 12. For a robust presentation of Jewish-Christian relations in the Roman empire generally and in Alexandria in particular, see Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 9–53.

²¹¹ CJ (Maxwell 2, 316), Pusey 3, 22.

²¹² Maxwell, "Translator's Introduction," xviii–xix.

the rapid progression from catechumenate to priesthood in some parts of the Alexandrian church.²¹³ With regard to the catechetical process, Cyril admonishes,

Let those who dispense the mysteries of the Savior learn from these things not to admit a person too soon within the holy veil or to allow neophytes to approach the divine table who are baptized too early and do not at that time believe that Christ is the Lord of all. In order to become a pattern for us in this as well, and to teach us who is appropriately initiated, he receives those who believe, but he clearly does not yet put his trust in them because they do not “believe in him.” It is clear from this that newcomers must spend not a little time in catechesis. In this way, they may with difficulty become faithful.²¹⁴

For Cyril, right faith is a critical aspect of, and indeed the prerequisite to, life in Christ.

The content of that faith is never simply a vague assent to the existence of God, for example. Rather, Cyril insists that right faith includes belief in the lordship of Christ, as noted earlier. At heart, Christian faith must include belief in the death of Christ, and in his resurrection. Only when faith is formed well can it benefit believers. It is for this reason that solid catechetical instruction is, for Cyril, an expression of love for one’s neighbor.

Similarly, in the context of preaching and teaching, Cyril encourages his audience to treat women as equally deserving of catechetical instruction as men. While Cyril’s treatment of sex and gender issues falls outside the scope of this project, it may be helpful to note that, on the one hand, he routinely presents “masculine” qualities as preferable to “feminine” qualities (whether describing men or women). There are also not a few instances in which his praise for women takes somewhat surprising turns. In reference to

²¹³ Maxwell, “Translator’s Introduction,” xix.

²¹⁴ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell, CJ 1:96), Pusey 1, 214: “Μανθανέτωσαν διὰ τούτων οἱ τῶν τοῦ Σωτῆρος μυστηρίων ταμίαι, μὴ πρόωρον τῶν ἱερῶν καταπετασμάτων εἰσω ποιεῖσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, μηδὲ νεοφύτους ταῖς θεαῖς ἐπιτρέπειν προσιέναι τραπέζαις ἁωρὶ βαπτιζομένους τινάς, καὶ οὐκ ἐν καιρῷ τὸν πάντων Δεσπότην πιστευομένους Χριστόν. ἵνα γὰρ τύπος ἡμῖν καὶ τούτῳ γένηται, καὶ διδάξῃ τίνι μᾶλλον ἐστὶ τὸ μυεῖσθαι πρεπωδέστερον, δέχεται μὲν τοὺς πιστεύοντας, οὕτω δὲ αὐτοῖς ἐπιθαρήσας ὁρᾶται, διὰ τοῦ μὴ πιστεύειν αὐτόν· ὥς εἶναι δῆλον ἐντεῦθεν, ὅτι χρὴ τοὺς νεήλυδας οὐ μικρὸν ἐν κατηχήσει τριβεσθαι χρόνον· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν μόλις γένοιντο πιστοί.”

the Samaritan woman at the well, Cyril sees Christ's extended conversation with her as an expression of his

loving kindness to all. By this act, he shows that since the creator is certainly one, he does not assign life through faith only to men, but he takes the female race as well into his net to the same life. Let the one who teaches in the church profit from this as a model, and let him not refuse to help women. After all, one must certainly be directed not by one's own will but by the need for preaching.²¹⁵

Here we see an example of the kind of conflict between Christian ideals and dominant cultural norms that can persist. And yet Cyril insists that culture yield to the gospel.

Christ's own willingness to offer instruction equally to women as to men offers catechists an example to emulate in their own efforts to teach and build up the faith in their neighbors within the Church.²¹⁶

3.3.3 Relations within Oneself

The human creature is composite by nature, possessing both body and soul. This means that we experience sensations, needs, and desires that correspond to each. So, for example, our bodies need food, water, rest, and we desire the avoidance of bodily pain and suffering. Our souls (meaning all that is not flesh in us) likewise experience a range of emotions, as well as intellectual movements. As a human being, Christ experiences everything that is proper to human life. He is born and he dies. These experiences are

²¹⁵ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 128), Pusey 1, 287: “εἰς ἅπαντας τὴν φιланθρωπίαν, καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ δεικνύει τοῦ πράγματος, ὅτι δὴ πάντως εἰς ὑπάρχων Δημιουργός, οὐ μόνοις ἀνδράσι τὴν διὰ πίστεως ἀπονέμει ζωὴν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θῆλυ πρὸς αὐτὴν σαγηνεύει γένος. Κερδαινέτω πάλιν καὶ τοῦτο πρὸς ὑπογραμμὸν ὁ διδάσκων ἐν ἐκκλησίαις, καὶ μὴ παραιτίσθω γυναῖκας ὠφελεῖν. οὐ γὰρ θελήμασι τοῖς ἰδίαις, ἀλλὰ τῇ τοῦ κηρύγματος χρείᾳ δεῖ πάντως ἀκολουθεῖν.”

²¹⁶ The question of how sex and gender factor into what it means to be human in general, and how Cyril's anthropology might answer or address that question is an important one, and deserving of subsequent investigation. I have chosen to set that question outside the scope of the current project.

proper because human beings are created, and therefore have both a natural beginning and an end, except insofar as they are preserved in life for a time.

3.3.3.1 *The Weakness of the Body*

Cyril identifies hunger, thirst, and fatigue as the primary bodily experiences of human beings, and, because Jesus experiences each of them, they both reveal that he is truly human, and that they are not, in themselves, sinful. They are, rather, examples of the weakness of our nature insofar as our bodies require assistance in remaining alive. In his *On the Unity of Christ*, Cyril urges his readers not to take offense at his saying that Christ hungered or was fatigued or experienced any other bodily manifestations of need. He argues,

Just as we say that the flesh became his very own, in the same way the weakness of that flesh became his very own in an economic appropriation according to the terms of the unification. So, he is “made like his brethren in all things except sin alone” (Heb 2:17). Do not be astonished if we say that he has made the weakness of the flesh his own along with the flesh itself.²¹⁷

In a similar way, in commenting on Christ saying from the cross, “I am thirsty” (Jn 19:28), Cyril explains

Pain is apt to produce thirst since it uses up moisture in the body with excessive inner heat, inflaming the inner organs of the sufferer with its fiery attacks. Now it would not have been difficult for the Word, who is almighty God, to keep this away from his flesh. But just as he willingly allowed himself to endure the other sufferings, he endured this one too by his own free choice. So he asked for a drink.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ UC (McGuckin, 107), SC 97, 448: “Ὡς περ γὰρ ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ τὴν σάρκα γενέσθαι φαμέν, οὕτω πάλιν αὐτοῦ κατ’ οἰκείωσιν οἰκονομικὴν καὶ κατὰ γε τὸν τῆς <ἐνώσεως> τρόπον, τὰς τῆς σαρκὸς ἀσθενείας. Ὁμοιώθη γὰρ κατὰ πάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, δίχα μόνως ἁμαρτίας. Καὶ μὴ τοι θαυμάσης εἰ τὰς τῆς σαρκὸς ἀσθενείας οἰκειοῦσθαι φαμεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς σαρκὸς”

²¹⁸ CJ 12 (Maxwell 2, 349), Pusey 3, 93: “δεινοὶ γὰρ οἱ πόνοι πρὸς τὸ ἀναγκᾶσαι διψῆν, ἐμφύτῳ τινὶ καὶ ἀφράστῳ θερμότητι τὴν ἐν τῷ βάθει δαπανῶντες ἱκμάδα, καὶ διαπύροις τισὶ προσβολαῖς τὸ τοῦ πάσχοντος διακαίοντες σπλάγχνον. ἦν μὲν γὰρ οὐ χαλεπὸν τῷ πάντα ἰσχύοντι Θεῷ Λόγῳ ἀποστῆσαι καὶ

These examples show that bodily weakness is proper to human nature, simply because we are creatures who do not have life from within ourselves. As such, those needs do not constitute sins. Rather, it is inordinate acquiescence to the demands of the body that proves sinful. And for this reason, Cyril also highlights how Christ is seen to fast, thereby inviting us into imitation, so that “he may appear as an example of the sinless life and the source of salvation. Among ourselves as well, therefore, let fasting precede the holy festival.”²¹⁹ Through his own fasting and self-denial, Jesus demonstrates the well-ordered relationship between body and soul, so that the body always submits itself and its needs to the soul and its guidance.

3.3.3.2 *The Weakness of the Soul*

Just as Cyril points out the ways in which Jesus experiences the whole range of bodily weaknesses that are proper to human nature, so also does he show Jesus enduring weaknesses of the soul. These appear most frequently in the forms of grief, fear, and mental anguish.²²⁰ While Cyril argues that experiencing each of these weaknesses is not sinful in itself, nevertheless, allowing them to become excessive and to dominate us would be considered sinful. By his own example, then, Christ reveals both that emotional responses to suffering are properly human, and that those responses must be limited to avoid sin.

τοῦτο τῆς ἰδίας σαρκὸς, ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ ἐκὼν ἐφῆκε παθεῖν τὰ ἕτερα, πάσχει καὶ τοῦτο καθ’ ἐκούσιον βούλησιν. οὐκοῦν ἐζήτει πεινῆν.”

²¹⁹ FL 21.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 111), PG 77, 852D: “ἵνα ὑπογραμμὸς ἡμῖν τῆς ἀναμαρτήτου ζωῆς καὶ ἀρχῆς σωτηρίας εὐρεθῇ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς προεδρευέτω τῆς ἀγίας πανηγύρεως ἡ νηστεία”

²²⁰ See, for example Andrew Mellas, “The Passions of His Flesh”: St Cyril of Alexandria and the Emotions of the Logos,” *Phronema* 29.1 (2014): 81–99.

To illustrate grief, Cyril appeals again to the story of Lazarus, and specifically to the description of Jesus weeping. He writes, “Since Christ is not only God by nature but also human, he undergoes human experience with the rest of us. When grief begins to stir in him and his holy flesh inclines to tears, he does not allow it to indulge those tears without restraint, as we often do.”²²¹ Cyril explains that Christ weeps for his friend, but also for the whole of humanity that had been made subject to death and decay.

Nevertheless,

he does no more than weep, and then he immediately checks his tears. This is so he does not appear cruel and inhuman as he teaches us not to give in excessively to grief over the dead. It is one thing to be sympathetic, another to be effeminate and unmanly. Therefore, he allowed his flesh to cry a little, even though he is by nature tearless and immune to all grief, as far as his own nature is concerned.²²²

Here we see most clearly that weeping as an expression of grief is fitting and appropriate (and “manly”), but that allowing an emotion to become a passion is where sin enters in.

Just as grief is an emotional response to loss, mental anguish is an emotional response to a future danger. Cyril explains that such anguish is a particularly human experience that depends upon our being rational creatures. He explains that animals experience fear prompted by the immediate presence of a threat, but that human beings experience anguish because of our capacity to imagine and anticipate dangers that have not presented themselves. To illustrate this point, Cyril turns to Christ speaking to a crowd about his death and saying, “Now my soul is troubled” (Jn 12:27). He clarifies,

²²¹ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 89), Pusey 2, 279: “Επειδή δὲ οὐ Θεὸς κατὰ φύσιν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁ Χριστός, πάσχει μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων τὸ ἀνθρώπινον· ἀρχομένης δὲ πῶς ἐν αὐτῷ κινεῖσθαι τῆς λύπης, καὶ νευούσης ἤδη πρὸς τὸ δάκρυον τῆς ἀγίας σαρκός, οὐκ ἀφίησιν αὐτὴν τοῦτο παθεῖν ἐκλύτως, καθάπερ ἔθος ἡμῖν.”

²²² CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 90), Pusey 2, 282: “δακρύει δὲ μόνον, καὶ εὐθὺς ἐπέχει τὸ δάκρυον, ἵνα μὴ δόξη τις ὥμους καὶ ἀπάνθρωπος εἶναι, καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς παιδεύων μὴ ἐπὶ πολὺ ἐκλύεσθαι ἐπὶ τοῖς τεθνηκόσι. τὸ μὲν γὰρ, συμπαθείας ἐχόμενον· τὸ δὲ γυναικικὸν καὶ ἀνανδρον. διὰ τοῦτο οὖν συνεχώρησε τῇ ἰδίᾳ σαρκὶ κλαῦσαι ὀλίγον, καίπερ ὧν τῇ φύσει ἄδακρυς καὶ ἀπάσης ἀνεπίδεκτος λύπης, ὅσον εἰς ἰδίαν φύσιν.”

once again, that Christ experiences suffering of the soul because he is human, but he does not let that suffering dominate him. Rather, he always exercises control over his own responses. Cyril highlights this difference between Christ's sinless example and our own excessive tendencies by saying, "he is not troubled like we are, but only to the point of undergoing the sensation of the experience. Then he immediately returns to the courage that is fitting for him...Christ is not yet on the cross, but he experiences mental anguish ahead of time as he looks ahead to what is going to happen and endures by his rational faculty the thought of future events."²²³ Cyril insists that fear of death is natural to us, and that Christ's own experience provides evidence of his true and full humanity. Indeed, his prayer that he might be spared the coming suffering discussed earlier indicates the weakness of human nature and its deep desire to escape suffering and death.²²⁴

3.3.3.3 *Human Growth and Development*

Lastly, it will be helpful to address a more positive movement of body and soul as it is lived and experienced by Jesus Christ. We saw in the first chapter that human beings are like God insofar as we are rational, but that we are unlike God insofar as we learn while God simply knows. We are fundamentally unstable, subject to change for better or worse, while God is always perfectly stable and utterly unchangeable. This human characteristic appears clearly in the physical and intellectual development of each human person from birth through childhood and into adulthood. Cyril understands that

²²³ CJ 8.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 105), Pusey 2, 317: "ταράττεται δὲ οὐχ ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς, ἀλλ' ὅσον εἰς αἴσθησιν μόνον ὑπενεχθῆναι τοῦ πράγματος, εἴτα πάλιν εὐθὺς εἰς τὴν ἐαυτοῦ πρέπουσαν εὐτολμίαν ἀναπηδᾷ...οὕτω γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ σταυρῷ γεγονῶς ὁ Χριστὸς, πρόωρον ὑπομένει τὸν θόρυβον, προαναθεωρήσας δηλονότι τὸ μέλλον, καὶ τῷ λογισμῷ πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἐσομένων μνήμην ὑπενεχθεῖς."

²²⁴ CJ 4.1 (Maxwell 1, 217), Pusey 1, 487–88.

It belongs to manhood to advance in stature and wisdom, and one might say in grace also, for understanding unfolds in a certain fashion in each person according to the limits of the body. It is one thing in infants, something else in grown children, and something different again for adults. It would not have been impossible, or impractical, for God the Word who issued from the Father to have made that body which he united with himself rise up even from its swaddling bands, and bring it straight to the stature of perfect maturity. One might even say that it would have been plain sailing, quite easy for him to have displayed a prodigal wisdom in his infancy; but such a thing would have smacked of wonder-working, and would have been out of key with the plan of the economy. No, the mystery was accomplished quietly, and for this reason (that is economically) he allowed the limitations of the manhood to have dominion over himself. This was so arranged as part of his “likeness to us,” for we advance to greater things little by little as the occasion calls us to assume a greater stature and a concomitant mentality.²²⁵

This is an entirely human process, and so it is fitting that Christ should participate in that human experience. It is also telling that Cyril includes advancing in grace as part of his description of natural human development. This suggests that grace functions along a spectrum rather than in a binary fashion where one either has or lacks grace. In Chapter 1 we saw hints at this spectrum in relation to the Holy Spirit and the image of God, which was lost gradually. This idea will become very important as we move to our assessment of Cyril’s thought on humanity’s eschatological nature.

²²⁵ UC (McGuckin, 109–10), SC 97, 454–56: “Ἀνθρωπότητος δὲ τὸ προκόπτειν ἐστὶν ἡλικία τε καὶ σοφία, φαίνῃ δ’ ἂν ὅτι καὶ χάριτι, συναναπηδῶσης τρόπον τινὰ τοῖς τοῦ σώματος μέτροις καὶ τῆς ἐν ἐκάστῳ συνέσεως. Ἐτέρα μὲν γὰρ ἐν νηπίοις, ἑτέρα δὲ αὖ ἐν τοῖς ἤδη παισὶ, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦτο ἔτι. Ἦν μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἀδύνατον, ἢ γοῦν ἀνέφικτον, ὡς Θεῷ τῷ ἐκ Πατρὸς φύντι Λόγῳ, τὸ ἐνωθὲν αὐτῷ σῶμα καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν παργάνων ἀραί τε ὑποῦ καὶ εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τῆς ἀρτίως ἐχούσης ἀνεγκεῖν. Φαίνῃ δ’ ἂν ὅτι καὶ ἐν νηπίῳ σοφίαν ἐκφῆναι τεθνασμένην ῥάδιόν τε καὶ εὐήλατον ἦν αὐτῷ. Ἀλλ’ ἦν τὸ χρῆμα τερατοποιίας οὐ μακράν, καὶ τοῖς τῆς οἰκονομίας λόγοις ἀναρμοστον. Ἐτελεῖτο γὰρ ἀποφητὶ τὸ μυστήριον. Ἠφίει δὴ οὖν οἰκονομικῶς τοῖς τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος μέτροις ἐφ’ ἑαυτῷ τὸ κρατεῖν. Τετάζεται γὰρ ἐν μοίρᾳ καὶ τοῦτο τῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὁμοιώσεως, οἷς κατὰ βραχὺ πρὸς τὸ μεῖζον ἢ πρόοδος, αἶροντος ἡμᾶς καιροῦ πρὸς ἐπίδοσιν ἡλικίας καὶ οὐκ ἀναρμόστου φρονήσεως.”

3.4 CHRIST’S OWN SINLESSNESS

Having laid out the variety of ways in which the narrative accounts of Jesus have revealed important truths of human nature and human experience apart from sin, we now turn to a critical aspect of the whole project of seeing the Incarnation as the revelation to human beings of sinless human nature. So much of the discussion about Christ’s humanity merely accepts sinlessness at face value. It is referenced in Scripture (e.g. 2 Cor 5:21, Heb 4:15, 1 Pet 2:2, 1 Jn 3:5) and Cyril certainly accepts these statements as true. Yet the sinlessness of Christ is deeply important to understanding Cyril’s anthropology. It is not sufficient to say that Christ *does not* sin; Cyril argues that Christ *cannot* sin:

Christ, after all, did not commit sin. All sin originates from a turning from what is better to what is not. It is brought forth in those who have a natural capacity for turning and who are susceptible to changing into what they should not change into. How then could he be understood to sin who knows no turning and is not susceptible to changing into anything improper but is unshakable in his own natural good properties—and this not from someone else but from himself?²²⁶

This means that statements about Christ being like us in all things save sin are speaking not of something insignificant, but rather something quite revealing.

We saw in Chapter 2 that Cyril ties the possibility of sin to the variations of instability that human beings possess by virtue of our being composite creatures. We also saw that the stability enjoyed, albeit briefly, by Adam and Eve in Eden was due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the image of God. This stability was only partial; it did not prevent Adam and Eve from turning when they freely chose to do so. And the consequence of their transgression was the loss of the Holy Spirit and the benefits of its

²²⁶ CJ 6 (Maxwell 2, 5), Pusey 2, 102: “ἀμαρτίαν γὰρ οὐκ ἐποίησεν ὁ Χριστός. ἅπαντα μὲν γὰρ ἀμαρτία ἐκ παρατροπῆς τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ βελτίονος ἐπὶ τὸ μὴ οὕτως ἔχον λαμβάνει τὴν γένεσιν, ἐντίκτεται δὲ τοῖς τρέπεσθαι πεφυκόσι, καὶ ἀλλοιώσεως τῆς ἐφ’ ἧ μὴ προσῆκε δεκτικοῖς. πῶς ἂν οὖν νοοῖτο καὶ ἀμαρτεῖν ὁ τροπὴν οὐκ εἰδὼς, οὐδὲ ἀλλοιώσεως τῆς ἐπὶ τι τῶν οὐ πρεπόντων δεκτικὸς, ἀκλόνητος δὲ μᾶλλον τοῖς ἰδίοις ἐμπεφυκόσιν ἀγαθοῖς, καὶ οὐ παρ’ ἐτέρου τινὸς, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ;”

indwelling. In short, the sinlessness of Adam and Eve, for that period prior to their encounter with the serpent, depended entirely on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit; it is the condition for the possibility of human sinlessness. This represents an important insight into the relationship between God and human beings.

In the Incarnation, however, it is God the Son and Word who becomes a human being. As God, he is completely and utterly stable, incapable of turning and therefore of sinning. When the Word becomes human, he remains himself as God. This is a profound dissimilarity between Jesus Christ and the rest of humanity. While it is true to say that he is like us in all things apart from sin, the reverse is not true: we are not like him in all things apart from sin. In Jesus exists a relationship between humanity and divinity that is entirely unique. It is a relationship that we do not possess, and in fact will never possess. The consequences of this relationship, or rather, of the fact that the Word is always the subject of whatever speech or activity is described, appear clearly in some of the gospel stories discussed in the previous section.

When Cyril describes the grief that Christ experiences in his encounter with Mary of Bethany over the death of Lazarus, he offers an interpretation of the phrase, “he was troubled by the Spirit and agitated” (Jn 11:33).

by the power of the Holy Spirit he rebukes his own flesh, in a manner of speaking. That flesh, since it cannot bear the movement of the divine nature within it, trembles and gives the appearance of being troubled. I think that is what “agitated” refers to. Otherwise, how could he experience trouble? How could that nature that is undisturbed and calm be troubled? The flesh, then, is being rebuked by the Spirit and taught to have feelings beyond its own nature.²²⁷

²²⁷ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 89), Pusey 2, 279–80: “τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐπιπλήττει τρόπον τινὰ τῇ ἰδίᾳ σαρκί· ἡ δὲ, τὸ τῆς ἐνωθείσης αὐτῇ θεότητος οὐκ ἐνεγκοῦσα κίνημα, τρέμει τε καὶ θορύβου πλάττεται σχῆμα. τοῦτο γὰρ οἶμαι σημαίνειν τὸ Ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν· πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἐτέρως ὑπομείνῃ θόρυβον; ταραχθήσεται γεμὴν κατὰ τινὰ τρόπον ἢ ἀθόλωτος ἀεὶ καὶ γαληνῶσα φύσις; ἐπιτιμᾶται τοίνυν ἡ σὰρξ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὰ ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἰδίαν διδασκομένη φρονεῖν.”

Here we see something of the relationship between human and divine at work in a given situation. Cyril attributes the ability to avoid excessive and unrestrained weeping, not to any human power, but rather to divine authority. Keating argues that “Christ personally experiences genuine temptation and suffering and overcomes them from within.”²²⁸

While it is certainly true to say, thanks to Cyril’s insistence that there is one subject and agent of whatever Christ says or does, that Christ overcomes these things from within himself, it is also true that the temptations he encounters *as man* are overcome because of his natural stability *as God*.

It is a curious thing to characterize the relationship of human and divine in Christ as offering such discomfort to the flesh. And yet that human discomfort itself is alleviated by divine strength and stability. Cyril goes on to summarize his assessment: “Here we understand ‘troubled’ as the will struggling with a sort of movement according to its power, because he fiercely rebuked his grief and the tears that would flow from his grief. As God, he rebukes his human nature like a teacher, commanding it to be brave in sorrowful situations.”²²⁹ This is exactly the dynamic that renders Christ quite unlike us when it comes to the problem of sin. Keating offers Christ’s own sinlessness as a form of revelation, insofar as “Cyril portrays Christ’s manner of overcoming temptation as a pattern for our own. Christ’s victory over temptation as man is for Cyril genuinely a model for us. We too overcome the weakness of the flesh by the power of God within us.”²³⁰ Again, there is truth to the statement, but more nuance is needed. The power of

²²⁸ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 127.

²²⁹ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 91), Pusey 2, 283: Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 2015, 2:91. “Ἐνταῦθα τὴν ἐμβρίμησιν νοοῦμεν, τὴν οἰοεῖ μετὰ κινήσεως τῆς κατ’ ἐξουσίαν θέλησιν· καὶ ὅτι ἀγριώτερον τῇ λύπῃ ἐπετίμησε, καὶ τῷ δακρύῳ τῷ ἐκ τῆς λύπης ἐκχεῖσθαι μέλλοντι. ὥς γὰρ Θεὸς παιδαγωγικῶς τῇ ἀνθρωπότητι ἐπιτιμᾷ, νεανιεύεσθαι ἐπιτάττων τῶν λυπηρῶν”

²³⁰ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 127.

God within us is quite different from that in Christ. In his own person, humanity and divinity are permanently and indissolubly united. To say that Christ is sinless *as man* depends entirely upon the fact that he cannot sin *as God*. There never existed a distinct human being that was then assumed by the Word. Such a thing would render the incarnation indistinguishable from that gift of the Holy Spirit to Adam when God breathed into his nostrils. The human-divine relationship that persists in the Incarnation has the effect of making Christ's human nature benefit from the ontological and natural stability of the Word.

Far from being a wedge between Christ's humanity and our own, this fact of his sinlessness and its derivative quality is itself a key aspect of the revelation that the Incarnation offers. The gift of the Law had the effect of exposing sin, humanity's inability to overcome its own sinfulness, and therefore our need for a savior. In a similar way, the Incarnation offers the lived embodiment of the Law. Despite the fact that human beings have in Jesus a perfect exemplar of sinless human nature, we utterly lack the capacity to accomplish such sinlessness ourselves. Once again, human beings are moved to look to outside of ourselves, to desire divine assistance as the source of the stability we need in order to avoid sin.

3.5 CHRIST REVEALS EXALTED AND GLORIFIED HUMAN NATURE

What had been merely gestured to or hinted at in Chapter 1, namely the *telos* of the human creature, becomes fully revealed in the Incarnation. Cyril expresses both the descending and ascending movements of the divine *oikonomia* when he writes that the

Word “thought it good to be made man and in his own person to reveal our nature honored in the dignities of the divinity.”²³¹ To be honored in this way is the consummation of God’s creation of human beings. It is accomplished first in Christ, when God “highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name” (Phil 2:9). Much of current scholarship on Cyril and his understanding of the work of Christ in the economy of salvation falls far short of offering a full explication. Scholars including Koen, McGuckin, Blackwell, and Maxwell agree that Cyril understands that the death and resurrection of Christ accomplish the work of restoring sinful and corrupt humanity to its Edenic state before the Fall.

Lars Koen’s assessment of Cyril’s teaching is that “redemption is a restoration to the primeval state”²³² and that participation in Christ “raises fallen man to the primeval *Imago Dei*.”²³³ Similarly, McGuckin characterizes the Incarnation as “a restorative act entirely designed for the ontological reconstruction of a human nature that had fallen into existential decay as a result of its alienation from God,”²³⁴ and as “an ontological rescue of the [human] race.”²³⁵ David Maxwell uses the language of divinization to argue for restoration along the lines of both Koen and McGuckin, but he argues for a redefinition or reinterpretation of Cyril’s understanding of divinization such that the focus is not on human beings being made “gods” but rather that “it restores to us the divine life that Adam shared through the Holy Spirit and the image of God.”²³⁶ He summarizes his position by saying, “divinization does not mean transcending our creaturely finitude, but

²³¹ UC (McGuckin, 55), SC 97, 316: “Πλὴν ἐνανθρωπήσαι κρίναντα, καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ μόνῳ τοῖς τῆς θεότητος ἀξιώμασιν ἐκπρεπῆ τὴν ἡμῶν ἀποφῆναι φύσιν.”

²³² Koen, *The Saving Passion*, 47.

²³³ Koen, *The Saving Passion*, 48.

²³⁴ McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, 184.

²³⁵ McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, 187.

²³⁶ Maxwell, “Sin in Cyril of Alexandria’s Commentary on John,” 376.

it means a restoration to the original condition of Adam in which the Spirit imprinted the image of God on Adam.”²³⁷ While all three of these scholars are correct to argue for the restoration to the Edenic state, which is clearly present, nevertheless Cyril does not end the human story there; rather, he continues it well beyond the divine remediation of the problem of sin and death.

Another important aspect of the *oikonomia* is the distinction between human nature and individual human beings. Koen’s project focuses more on the universality of the work of Christ on behalf of human nature than on the particular benefit of that work to individual human beings. This distinction will be explored in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively. Blackwell does well to distinguish between the “objective aspects of Christ’s work” and the “subjective experience of believers”²³⁸ in a way that Koen had not, yet he argues that it is the death and resurrection that form the “climax of Christ’s soteriological work.”²³⁹ These things are true characterizations of Cyril’s thought. However, they do not go far enough. Eden is a created place that is proper to the earth. Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden, and the entrance to the garden was guarded by cherubim with swords, so that the first couple might not return unaided. For Cyril, it is absolutely the case that the death of Jesus Christ destroys death and the resurrection raises what had fallen to new life. However, this is not the full extent of the *oikonomia*. I argue, with Keating, that the pinnacle is found rather in Christ’s ascension into heaven and his enthronement at the right hand of the Father. Where I depart from Keating

²³⁷ Maxwell, “Sin in Cyril of Alexandria’s Commentary on John,” 381.

²³⁸ Blackwell, *Christosis*, 81.

²³⁹ Blackwell, *Christosis*, 79.

involves the effect of the ascension on humanity in preparing us to reach our *telos*, which will be addressed in section 3.3.3.2 *Ascent of Humanity into Divine Life*.

Biblical language about the ascension includes a variety of passages. We have, of course, the narrative accounts of the event in Luke 24 and Acts 1, as well as reference to the ascension in the longer ending of Mark (16:19). In John, Jesus speaks in advance about his ascension. For example, we read that “no one has ascended to the heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the son of man” (Jn 3:13). In another place, Jesus reassures his disciples by telling them that it is good for him to ascend, because then they will receive the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:7). On Easter morning, Jesus tells Mary Magdalene not to hold on to him because he has not yet ascended to the Father (Jn 20:17).

Discussion of the ascension, and of its revelatory power, is not a significant component of these scholars’ works, nor indeed in the writings of earlier authors. A mere restoration to the Edenic state is only possible if one ignores the ascension and its place in Cyril’s understanding of the whole *oikonomia*. Restoration is absolutely central, but so too are exaltation and glorification beyond our nature. This is the *telos* for which human beings were created: the ultimate union with God and fellowship with the saints in a manner that precludes instability.

3.5.1 Descent of Divinity into Human Life

In the Incarnation, the Son descends through a self-emptying into human life by assuming to himself complete and true human nature. Because of the dynamic of divinity coming down into humanity, so that it might draw humanity up into divinity, the humanity into

which the Son descends must be like our humanity, otherwise the whole project fails. We recall Cyril's paraphrase of Gregory of Nazianzus: "Whatever is not assumed is not healed."²⁴⁰ It may be tempting to think that, in becoming like us, the Word is conforming himself to us. This is exactly how Hannah Hunt describes the process whereby the Word's humanity is "mirrored" on our own.²⁴¹ She offers Cyril's insistence that the humanity that the Word assumed was integrated, comprising both soul and body, to argue that the Second Adam must become like the first Adam for salvation to work. While this is true in terms of the necessity of likeness, Hunt's dynamic of mirroring is problematic because the logic does not recognize the role of the Word in creation. As we saw in Chapter 1, the Word is the one through whom all things were made. As the image of God, the Word is the archetype of humanity. According to Cyril's understanding of images and archetypes, the archetype is always logically prior to the image. That means that, rather than his humanity being mirrored on ours, the opposite is true. We are always mirrored on him, not the other way around, even as our capacity to mirror him is damaged beyond recognition. He becomes human in a full and perfect way because he is the archetype of humanity. In a way, then, Nazianzen's adage could lead to a derivative idea that whatever is not assumed is not human.

In our discussion of the human *telos* as revealed in Scripture, Cyril pointed to the command to stay in one's tent during the Sabbath as referring to the stability that will prevent a subsequent fall into sin. Here, in the Incarnation itself, we see something of the

²⁴⁰ CJ 8.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 106), Pusey 2, 318: "ὃ γὰρ μὴ προσείληπται, οὐδὲ σέσωσται." See also Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ep. 101* in Hardy, *Christology of the Later Fathers*, 218.

²⁴¹ Hannah Hunt, *Clothed in the Body: Asceticism, the Body, and the Spiritual in the Late Antique Era*, Ashgate Studies in Philosophy & Theology in Late Antiquity (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 190.

means by which that eschatological stability will be accomplished for humanity. Cyril's understanding of the whole economy included the idea that the Son became like us so that we might become like him. "Like him" means humanity united to divinity, though not in exactly the same manner as the Incarnation. Cyril maintains distinctions between realities that persist in Christ by nature from those promised to us by grace. For example, Christ is the Son of God by nature, while we become children of God by grace, specifically through our union with Christ through the Holy Spirit. While we may be alike insofar as we are children of God, we are different in that we are children in different ways. We will not become the same as Christ, but rather similar to Christ in terms of human relation to divinity.

A question raised by Cyril's anthropology as presented thus far is: "How is the eschatological sabbath rest secured for all eternity?" In Eden, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the image of God could be lost because it was not "firmly rooted" in us, being external to and above our nature. This meant that our ontological and natural instabilities allowed for the possibility of sin. The only way that another fall can be prevented is if the principle of our stability is made permanent. This suggests that the first gift of the Spirit in Eden is somehow different from the final gift. The Incarnation reveals to us that human sinlessness is possible only insofar as humanity and divinity are united in such a way as to enable humanity to participate in the ontological and natural stability of divinity. Hence the hope of our future stability, and thereby the attainment of eternal life, are predicated on a divine gift that surpasses what had been given in Eden. True union with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit is the end toward which the whole *oikonomia* is directed. The gift of the Holy Spirit in Eden can be seen, then, as a type of the ultimate

gift that would come at the end of the ages. The restoration of the Holy Spirit to humanity, first in its descent at the baptism of Jesus and then in Christian baptism generally, is the mark of creation's purpose. Yet even here, the gift is partial or provisional; it does not keep us from sin the way that the Son rebukes his own human nature. This distinction will become clear as we take up the gift of the Spirit.

3.5.2 Ascent of Humanity into Divine Life

In his very first *Festal Letter*, dated to 414CE, Cyril opens and closes with reference to the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven, not only as a historical fact, nor even simply as an article of faith following the formulation of the Nicene Creed,²⁴² but as the expression of the consummation of the divine plan for humanity. In the first paragraph, Cyril writes, “Thus guided by the unquenchable rays of our Savior’s light, we may reach the Jerusalem above, where we shall dwell with the holy choirs of angels in heaven.”²⁴³ And in the penultimate paragraph, “And having made heaven accessible to it through the economy of the Incarnation, he was taken up, presenting himself to the Father as the first-fruits of the human race. And as a sort of pledge to us of the future hope, he bestowed the Spirit, saying, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”²⁴⁴ The ascension of Christ into heaven represents the very first appearance of a human being in heaven.²⁴⁵ It is, therefore, evidence that the

²⁴² The Nicene Creed referred to here is that statement of the Council of Nicaea (325) as preserved in texts by Athanasius, Socrates, and Basil, and in the *acta* of the Council of Chalcedon (451). See J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (London,: Longman, 1972), 215–16.

²⁴³ FL 1.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 35), SC 372, 142: “ἵνα καὶ ταῖς ἀσβέστοις τοῦ Σωτῆρος φωταγωγούμενοι λαμπάσιν εἰς τὴν ἄνω καταντήσωμεν Ἱερουσαλήμ, τοῖς εὐαγγέσι τῶν ἀγγέλων χοροῖς ἐν οὐρανῷ συνδιατῶμενοι.”

²⁴⁴ FL 1.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 51), SC 372, 184: Cyril of Alexandria, *Festal Letters*, I-12, 51. “Βατὸν δὲ αὐτῇ κατασκευάζων τὸν οὐρανὸν μετὰ τὴν τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως οἰκονομίαν ἀναλαμβάνεται, ἀπαρχὴν τινὰ τῆς ἀνθρώπων φύσεως προσάγων ἑαυτὸν τῷ Πατρὶ· ἄρραβῶνα δὲ ὥσπερ ἡμῖν τῆς μελλούσης ἐλπίδος τὸ Πνεῦμα χαρίζεται, λέγων· «Λάβετε Πνεῦμα ἅγιον.»”

²⁴⁵ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 147), Pusey 2, 403.

work of Christ (to be discussed more fully in Chapters 4 and 5) does not end at the restoration of fallen humanity to its pre-Fall state in the earthly paradise, but rather rests only in the exaltation and glorification of humanity well beyond its proper nature, to a heavenly state of permanent and irrevocable union with God by means of participation in the divine life.

The point of the ascension of Christ is the culmination of the whole *oikonomia*; the descent of the divine Word into the human condition was, in fact, for the sake of the ascent of the human community up to the divine condition. Cyril is very careful to say that this ascent is utterly impossible for any creature to accomplish on its own: “We will find, however, that the power to ascend to the glory of the creator of all belongs to none of the creatures. No originate being will be God by nature, nor will the slave have equal honor with the Lord, sitting and ruling with him.”²⁴⁶ The possibility of human ascent into heaven, of becoming “gods and sons of God” (Ps 82:6, *paraphrase*), is entirely dependent upon the will of God and the work of Christ through the Holy Spirit in the whole *oikonomia*. By his personal and bodily entry into heaven, Christ reveals that the human *telos* is nothing less than our own entry into heaven. Furthermore, his gift of the Holy Spirit, first to the disciples in the locked room on Easter morning and then broadly to believers on the day of Pentecost, is understood in terms of a pledge (ἄρραβών).²⁴⁷ That gift is a partial one, a token of a greater gift yet to come. And finally, Christ’s

²⁴⁶ CJ 5.4 (Maxwell 1, 333), Pusey 2.16: “τὸ γεμῆν εἰς τοῦ τὰ πάντα πεποιηκότος ἀναβαίνειν δύνασθαι δόξαν οὐδενὶ τῶν κτισμάτων προσὸν εὐρήσομεν· οὐ γὰρ ἔσται τι τῶν γεγονότων φύσει Θεός, οὐδ’ ἰσότημον ἔσται τῷ Δεσπότῃ τὸ δοῦλον, σύνεδρόν τε καὶ συμβασιλεῦον αὐτῷ.”

²⁴⁷ It is quite curious that the only use of this term in the entire LXX appears in the story of Tamar and Judah (Gen 38), where Tamar demands a pledge from Judah so that he will return with the promised payment.

enthronement at the right hand of the Father reveals that humanity was created in order to exercise dominion with Christ over all of creation.

This idea of the Holy Spirit being given as a pledge of something more yet to come appears in 2 Corinthians and in Ephesians: “But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as *a first installment* (ἄρραβῶνα)” (2 Cor 1:21–22);²⁴⁸ “He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as *a guarantee* (ἄρραβῶνα)” (2 Cor 5:5);²⁴⁹ and, “In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is *the pledge* (ἄρραβὼν) of our inheritance towards redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory” (Eph 1:13–14).²⁵⁰ These three usages indicate that whatever is given now, in this life, is not the gift in its fullness; more is yet to come.

Cyril incorporates this idea in several places. In the *Commentary on John*, for example, he uses the pledge to illustrate how things given in part lead to greater future gifts. So, for example, Cyril interprets Christ as the bread of heaven in terms of the fulfillment of the pledge given in the manna.²⁵¹ Similarly, Cyril shows how the raising of Lazarus and the transfiguration of Christ function as pledges that Christ’s promises will be fulfilled. In the first case, the raising of Lazarus is a pledge of the general resurrection, while in the second, the transfiguration indicates the glory to be enjoyed in the resurrection of the righteous. Cyril summarizes the relationship between present and

²⁴⁸ ὁ δὲ βεβαίων ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ χρίσας ἡμᾶς θεός, ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς τὸν ἄρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.

²⁴⁹ ὁ δὲ κατεργασάμενος ἡμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο θεός, ὁ δοὺς ἡμῖν τὸν ἄρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος.

²⁵⁰ ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἄρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

²⁵¹ CJ 3.6 (Maxwell 1, 205), Pusey 1, 458.

future gifts: “Therefore, although he promises to do these things in their own time, he does them partially even before the right time as a kind of down payment on the primary act that is being awaited, which will apply to all, so that we may believe without doubt.”²⁵²

In his three earliest *Festal Letters* (1, 2, and 4),²⁵³ Cyril’s concluding rehearsals of salvation history include reference to the gift of the Holy Spirit in anticipation of the fulfillment of future benefit:

And as a sort of pledge to us of the future hope, he bestowed the Spirit, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”²⁵⁴

and

He raised up the temple of himself in three days...having endowed those on earth with a share in the Spirit as a pledge of grace.²⁵⁵

and

He also destroyed the power of death, having placed in us the Holy Spirit as our earnest of future hope, the pledge of the good things we expect.²⁵⁶

These earliest references to the pledge do not offer any substantial insight into how Cyril understands the idea or what part it might play in his anthropology. Fuller treatments of the pledge as indicating some kind of eschatological fulfillment appear in the *Commentary on John*. In the first instance, Cyril differentiates between those who will be

²⁵² CJ 12.1 (Maxwell 2, 370), Pusey 3, 137: “ὥσπερ οὖν καίτοι κατὰ καιροὺς ἰδίους τὰ τοιαῦτα δράσειν ὑπισχνούμενος καθάπερ τινὰς ἀρραβῶνας τοῦ κατὰ πάντων ἔσεσθαι προσδοκωμένου καὶ γενικωτάτου πράγματος, τὰ κατὰ μέρος εἰργάζετο καὶ πρὸ καιροῦ τοῦ δέοντος, ἵνα καὶ ἀνευδοιάστως πιστεῦνται.”

²⁵³ Due to scribal error, what we know as *Festal Letter 4* is actually the third of Cyril’s episcopate. See SC 372, 113.

²⁵⁴ FL 1.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 51), SC 372, 184: “ἀρραβῶνα δὲ ὥσπερ ἡμῖν τῆς μελλούσης ἐλπίδος τὸ Πνεῦμα χαρίζεται, λέγων· «Λάβετε Πνεῦμα ἅγιον.»”

²⁵⁵ FL 2.8 (Amidon, FC 118, 67), SC 372, 232: “τρίτημερον μὲν ἀνίστησι τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ναόν...τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τῆς χάριτος τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς δωρησάμενος τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος μετουσίαν.

²⁵⁶ FL 4.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 81), SC 372, 272: “Ἐλυσε καὶ τοῦ θανάτου τὸ κράτος, ἀρραβῶνα μὲν τῆς μελλούσης ἐλπίδος θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, ἐνέχυρόν τε τῶν προσδοκωμένων ἀγαθῶν”

raised to eternal life and those who will be raised to condemnation: “Those who have gone to their rest with faith in Christ and who have received the first installment of the Spirit during their life in the flesh will obtain the most perfect grace and will be changed to the glory that will be given by God.”²⁵⁷ And in the second instance, Cyril writes of the benefit, not only of receiving the pledge, but also of keeping it (this is exactly what Adam had been unable to do): “And since they have kept the ‘deposit of the Spirit’ intact, they will be with [Christ] and behold his God-befitting beauty without hindrance.”²⁵⁸ These references to the Holy Spirit as a pledge use the same phrasing as 2 Corinthians 1:21–22 and 5:5. Cyril’s use of Ephesians 1:13–14 is slightly less precise, but evokes baptismal imagery and grace: “Once we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and have the pledge of grace in our mind, our hearts are protected in that we have been ‘clothed with power from on high.’”²⁵⁹ In his summary of the structure of these concluding proclamations of the Christian kerygma, Bernard Meunier refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit in general; he does not include reference to the Holy Spirit being given specifically *as pledge*, despite the fact that the example he uses (from *Festal Letter* 4) to illustrate Cyril’s structure includes the phrase “putting in us the Holy Spirit as a pledge of the hope to come.”²⁶⁰

This idea of the Holy Spirit as pledge does not seem to feature in Keating’s account of the return of the Holy Spirit to humanity, first in Christ, then in his disciples,

²⁵⁷ CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 61), Pusey 2, 220: “οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐν πίστει τῇ εἰς Χριστὸν ἀναπανσάμενοι, καὶ τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ Πνεύματος κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς μετὰ σώματος ζωῆς κομισάμενοι τελεωτάτην ἐναποκομιοῦται τὴν χάριν, καὶ ἀλλαγῇσονται πρὸς δόξαν κομιζόμενοι τὴν παρὰ Θεοῦ.

²⁵⁸ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 183), Pusey 2, 475: “καὶ τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ Πνεύματος ἀσινῇ τηρήσαντες, συνόντες δὲ δηλονότι, καὶ τὸ θεοπρεπὲς αὐτοῦ κατόνουνται κάλλος ἀδιακωλύτως.”

²⁵⁹ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 309), Pusey 3, 9: “οἱ γὰρ ἅπαξ κατασφραγισθέντες τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι καὶ τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τῆς χάριτος ἔχοντες εἰς νοῦν, πεπυργωμένην ἔχουσι τὴν καρδίαν, ἅτε δὴ καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὴν ἐξ ὕψους δύναμιν.”

²⁶⁰ Bernard Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d’Alexandrie: L’humanité, le salut et la question monophysite* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1997), 19: “en mettant en nous comme arrhes de l’espérance à venir l’Esprit-Saint.” SC offers *arrhes* as the French translation of ἀρραβῶνα (SC 372, 272–73).

and finally in us. He writes, “By breathing the Spirit on the disciples (and so on us all), Christ restores the original, supernatural state of the human race, except now with unshakeable stability and greater dignity. It is clear that Cyril teaches a genuine gain in Christ over what we had in Adam; it is less clear what precisely that gain consists in.”²⁶¹ If it were the case that the gift of the Holy Spirit gave us “unshakeable stability” in and through the sacrament of baptism, then there would be no need for the confession of sins, or their forgiveness, or for patterns of church discipline as they appear throughout the New Testament epistles. It cannot be the case that we receive “unshakeable stability,” but rather a smaller measure of stability in pledge for that which will become truly rooted in us by grace—and therefore impossible to lose—in the age to come.²⁶² Cyril’s most explicit treatment of the Holy Spirit being given in pledge appears in his *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* 5. He responds to a concern that the soul’s advancement to its future state implies the possibility of falling back again: “People who draw this conclusion appear ignorant of the grace to be granted to man’s nature after its return to life from the dead...If we lead holy lives now that we have the pledge of the Spirit, what shall we be when we receive its fullness? Where there is a filling with the Spirit, there must be a security of mind and a stability of heart which looks toward goodness and the pure vision of God.”²⁶³ Cyril’s use of this concept of pledge and fulfillment accounts for the simultaneous presence and work of the Holy Spirit in believers, and the reality that

²⁶¹ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 201–2.

²⁶² It is surprising that Keating’s argument for the centrality of the letter to the Ephesians to Cyril’s account of the whole economy lacks any reference to this idea of the Holy Spirit as pledge. See Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 197–99.

²⁶³ DQA 5 (Wickham, 199–201), Wickham, SL 198–200: “Οἱ ταῦτα διενθυμούμενοι, ἀγνοεῖν εἰκόασιν τὴν δοθησομένην χάριν τῇ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσει μετὰ τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναβίωσιν...εἰ γὰρ νῦν τὸν ἀρράβωνα τοῦ Πνεύματος ἔχοντες ἀγίως πολιτευόμεθα, τίνες ἐσόμεθα λαβόντες τὸ πλήρες; ὅπου δὲ πλήρως Πνεύματος, ἐκεῖ που πάντως καὶ ἀσφάλεια νοῦ καὶ καρδίας ἐδραιότης, τῆς ὁρώσης εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εἰς ἀκραιφνὴ θεοπτίαν.”

believers do not yet participate fully in the divine stability necessary to preclude our falling into sin.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Over the course of this chapter, I have sought to present Cyril's view of human nature as revealed in the Incarnation. Given this aim, I have focused on what has been *revealed* to us in the Incarnation, without giving much attention to what has been and will be *accomplished* on our behalf. The latter consideration will be taken up in the next two chapters. This revelation contains two major aspects: first, humanity as it is under the conditions of the Fall, yet without sin; and second, humanity as it will become, namely exalted above its own proper nature and participating forever in the divine life.

What we found in the person of Christ was the one example of sinless humanity, yet successful imitation of that example through our own power and effort is not possible for us. In this way, the Incarnation functions in a way similar to the revelation in the Law. We are presented with a standard that we cannot meet, and are therefore compelled to look outward for assistance. The person of Christ, in his own union of humanity and divinity, is itself the revealed pattern of what lies ahead. We saw that the only reason that Christ remained sinless was because he was and is the Word, who cannot sin. If we are to hope for sinlessness ourselves, it can be found only in and through our future relationship with God, one that surpasses the relationship of indwelling enjoyed briefly in Eden. Sinlessness is fundamentally a characteristic of divinity, grounded as it is in God's perfect stability.

Finally, the bodily ascension of Christ into heaven provides the clearest indication of humanity's *telos*: exaltation and glorification beyond our nature and filial union with God through Christ in the Holy Spirit. It is the ascension of Jesus that reveals that human destiny lies, not in a mere restoration to the Edenic state, though such restoration is both good and necessary, but rather in a fundamental transformation of our existence through a participation in divine life and stability that is made perfect and eternal. This consummation of the divine *oikonomia* is promised to humanity through Christ's gift of the Holy Spirit as a pledge (ἄρραβὼν), one that is efficacious to a degree, but will not be fully realized until the end of the ages.

PART II: THE WORK OF CHRIST

In Part I, I examined how Scripture and the Incarnation each reveal human nature. I argued that the image presented by Scripture was helpful in disclosing the basic character of created human nature, as well as in offering a glimpse into the purpose for which human beings were made. That revelation had been necessary because of the damage done by sin to our rational faculties. I further argued that the image revealed in the Incarnation offered the only instantiation of human nature unmarred by sin and the clearest picture of humanity's *telos*, namely eternal union with God in Christ. We turn now to the ways in which the *oikonomia* is worked out in the major events in the life of Christ.

Part II represents the fulcrum of the project, the means by which the revelation presented in Part I leads to and makes possible the imitation we shall discuss in Part III. Put another way, Parts II and III differentiate between what is universal and what is particular, what pertains to *human nature* as a general category, and what pertains to *human beings* as discrete individuals. Thus Part II focuses on the work of Christ and what it accomplishes for all of human nature. This work can be characterized in much the same way as Scripture is characterized, namely that some of Christ's work is remedial, while some is preparatory. This means that some aspects of the *oikonomia* address the problem of the fall of humanity and its restoration and recapitulation, while others prepare the way for humanity's attainment of its *telos*. The work of Christ on behalf of humanity is universal in its efficacy, insofar as all of human nature participates in Christ through his

assumption of humanity. That efficacy, however, is beneficial only to those individuals who desire to receive it.

Cyril lays out a framework for the ways in which a person might benefit from Christ's work at the close of his *Festal Letters*. Cyril follows a pattern of concluding with a rehearsal of the *oikonomia* and ethical exhortation to his people, followed immediately by the announcement of the date of Easter and the feast and fast days calculated from it. This structure provides the grounding and rationale for the community's observance of the Lenten fast and celebration of the Easter feast. There is a sense in which this structure also forms a paradigm of the Christian life as Cyril understands it: right faith, works of charity, and participation in the sacramental life of the Church, especially through baptism and Eucharist. Thus God acts on behalf of all humanity, and Cyril urges the members of his church communities to seek to respond to those acts. The narrative of the *oikonomia* comprises both the remedial and the preparatory works of Christ, while personal acceptance of that story constitutes the central aspect of right faith and leads believers to live according to the pattern of Christian life. Saving our investigation into human receptivity for Part III, we enter into our examination of Christ's work for human nature.

Cyril's rehearsals of the *oikonomia* vary in detail and emphasis. In some cases, they follow the basic outline of the second article of the Nicene Creed: incarnation, passion and resurrection, ascension, and return for judgment.²⁶⁴ In other cases, Cyril presents his account in terms of what Christ's work has accomplished. For example, in *Festal Letter 2* (415CE), Cyril writes:

²⁶⁴ See, for example, FL 10 and 12.

Having assumed our likeness, he is born by means of the holy Virgin and saves the human race, bringing nature back to its primitive incorruption, and, as Paul says, by opening for us an unknown way, he has joined earthly things to heavenly, having broken down the dividing wall, and abolished the hostility of the commandments and ordinances, so that even the blessed angels, astonished at this, said, “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will to men.”²⁶⁵

Here we see that Cyril identifies the problems as our sin, death, and decay. Resolving those problems is the remedial aspect of the work of Christ. When he writes that Christ has opened an unknown way, and has joined earthly and heavenly together, he is presenting the preparatory aspect of Christ's work. The way to heaven and to eternal life in communion with God had been utterly unknown to humanity before the Incarnation, yet it was always present in our *telos*. This preparatory aspect is highlighted in Cyril's treatment of Christ as high priest, who intercedes for all of humanity. Cyril writes that “the only-begotten Word of God, accordingly, achieved two things at once when he became a human being. He drove off from human bodies the death which he himself had not made but which had supervened because of sin. And he also became a merciful high priest for us all.”²⁶⁶ If the argument for a mere recapitulation of the Edenic state, or even a more stable version of that state, were to hold, one would need to explain and account for this intercessory aspect of Christ's work.

The notion that the *oikonomia* is oriented only to the remediation of the effects of the fall and to the restoration of humanity to its original condition risks rendering God's

²⁶⁵ FL 2.8 (Amidon, FC 118, 66), SC 372, 230: “καὶ τὴν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὁμοίωσιν ἀναλαβὼν, τίκεται μὲν διὰ τῆς ἁγίας Παρθένου, διασφύζει δὲ τὸ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων, εἰς τὴν ἀρχαιότητα τῆς ἀφθαρσίας τὴν φύσιν ἀναγαγὼν, καὶ καθάπερ ὁ Παῦλός φησι· Ξένην ἡμῖν ἐγκαινίσας ὁδόν, συνῆψεν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις τὰ ἐπίγεια, τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, καὶ τὴν ἔχθραν τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασι καταργήσας, ὥς ἐπὶ τούτῳ καταπληττομένους καὶ τοὺς μακαρίους ἀγγέλους εἰπεῖν· «Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη, ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία.»”

²⁶⁶ FL 26.3 (Amidon, FC 127, 162), PG 77, 924D: “Δύο τοιγαροῦν ἐν αὐτῷ κατώρθωκεν ὁ Μονογενὴς τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος. Ἀπεσόβησε μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων σωμάτων, ὃν οὐ πεποίηκεν αὐτὸς, ἐπισυμβάντα δὲ μᾶλλον ἐκ τῆς ἁμαρτίας θάνατον. Γέγονε δὲ καὶ εἰς πάντας ἡμᾶς ἐλεήμων ἀρχιερεὺς.”

plan a mere reaction to human behavior. It implicitly claims that God's original creation of human beings was faulty and therefore needed to be corrected. But Cyril would reject such an idea. Instead, Cyril's argument is that God's plan had, from the beginning, accounted for the emergence of human sin: "But it was necessary that God's plan of old for us not be defeated by the envy of the twisted serpent, prince of evil, but be revealed as mightier than his perversity."²⁶⁷ The Fall was not some kind of indication of faulty planning on God's part; rather it was the result of the human exercise of freedom to choose poorly rather than well. And Cyril insists that plan would not be frustrated by the machinations of the devil. Indeed, Burghardt writes, "As soon as Adam fell—in fact before Adam's fall—God had determined the measures He would take to mend it. In that divine decree, as Cyril sees it, the central themes were image and Incarnation. Redemption is recapitulation (ἀνακεφαλαίωσις), and recapitulation means 'restoration to the original state.'"²⁶⁸ Burghardt appeals to Cyril's explanation of Ephesians 1:10 in the *Commentary on John*: "the term and the act of 'recapitulation' refers to bringing back and taking up what had fallen into an unrecognizable end to what it was in the beginning."²⁶⁹ Koen continues Burghardt's line of reasoning and argues that Cyril's understanding of recapitulation depends upon Christ's self-offering on the cross.²⁷⁰

While I agree with Burghardt that the divine plan was in place before the fall, and was not simply a reaction to it, and that Cyril's understanding of recapitulation is as Burghardt and Koen say, redemption understood as recapitulation is only part of the

²⁶⁷ FL 26.3 (Amidon, FC 127, 162), PG 77, 924C–D: "Ἦν δὲ ἀναγκαῖον μὴ τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἐφ' ἡμῖν τοῦ Θεοῦ βούλησιν ἡττᾶσθαι τῷ φθόνῳ τοῦ σκολιοῦ καὶ ἀρχεκάκου δράκοντος· ἀδροτέραν δὲ μᾶλλον τῆς ἐκείνου σκαιότητος ἀναφαίνεσθαι."

²⁶⁸ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 160.

²⁶⁹ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 185), Pusey 2, 481: "ὃ τῆς ἀνακεφαλαιώσεως ὄνομά τε καὶ πρᾶγμα δηλοῖ τὸ ἀνακομίσει πάλιν καὶ ἀναλαβεῖν εἰς ὅπερ ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ τὰ πρὸς ἀνόμοιον ἐκπεπτωκότα τέλος·"

²⁷⁰ Koen, *The Saving Passion*, 38–39.

whole *oikonomia*. And it is that part that is universal to all of humanity. The purpose of the whole *oikonomia* is human union with the divine, in a manner distinct from, yet dependent upon, the union of humanity and divinity in the Incarnation. Individual human beings are given the power to become children of God (Jn 1:12) through their willing reception of the revelation in Jesus Christ and his works. While Koen does allow for a distinction between the universality of the work of Christ and the particular benefit to individual human beings, his emphasis is heavily weighted toward the former.²⁷¹

Cyril summarizes the *oikonomia*, not merely in narrative terms, but also in terms of what each point in the life and work of Christ accomplishes for humanity. So, for example, in *Festal Letter 5*, Cyril writes that Christ dies so that “he might raise us again with himself from the dead, after giving us life through the Holy Spirit, open to us the gates of heaven, lead human nature there which of old had been made fugitive by sin, and present it before the Father.”²⁷² Not only does Christ correct what had gone wrong, namely that we lost the Holy Spirit through sin and therefore became subject to death, but he goes beyond remediation into preparation, opening the way for human beings to enter into heaven and into the very presence of God. Two years later, Cyril’s account includes the descent into hell, to release those who had become the devil’s prisoners. He spends considerably more attention here on the ascension into heaven, so that “[Christ] might render the bright dwelling-places of the angels accessible to those upon earth...in order

²⁷¹ Koen, *The Saving Passion*, 46.

²⁷² FL 5:7 (Amidon, FC 118, 99), SC 372, 326: “ἐαυτῷ πάλιν ἡμᾶς ἐκ νεκρῶν συναναστήσῃ, ζωοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος· καὶ ἀνοίξῃ μὲν ἡμῖν τῶν οὐρανῶν τὰς πύλας, ἀναγάγῃ δὲ εἰς αὐτούς, καὶ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς παραστήσῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς τὴν πάλαι διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν δραπετεύσασαν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν.”

therefore that we might reign with Christ, that we might be found to be sharers and participants in immortal glory.”²⁷³

I indicated in Chapter 3 that some scholars have argued that recapitulation for Cyril means a return to the life and incorruption in Eden, but Cyril offers a clarification: “For his purpose was to remove from sin both the living and the dead, and to renew once again for human nature the *ascent* (ἀναδρομήν) to incorruptibility.”²⁷⁴ The renewal and restoration enacted by Christ is not a return to the Edenic state as if that were a final destination; rather, the restoration gives human nature a new beginning from which to progress toward its original *telos*. The renewal is, therefore, the return of possibility, which had been lost because of sin. In *Festal Letter 12*, Cyril emphasizes in his rehearsal of the *oikonomia* the defeat of sin and its consequences:

having triumphed over the Principalities and Powers, he might nail to his own cross, as is written, the bond that stood against us, and might render us pure, freed from all guilt, once he had washed us of the defilement of our failings of the past. His purpose was also that he might preach “also to the spirits in hell, who formerly did not obey,” as is written, in order thus at last to abolish death, the enemy of all, once he had been raised from the dead, and indeed, when he had opened the gates above to those on earth, to make the former runaway a citizen of heaven.²⁷⁵

Triumph over death represents the remedial, while opening the gates above represents the preparatory aspect of Christ’s work.

²⁷³ FL 7.2 (Amidon, FC 118, 136), SC 392, 52: “ἵνα καὶ τὰ λαμπρὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐνδαιτήματα βάσιμα τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς ἀποδείξῃ... ἵνα τοίνυν συμβασιλεύσωμεν τῷ Χριστῷ, ἵνα μερισται καὶ κοινωνοὶ τῆς ἀθανάτου δόξης εὐρισκώμεθα.”

²⁷⁴ FL 10.5 (Amidon, FC 118, 193), SC 392, 238: “Σκοπὸς γὰρ ἦν αὐτῷ καὶ ζῶντας καὶ νεκροὺς ἀπαλλάξαι τῆς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ καινοτομήσαι πάλιν τῇ ἀνθρωπείᾳ φύσει τὴν εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν ἀναδρομήν, ὃ δὴ καὶ γέγονεν.”

²⁷⁵ FL 12.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 234), SC 434, 76–78: “θριαμβεύσας τὰς Ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς Ἐξουσίας τῷ ἰδίῳ σταυρῷ προσηλώσῃ, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, τὸ καθ’ ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον, καὶ ἀπάσης μὲν ἡμᾶς αἰτίας ἀπηλλαγμένους καθαροὺς ἀποφήνῃ, τῶν πάλαι πταισμάτων ἀπονίψας τὸν μολυσμόν· διακηρύξῃ δὲ «καί τοις ἐν ᾧ δούλοισιν, ἀπειθήσασί ποτε», κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, οὕτω δὲ λοιπὸν τὸν πάντων ἐχθρὸν καταργήσῃ θάνατον, ἐγγεγερμένος ἐκ νεκρῶν· καὶ μὴν καὶ τὰς ἄνω τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς ἀναπετάσας πύλας, οὐρανοῦ πόλιν ἐργάσῃ τὸν πάλαι δραπετήν.”

And lastly, Cyril summarizes the purpose of the *oikonomia*, namely that the Incarnate Word “might put to death sin in the flesh, and, having filled nature with spiritual strength through himself and in himself, might refashion it to what it was of old, might render it impregnable to sin, and might ready it to become superior to destruction and corruption.”²⁷⁶ This example shows both the remedial and the preparatory aspects of the work of Christ. Not only is the original problem of sin resolved, but future sin is prevented through the gift of divine stability, which renders human nature ready and able to participate in the divine life. And, while Keating is correct to say that Cyril prefers the biblical language of partaking in the divine life (2 Pet 1:4) over the theological terminology of deification (θεοποίησις),²⁷⁷ nevertheless, Cyril does speak of Christ as the second Adam as “the source of all good for human nature, the deliverance from imported corruption, the bestower of eternal life, *the basis for transformation into God* (ἀναμορφώσεως τῆς εἰς Θεὸν ὑπόθεσις), the source of piety and righteousness and the road to the kingdom of heaven.”²⁷⁸ While the language of partaking may predominate, the idea of divinization remains present.

Cyril grounds the entirety of his Christological argumentation in the capacity of the *oikonomia* to accomplish its purposes. Christ is who and what he is precisely because the plan of salvation depends upon it. Another way of saying this would be that any Christological formulation that jeopardizes any aspect of God’s saving action and purpose must be rejected as false. What that means is that the question, “Why did God

²⁷⁶ FL 13.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 4), SC 434, 90: “κατανεκρώση τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί, καὶ πνευματικῆς εὐρωστίας ἀναπιμπλάς δι’ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν φύσιν ἀναμορφώσῃ πρὸς τὸ ἀρχαῖον, καὶ ἀνάλωτον μὲν ἀποφύγῃ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις, ὀλέθρου δὲ καὶ φθορᾶς ἀμείνω γενέσθαι παρασκευάσῃ.”

²⁷⁷ Keating, “Divinization in Cyril,” 10–12.

²⁷⁸ CJ 2 (Maxwell 1, 76), Pusey 1, 170: “καὶ ἀρχὴ γένηται τῇ ἀνθρώπου φύσει παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ, λύσις ἐπεισάκτου φθορᾶς, πρόξενος αἰωνίου ζωῆς, ἀναμορφώσεως τῆς εἰς Θεὸν ὑπόθεσις, εὐσεβείας καὶ δικαιοσύνης ἀρχή, ὁδὸς εἰς βασιλείαν οὐρανῶν.”

become a human being” must precede the question, “How did God become a human being.” The short answer, for Cyril, is that God became human in order to accomplish the purposes for which God created us, namely for eternal, familial union with the Father, in the Son, and through the Spirit. This purpose is summed up by Paul, “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9).²⁷⁹ This verse summarizes the descending/ascending dynamic of the Incarnation, such that the Word’s own self-emptying into our human life results in his bringing us up to share in the glory of his divine life. This sharing is only possible if and when the fundamental instability that separates our created and composite human nature from the simple and unoriginate divine nature is rendered permanently stable. Such stability would therefore preclude any subsequent fall because sin would become impossible for us, just as it is impossible in God. The plan of salvation, then, includes both the remediation of the consequences of our instability, and the preparation of our nature to enjoy eternal fellowship with God through the permanent establishment of divine stability within us. That ultimate union with God is the fruit of the work of Christ and our willing reception of its benefits, which will happen only after Christ’s coming in glory for the final judgement.

Cyril’s writings include considerable focus on the remedial aspect of Christ’s work whereby fallen humanity is restored to its original Edenic state. Nevertheless, Cyril also presents significant treatments of God’s exaltation of humanity beyond our nature as

²⁷⁹ Cyril routinely uses this verse, sometimes in conjunction with Philippians 2:5-11, to express the Incarnation as the Son’s descent from heavenly wealth into earthly poverty, so as to raise humanity from its natural poverty to supernatural wealth. See, for example, CJ 1.9 (Maxwell 1, 64); CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 81, 82); FL 5.2 (Amidon, FC 118, 86); FL 17.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 61–62); FL 20.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 101); FL 28.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 182).

the consummation of the divine plan begun in creation. From Paul, Cyril takes the notion of recapitulation (ἀνακεφαλαιώσεις) being accomplished primarily through the death and resurrection Christ:

Paul expounds for us one true and general reason for the incarnation of the Only Begotten when he says that God the Father was pleased “to recapitulate all things in Christ,” and that the term and the act of “recapitulation” refers to bringing back and taking up what had fallen into an unrecognizable end to what it was in the beginning.²⁸⁰

Cyril continues by citing Romans 8:3–4²⁸¹ and Hebrews 2:14–15²⁸² in order to explain how this recapitulation takes place, namely through fulfillment of the law’s requirement that sin be justly punished, and by destroying death and the devil’s exploitation of humanity’s fear of death. Cyril concludes, “So Paul expounded the incarnation of the Only Begotten to have these two necessary ways of recapitulation.”²⁸³ And yet Cyril does not allow for Paul’s contribution to stand alone. From John’s Gospel, Cyril adds the idea that human beings have the potential to become children of God:

The wise Evangelist John, however, set forth a way in addition to these, inclusive of the others. He writes this concerning Christ: “He came to his own, and his own did not receive him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born not from blood, nor from the will of the flesh, nor from the will of a husband, but born of God.” Now it is clear to everyone, I think, that the Only Begotten, though he was God from God by nature, became a human being for these reasons: to condemn sin in the flesh, to kill death by his own death, and to make us children of God, giving new birth

²⁸⁰ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 185), Pusey 2, 481: “οὐκοῦν μίαν μὲν ὥσπερ ἀληθῆ τε καὶ γενικωτάτην αἰτίαν τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ὁ σοφὸς ἡμῖν ἐξηγούμενος Παῦλος ἔφασκεν· εὐδόκησε γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς καὶ Πατὴρ ‘ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ,’ καὶ ὅτι τὸ τῆς ἀνακεφαλαιώσεως ὄνομα τε καὶ πρᾶγμα δηλοῖ τὸ ἀνακομίσαι πάλιν καὶ ἀναλαβεῖν εἰς ὃπερ ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ τὰ πρὸς ἀνόμοιον ἐκπεπτωκότα τέλος.”

²⁸¹ “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (NRSV).

²⁸² “Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death” (NRSV).

²⁸³ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 185), Pusey 2, 481: “καὶ δύο μὲν τούτους ἡμῖν τῆς ἀνακεφαλαιώσεως τρόπους ἀναγκαίως ἔχοντα τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ Μονογενοῦς τὸν λόγον, ὁ Παῦλος ἐξηγήσατο.”

in the Spirit to those on earth, thus elevating them to a dignity beyond their nature. It was of course a very good thing to recapitulate in this way and restore the fallen race, that is, the human race, to its original condition.²⁸⁴

Only when we bear in mind both the Pauline and Johannine contributions, and weave them together as Cyril has commended, does the full picture of God's plan for humanity emerge. Just as the revelation in Scripture that we discussed in Chapter 1 possessed the twin roles of remediation and preparation, so too does the work of Christ accomplish the twin tasks of healing the effects of the Fall by defeating sin and death, and stabilizing human nature so that it might be prepared to share eternally in the very life of God.

One of the ways that Cyril articulates the ultimate *telos* that orients and drives the *oikonomia* is through his use of the Adam/Christ typology (1 Cor 15:45-46), which receives more nuance in its continuation as the earthly man/heavenly man (1 Cor 15:47-49). Cyril explains that Christ is called the “second Adam” (δεύτερος Ἀδὰμ) because he both restored human nature to life and gave it “what is above our nature.”²⁸⁵ It is because he became the heavenly man that the Word is able to “convey his good attributes through

²⁸⁴ It is troubling that Maxwell's n267 at the conclusion of this section argues, against the plain sense of Cyril's own words, that Cyril does not intend to convey any sense in which “elevation to a dignity beyond human nature” means what he has written. Rather, Maxwell argues that Cyril means only that humanity will return to its prelapsarian state where it “possesses life and the Holy Spirit.” Yet there is no evidence that Cyril's understanding of prelapsarian humanity includes our enjoying a familial relationship with God. Cyril's reliance on John 1:12 asserts that this kind of relationship is possible only through faith in Christ and willing reception of him. Recapitulation is indeed the restoration of humanity to its original condition, but with the express purpose of preparing humanity to receive and enjoy the very elevation to dignity beyond nature that is God's purpose for us. This is precisely the kind of truncated view of the human *telos* and the work of Christ that I seek to correct.

CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 186), Pusey 2, 482: “τρόπον δὲ ἐπὶ τούτοις τῶν ἐτέρων περιεκτικόν, ὁ σοφὸς εὐαγγελιστὴς Ἰωάννης. γράφει γὰρ οὕτω περὶ Χριστοῦ ‘Εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθε, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον· ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτὸν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς, ἀλλ’ ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.’ πρόδηλον οὖν ἄρα καὶ πᾶσιν οἶμαι διαφανὲς, ὅτι τούτων ἕνεκα δὴ μάλιστα τῶν αἰτιῶν Θεὸς καὶ ἐκ Θεοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ὑπάρχων, ἄνθρωπος γέγονεν ὁ Μονογενὴς, ἵνα δηλονότι κατακρίνῃ μὲν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί, νεκρώσῃ δὲ τῷ ἰδίῳ θανάτῳ τὸν θάνατον, καὶ υἱοῦς ἡμᾶς ἀποδείξῃ Θεοῦ, πρὸς τὸ ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἀξίωμα τοὺς ὄντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀναγεννήσας ἐν Πνεύματι. ἦν γὰρ δήπου καὶ μάλα καλῶς, κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι πάλιν καὶ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀναλαβεῖν τὸ διολισθῆσαν γένος, τουτέστι, τὸ ἀνθρώπινον.”

²⁸⁵ CJ 8.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 105), Pusey 2, 317: “τὰ ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἐκερδάναμεν.”

himself to the entire race.”²⁸⁶ Because Christ is incomparably better than Adam, so also is the work of Christ incomparably more effective than that of Adam. It is for this reason that the Son could “bring our condition to an incomparably better state than of old.”²⁸⁷ But before we can address the work of Christ, it will be necessary first to address the Incarnation itself, and what the appropriation of humanity by divinity accomplishes for human nature.

We saw earlier that Cyril envisions an account of the *oikonomia* that includes both remedial and preparatory purposes, which will be addressed more fully in the sections that follow. Our purpose now is to offer Cyril’s understanding of what the actual “humanization” (ἐνανθρωπήσεως) of the Word accomplishes, such that the work of Christ is efficacious for all of humanity. The most important aspect of this question is the role of Christ as mediator between human beings and God (1 Tim 2:5). We saw in Chapter 1 that Cyril had identified the mediation of Moses between God and Israel as a type and shadow of the mediation that would be fully realized in Christ. Because the Word became a human being, he is simultaneously human and divine in his own person. He himself “has become a kind of borderland, containing in himself the elements that concur in unity and friendship”²⁸⁸ between two incomparable natures. Cyril explains,

As God and from God, he is naturally joined to God the Father. And as a human being, he is joined to humanity, having the Father in himself and himself being in the Father. He is the imprint and radiance of his hypostasis, not distinct from the essence of which he is the imprint and from which he proceeds as radiance, but being in it and having it in him. And he likewise has us in himself in that he bore

²⁸⁶ CJ 11.10 (Maxwell 2, 299), Pusey 2, 724: “παραπέμψη λοιπὸν δι’ ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς ἅπαν τὸ γένος τὰ ἀγαθὰ.”

²⁸⁷ FL 16.6 (Amidon, FC 127, 55), SC 434, 244–46: “μετακομιῶντα τὰ καθ’ ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸ ἀσυγκρίτως ἄμεινον ἢ πάλαι.”

²⁸⁸ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 151), Pusey 2, 411: “μεθόριον ὥσπερ τι γέγονε, συνέχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ πρὸς ἐνότητα καὶ φιλίαν συνδεδραμηκότα.”

our nature, and our body is called the body of the Word. “The Word became flesh,” as John says.²⁸⁹

The union of divine and human in Christ is, therefore, the means by which the work of Christ for the sake of all humanity can be accomplished on a universal level. Weinandy is careful to point out that the human nature that was assumed by the Word in the Incarnation was fallen, sinful humanity, subject to the passions, and to death and decay. As such, the Word also assumed “the weakness, vulnerability and woundedness of fallen humanity.”²⁹⁰ It is for this reason that Cyril is so adamant that the Word assumed human nature, rather than an individual human being. In addition to the problem of two Sons, the Word's assumption of one single person could only benefit that particular individual, whereas the appropriation of human nature creates true and efficacious “solidarity” with every human being,²⁹¹ “so that having everyone in himself he might reconcile everyone in one body with the Father, as Paul says.”²⁹² This solidarity is critical for the universal applicability of the work of Christ, insofar as whatever is accomplished in and by Christ becomes available to every human being. Burghardt understands this solidarity to be critical for a few reasons. First, it is the means by which all of humanity is restored in Christ to what it was in the beginning. And second, that solidarity makes possible what Burghardt calls the “exchange” whereby the Word “became man in order that man might

²⁸⁹ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 188), Pusey 2, 486: “τῷ μὲν Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ φυσικῶς ὡς Θεὸς καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ συναπτόμενος, ἀνθρώποις δὲ πάλιν ὡς ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἔχων μὲν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν Πατέρα καὶ ὢν αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ· χαρακτήρ γάρ ἐστι καὶ ἀπαύγασμα τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, οὐ διωρισμένος τῆς οὐσίας, ἣς ἐστι χαρακτήρ καὶ ἐξ ἧς πρόεισιν, ὡς ἀπαύγασμα, ἀλλ’ ἐν αὐτῇ τε ὢν αὐτὸς, καὶ ἔχων αὐτὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ· ἡμᾶς δὲ πάλιν ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ, καθὼς τὴν ἡμετέραν πεφόρηκε φύσιν, καὶ σῶμα τοῦ Λόγου κεχηρημάτικε τὸ ἡμέτερον σῶμα. σὰρξ γὰρ ὁ Λόγος ἐγένετο, κατὰ τὴν Ἰωάννου φωνήν.”

²⁹⁰ Thomas G. Weinandy, “Cyril and the Mystery of the Incarnation,” in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 26.

²⁹¹ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 107.

²⁹² CJ 1.9 (Maxwell 1, 64), Pusey 1, 142: “σκηνοῖ δὲ ὁ Λόγος ὡς ἐν πᾶσιν, ἐν ἐνὶ τῷ δι’ ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐξ ἡμῶν ληφθέντι ναῷ, ἵνα πάντας ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ, ἀποκαταλλάξῃ πάντας ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα,” καθάπερ ὁ Παῦλός φησι.”

become sons of God. He took what was ours, to give us what is His.”²⁹³ He goes on to argue that the Incarnation’s dual solidarity with God and humanity is itself a “new human relationship to God.” And this new relationship is both different from and superior to that original relationship enjoyed by Adam. This new relationship is a sharing, through the grace of adoption, in the sonship of Christ.²⁹⁴ But it is important to note that such a relationship is subject to the human will. For Cyril, human freedom is critical, because the benefits of Christ’s work are never imposed on anyone, even as they are offered freely to all. The human reception of these benefits is the focus of Chapter 4. Cyril repeatedly appeals to the first Adam/second Adam typology (1 Cor 15:45–46) in expressing how it is that what happens in one person can affect all of humanity. While Adam was a single human being, the effects of his transgression carry through to all of humanity because all of humanity derives from him. In Christ, however, the many do not derive from the one, so much as the many are present in and represented by the one.

When the Word becomes flesh, he enacts in himself both the remediation and preparation of human nature. The fundamental instability native to human nature is thus stabilized permanently in the Incarnation. Our ontological instability, because of which we naturally tend toward death, decay, and a return to non-existence, is stabilized through union with the Word’s own eternal life. Our natural instability, because of which we naturally tend toward conflict between body and soul, and between self and neighbor, is stabilized through union with the Word’s own simple being. Because of the Incarnation, every weakness that derives from our inherent instability (sin, death, decay) is strengthened so as to make possible eternal life in communion with God. Because

²⁹³ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 107.

²⁹⁴ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 114.

Adam's sin led to death and decay, Christ's sinlessness (through the Word's inherent stability) makes possible human immortality and incorruption:

For, being unchangeable by nature, and unacquainted with the experience of being pushed down toward sin, he mingled himself ineffably with that nature which is most apt to be pushed down toward every sort of wickedness—human nature, that is; he bestowed upon it in its weakness the stability of his own nature, as I just said, that our mind might from then on be seen as committed to good deeds, and the passions of the flesh chastised, put to death utterly by the power of the One dwelling in it, God the Word.²⁹⁵

In Chapter 3, we addressed the challenge posed by Christ's own sinlessness. Here, we see that his human sinlessness (i.e., stability) relies upon the incapacity to sin that is proper to divine nature. Human beings are incapable of attaining sinlessness apart from the grace of God. Human instability, or tendency toward turning, is rooted in our creatureliness. And in order for us to enjoy eternal communion with God, that instability, and therefore the potential for a subsequent fall, must be overcome.

It is as though the Only Begotten, being the Word of God the Father, lends us the immutability of his own nature, which we needed because human nature was condemned in Adam for not being able to remain unchanged. Indeed, it slipped quite easily into turning away. Just as in the turning of the first man, the loss of good gifts extends to the whole nature, in the same way, I think, in the one who knows no turning, the attainment of the lasting possession of the divine gifts will be preserved for the entire race.²⁹⁶

While the Incarnation achieves in itself this overcoming of human instability in Christ, there is more to the process when it comes to overcoming human instability in us.

²⁹⁵ FL 10.2 (Amidon, FC 118, 183), SC 392, 208: “Ἀτρεπτος γὰρ ὢν, κατὰ φύσιν, καὶ παθεῖν οὐκ εἰδὼς τὸ κατωθεῖσθαι πρὸς ἁμαρτίαν, ἑαυτὸν ἀρρήτως ἀνέμιξε τῇ λίαν εὐκόλως πρὸς πᾶν ὁτιοῦν τῶν φαύλων κατωθυμένῃ φύσει, φημὶ δὴ τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ· καθάπερ ἔφην ἀρτίως, τῆς ἑαυτοῦ φύσεως τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, ὡς ἀσθενούσῃ δωρούμενος, ἵνα φαίνεται λοιπὸν πεπηγὼς εἰς ἀγαθοουργίας ὁ ἡμέτερος νοῦς, καὶ τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς κολάζεται πάθη, νεκρωμένα παντελῶς τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κατοικήσαντος ἐν αὐτῇ, τοῦτέστι τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου.”

²⁹⁶ CJ 5.2 (Maxwell 1, 310), Pusey 1, 694: “οἰονεὶ κιχρῶντος ἡμῖν τὸ τῆς ἰδίας φύσεως ἀμετάπτωτον τοῦ Μονογενοῦς, καὶ ἐκ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ὄντος Λόγου, διὰ τὸ κατεγνώσθαι τὴν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἐν Ἀδὰμ, ὡς ἀδιαπτώτως ἔχειν οὐ δυναμένην, κατολισθαίνουσιν δὲ καὶ σφόδρα ῥαδίως εἰς παρατροπὴν. ὥσπερ οὖν ἐν ταῖς τοῦ πρώτου τροπαῖς εἰς ὅλην διήκει τὴν φύσιν ἢ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ζημία· κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν οἶμαι λόγον καὶ ἐν τῷ μὴ εἰδῶτι τροπὴν τῆς τῶν θείων χαρισμάτων διαμονῆς ὅλῳ σωθήσεται τῷ γένει τὸ κέρδος.”

Because in Christ there is no sin, neither is there any remediation of sin in him. This is not the case in us. The remediation of our instability requires the return of the Holy Spirit and the image of God that had been lost because of sin. This aspect of Cyril's account will be taken up in *Section 4.3 The Flight of the Holy Spirit and the Loss of the Image of God*.

Lastly, the Incarnation represents the first instance by which a human being is born of the Spirit. John's Gospel tells of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-21), in which Jesus teaches that entry into the kingdom of God depends upon being "born of water and the Spirit" (Jn 3:5). Cyril points to the Incarnation, to Mary having conceived by the Holy Spirit, as evidence of this requirement at work in Christ himself. Cyril uses this point to explain that, despite Christ's having honored human marriage by his presence and first miracle at the wedding in Cana (Jn 2:1-11), he was not the product of human marital congress:

the Son came, or rather was made man, in order to reconstitute our condition within himself; first of all in his own holy, wonderful, and truly amazing birth and life. This was why he himself became the first one to be born of the Holy Spirit (I mean of course after the flesh) so that he could trace a path for grace to come to us. He wanted us to have this intellectual regeneration and spiritual assimilation to himself, who is the true and natural Son, so that we too might be able to call God our Father, and so remain free of corruption as no longer owning our first father, that is Adam, in whom we were corrupted. All this happened "not from blood, not from the will of the flesh, or the will of man" (Jn 1:13) but from God through the Spirit.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ UC (McGuckin, 62), SC 97, 334: "Ἀφίκετο γάρ... ἡ γοῦν ἐνηνθρώπησεν ὁ Υἱός, ἀναστοιχειώσων τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς ὡς ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ πρῶτον εἰς ἁγίαν τινα καὶ τεθραυσμένην καὶ παράδοξον ἀληθῶς ἀπότηξιν καὶ ζωὴν. Γέγονε δὲ καὶ πρῶτος αὐτὸς γεννητὸς τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, κατὰ γε, φημί, τὴν σάρκα, ἵν' ὥσπερ ὁδῶ καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς διαβαινούσης τῆς χάριτος, «οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός,» ἀλλ' ἐκ Θεοῦ διὰ Πνεύματος τὴν νοητὴν ἔχοντες ἀναγέννησιν, καὶ τὴν πρὸς γε τὸν φύσει καὶ ἀληθῶς Υἱὸν συμμορφίαν πνευματικὴν, Πατέρα καλῶμεν τὸν Θεόν, οὕτω τε ἄφθαρτοι διαμένωμεν, ὡς οὐκ ἔτι πατέρα τὸν πρῶτον ἔχοντες, τουτέστιν Ἀδάμ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐφθάρμεθα."

We see here that Cyril not only demonstrates how Christ fulfills his own teaching on human entry into the kingdom of God, but also that the purpose of his Incarnation culminates in the Johannine contribution to recapitulation, namely “the power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12). Furthermore, “becoming God's children” is an image to describe the ultimate human *telos*, union with God inaugurated in the Incarnation. In the act of becoming human, the Word “joined to God the Father the race that had shied away from its original intimacy with him.”²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ FL 10.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 178), SC 392, 192: “συνῆψε δι’ ἑαυτοῦ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ τὸ τῆς ἀρχαίας οἰκειότητος ἀποσκιρτῆσαν γένος.”

4.0 THE REMEDIATION OF HUMAN NATURE

In Chapter 2, I laid out Cyril's account of the Fall of the first couple and the consequences that extended to all of humanity. The instability native to human nature allowed them to turn away from the “saving command” of God and toward the deceptive promise of the serpent. The serpent had stirred up their passions such that they freely chose to disobey God, preferring instead to satisfy the desires of both body (the fruit was good to eat) and soul (it would make one wise). The consequences of that decision included being cursed by God and losing the Holy Spirit and the image of God. Thus, death and decay became part of the human experience. This basic narrative provides a clear outline of the problems faced by human beings, problems that are utterly unsolvable by human effort. As if in the voice of the Word, Cyril explains, “It was fitting for the physician to be with those in danger. It was fitting for life to be with the dying. It was fitting for light to dwell with those in darkness. But it was not possible for you, who are human by nature, to fly up to heaven and dwell with the Savior. So I myself have come to you.”²⁹⁹ The remedial aspect of the work of Christ addresses each of these problems and fully resolves it. We will see Christ taming the passions, fulfilling and lifting the curse, receiving the Holy Spirit, restoring the image of God, defeating the devil, and conquering death and decay. In short, Christ effects reconciliation between God and humanity. That relationship

²⁹⁹ CJ 5.3 (Maxwell 1, 329), Pusey 2, 8: “ἔδει συνεῖναι τοῖς κινδυνεύουσι τὸν ἱατρὸν, ἔδει παρεῖναι τοῖς ἀποθνήσκουσι τὴν ζωὴν, ἔδει συνδιατᾶσθαι τοῖς ἐν σκότει τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ’ ἦν οὐκ ἐφικτὸν ἀνθρώπους ὄντας ὑμᾶς τὴν φύσιν ἀναπτῆναι πρὸς οὐρανὸν καὶ συνδιατᾶσθαι τῷ σώζοντι. ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν τοιγαροῦν αὐτὸς ἐγὼ πρὸς ὑμᾶς.”

suffered a dramatic breach with profound consequences. Cyril summarizes, “‘For God was,’ as Paul says, ‘in Christ reconciling the world to himself,’ and in forgiveness restoring that which has fallen from friendship with him to what it was in the beginning.”³⁰⁰ Taken together, all of this remediation restores human nature to its original condition and constitutes a new beginning. It does not represent the culmination of the *oikonomia*, but rather the condition for the possibility that human beings will reach their perfection. Only when the devastating effects of sin have been healed, and a further breach prevented, can humanity be made ready to receive the ultimate good that has been prepared from the very beginning.

4.1 THE PASSIONS

Cyril identifies the passions as the root of all human sin. Indeed, it was the desires of both body and soul that the serpent exploited in tempting Adam and Eve to disobey the divine command. We saw, also, that the natural instability of the human creature allows for the possibility of internal conflict. In the garden of Eden, the first couple had benefited to a degree from the stabilizing presence of the Holy Spirit and they were able to keep and preserve the gift they had received, albeit for a brief period. With the flight of the Holy Spirit, humanity lost even what provisional stability they had enjoyed, thus allowing the passions to run rampant and to provide ample fodder for the devil's tyranny. Hence conflict internal to the human person had to be stabilized at the outset, in order for the

³⁰⁰ CJ 5.3 (Maxwell 1, 327), Pusey 2, 4: “‘Θεὸς γὰρ ἦν,’ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Παύλου φωνήν, ‘ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ,’ καὶ τὸ τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν φιλίας ἐκπεπτωκὸς ἀνακομίζων ἀμνησικάκως εἰς ὅπερ ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ.”

root of sin to be excised. Human nature receives this stability in Christ at the moment of the Incarnation, because this natural property of the Word immediately and permanently benefits the nature that was assumed. Cyril explains that the Word became flesh

so that by the energies of his Spirit he might strengthen the weaknesses of the flesh, free its nature from feelings that are too earthly, and transform it, as it were, to only such feelings as are pleasing to God. Now it is an infirmity of human nature to be tyrannized by grief. But this infirmity, along with the others, is neutralized first in Christ so that this benefit may extend to us as well.³⁰¹

Here we see how Cyril envisions the stabilizing power of the divine nature to strengthen the naturally unstable human nature, thereby rendering it impassible.

This does not mean that Christ is unfeeling; far from it. We saw in the previous chapter that Christ's experience included hunger, fatigue, grief, and anxiety. He experiences emotional stimuli and physical needs and desires, but always maintains a right ordering of reason and the will such that those experiences are never allowed to dominate or overwhelm. We see two aspects of his taming of the passions: first, in the union of human and divine, and second, in the lived experiences. In his Incarnation,

he at once freed the body, which had become the Word's own, from the passions that afflict us, removed the goad of the movements toward wickedness, and transformed it, as it were, unto a purity ineffable and befitting God, once sin was put to death in it and pleasure shaken down to its very foundations, so to speak. For just as it [Christ's body] was superior to death, because it became the flesh of that life which is such by nature, in the same way, I think, it trod upon the power of sin. For it belonged to the One who did not know sin.³⁰²

³⁰¹ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 89) Pusey 2, 280: “ἵνα ταῖς ἐνεργείαις τοῦ ἰδίου πνεύματος, τὰς μὲν τῆς σαρκὸς ἀσθενείας νευρώσῃ, καὶ γεωδεστέρου φρονήματος ἀπαλλάξῃ τὴν φύσιν, ἀναμορφώσῃ δὲ ὥσπερ εἰς μόνα τὰ δοκοῦντα Θεῷ. οὐκοῦν νόσημα μὲν φύσεως ἀνθρωπίνης, τὸ τυραννεῖσθαι ταῖς λύπαις· καταργεῖται δὲ καὶ τοῦτο μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἐν πρώτῳ Χριστῷ, ἵνα καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς διαβῇ.”

³⁰² FL 19.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 93), PG 77, 829A: “Ἰδιον γὰρ γεγονὸς τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Λόγου, παθὼν μὲν εὐθὺς τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἀπηλλάττετο, καὶ τῶν εἰς φανλότητα κινήματων τὸ κέντρον ἀπεσκευάζετο· μετεστοιχειοῦτο δὲ ὥσπερ πρὸς θεοπρεπῇ καὶ ἀπόρρητον καθαρότητα, νεκρουμένης ἐν αὐτῷ τῆς ἀμαρτίας, καὶ οἷον ἐκ βάρων αὐτῶν κατασειομένης τῆς ἡδονῆς. Ὡσπερ γὰρ θανάτου κρεῖττον ἦν, ὅτι ζωῆς τῆς κατὰ φύσιν γέγονε σὰρξ, κατὰ τὸν ἴσον, οἶμαι, τούτῳ τρόπῳ τὴν τῆς ἀμαρτίας πεπάτηκε δύναμιν. Ἰδιον γὰρ ἦν τοῦ μὴ εἰδότος ἀμαρτίαν.”

Each of his lived experiences was necessary, in fact, in order that the healing process might be complete:

If he had not been afraid, our nature would not have been freed from fear. If he had not grieved, there could never have been any deliverance from grief. If he had not been troubled and alarmed, there would have been no escape from these conditions. For every human experience, you will find the same corresponding experience in Christ. The passions of his flesh are stirred up, however, not to overcome him as they do us, but so that once they are stirred up they may be destroyed by the power of the Word who dwells in the flesh, transforming our nature to a better condition.³⁰³

The adage that “what is not assumed is not healed”³⁰⁴ applies not only to constitutive elements of the human person such as body and soul, but also to human experiences. If Christ's humanity is to be full, as Cyril insists that it is, then his human experience must likewise be full. Otherwise, the healing and restoration would not extend to the entire human life. In these two aspects of the taming of the passions, we see Cyril highlighting both the healing of the inherent weakness of the human creature, and also the free exercise of the will. Because the passions are the root of sin, subduing them or entertaining them represents a choice. By always choosing to rule over the passions, rather than allowing them to rule over him, Christ heals the internal conflict that leads human beings into sin.

³⁰³ CJ 8.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 107), Pusey 2, 320: “εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἐδειλίασεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐν ἐλευθερίᾳ τοῦ δειλιάων ἡ φύσις γέγονεν· εἰ μὴ ἐλυπήθη, οὐκ ἂν ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ λυπεῖσθαι ποτε· εἰ μὴ ἐταράχθη καὶ ἐπτοήθη, οὐκ ἂν ἔξω ποτὲ τούτων ἐγένετο. καὶ ἐφ’ ἐκάστῳ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνως γεγονότων, τὸν αὐτὸν ἐφαρμόζοντα λόγον εὐρήσεις ἐν Χριστῷ· τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς πάθη κεκινημένα, οὐχ ἵνα κρατήσῃ, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν, ἀλλ’ ἵνα κινηθέντα καταργηθῇ τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ ἐνοικήσαντος τῇ σαρκὶ Λόγου, πρὸς τὸ ἁμεινον μεταποιουμένης τῆς φύσεως.”

³⁰⁴ CJ 8.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 106), Pusey 2, 318: “ὁ γὰρ μὴ προσείληπται, οὐδὲ σέσωσται.”

4.2 THE CURSE

When the first couple admitted their act of taking the forbidden fruit, they were cursed by God: “you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3:19). In Genesis, this part of the curse is addressed to the man, but Cyril interprets it to apply to all of humanity, specifically affecting the body alone rather than the whole human person. Death and decay are the destiny of all human flesh under the condition of being separated from God. This separation is summarized in the flight of the Holy Spirit, the breath of life and image of God. The loss of the Holy Spirit will receive attention in the following section; the curse itself is our current focus. While Cyril's chief way of defining the curse refers to what God says to the man, there are instances where Cyril deals specifically with the aspect of the curse addressed to the woman, “in pain you shall bring forth children” (Gen 3:16). We begin, then, with the primary curse of death and decay, and will move on to the secondary curse of pain in childbirth.

The humanity assumed by the Word is fallen. Cyril makes this point explicitly in the *Commentary on John*. Explaining Christ's words in John 6:51 (“And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh”) Cyril writes, “I die, he says, for all that I may give life to all through myself, and I made my flesh a ransom for the flesh of all. Death will die in my death, and fallen human nature (ἡ πεσοῦσα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσις) will rise with me, he says.”³⁰⁵ Similarly, in interpreting John's portrayal of Christ as the good shepherd who knows and is known by his sheep (Jn 10:14–15), Cyril

³⁰⁵ CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 231), Pusey 1, 518: “Ἀποθνήσκω, φησὶν, ὑπὲρ πάντων, ἵνα πάντας ζωοποιήσω δι’ ἑμαυτοῦ, καὶ ἀντίλυτρον τῆς ἀπάντων σαρκὸς τὴν ἐμὴν ἐποιησάμην. τεθνήξεται γὰρ ὁ θάνατος ἐν θανάτῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, καὶ συναναστήσεται μοι, φησὶν, ἡ πεσοῦσα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσις.”

distinguishes between the universality of Christ relationship to humanity and the particularity of individual benefit from that relationship. Cyril insists that Christ “became a human being not to give grace to some and not to others but to take pity on our entire fallen human nature.”³⁰⁶ Indeed, unless the Incarnation involves the assumption of *fallen* human nature, it cannot heal that which suffers under sin and its consequences. Christ’s remediation of this condition begins with his own submission to that curse in undergoing death himself. It continues by his destruction of death itself. Thus, for Cyril, the “Word becoming flesh is the undoing and the abolition of all that fell upon human nature as our curse and punishment.”³⁰⁷ This means that, not only must the death and decay ushered in by the curse be removed from humanity; they must be destroyed altogether, so as never to hold sway over humanity again. The curse, “you are dust, and to dust you shall return,” was the just punishment for sin, and “in so hearing [Adam] was stripped of grace.”³⁰⁸ The loss of the Holy Spirit was the loss of life and of stability. Stripped of grace, humanity was left in its natural condition: utterly contingent, unstable, and with a body prone to return to non-existence. The body, then, was and is the most fragile part of human nature.

That in us which was in the most danger had to be vigorously restored and called back to incorruption by being intertwined once again with life by nature. That which suffered the evil had to procure the release from evil. The statement, “Earth you are, and to earth you will depart,” had to give way since the body that fell was united ineffably with the Word who gives life to all things.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 67), Pusey 2, 233: “γέγονε γὰρ ἄνθρωπος, οὐ χαρίζομενος ἀνὰ μέρος τισὶ, τισὶ δὲ οὐκέτι, ἀλλ’ ὅλην πεσοῦσαν ἐποικτεῖρας τὴν φύσιν.”

³⁰⁷ UC (McGuckin, 60), SC 97, 328: “Τὸ γὰρ τοι γενέσθαι σάρκα τὸν Λόγον λύσιν ἔχει καὶ ἀνατροπὴν τῶν ἐξ ἁρᾶς καὶ δίκης τῇ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσει συμβεβηκότων.”

³⁰⁸ CJ 1.9 (Maxwell 1, 63), Pusey 1, 139: “τότε δικαίως ἀκούων ἀπεγυμνώθη τῆς χάριτος”

³⁰⁹ CJ 1.9 (Maxwell 1, 63), Pusey 1, 139: “ἔδει τοίνυν τὸ μάλιστα κινδυνεῦσαν ἐν ἡμῖν, γοργότερον ἀνασώζεσθαι, καὶ συμπλοκῇ πάλιν τῇ πρὸς ζωὴν τὴν κατὰ φύσιν ἀνακαλεῖσθαι πρὸς ἀφθαρσίαν. ἔδει τὸ πεπονθὸς λύσιν εὐράσθαι τοῦ κακοῦ. ἔδει λοιπὸν ἀτονῆσαι τὸ “Γῆ εἶ καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύση,” ἐνωθέντος ἀφράστως τοῦ πεσόντος σώματος τῷ τὰ πάντα ζωογονοῦντι Λόγῳ.”

The death of Christ, then, was necessary because of his complete humanity. At the same time, because his flesh was that of the Word, and therefore of life itself, he could not remain in death. The power of death to hold him, and us, was abolished in his resurrection to life.

Death and decay are the primary and universally applicable aspect of the curse. The secondary aspect as represented by the curse addressed to the woman, namely that she will experience painful childbirth, finds its reversal in two key passages, one before, and the other after, the death and resurrection of Christ. The first instance occurs in Cyril's exposition of the wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1-11). He offers a variety of reasons for which Christ attended the wedding, not least of which is to reverse this aspect of the curse.

God said to the woman somewhere, "In pain you will bear children." How could we not need to be rescued from this curse as well? How else could we have escaped the condemnation of marriage? The Savior undid this too, since he loves humanity. By his presence, he, the desire and joy of all, has honored marriage in order to drive out the ancient grief of childbearing.³¹⁰

Interestingly, Cyril renders this curse applicable to all, not just to women, through his use of the first-person plural. Cyril understands marriage to be the "very beginning of human birth" and so Christ's sanctification of marriage through his presence at the wedding at Cana also has the effect of reaching into the future: "It was fitting for the one who was recapitulating human nature itself and refashioning the whole of it in a better condition not only to impart his blessing to those already called into existence but also to prepare

³¹⁰ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 90), Pusey 1, 201: "εἰρητό που πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα παρὰ Θεοῦ 'Ὑν λύπαις τέξῃ τέκνα.' πῶς οὖν ἔδει καὶ ταύτην ἡμᾶς ἀποκρούσασθαι τὴν ἀρὰν, ἢ πῶς ἂν ἦν ἐτέρως διαφυγεῖν καταδεδικασμένον τὸν γάμον; ἔλυσε καὶ τοῦτο φιλόανθρωπος ὢν ὁ Σωτήρ. τετίμηκε τῇ παρουσίᾳ τὸν γάμον, ἢ πάντων εὐθυμία καὶ χαρὰ, ἵνα τῆς τεκνογονίας τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἐξέλαση κατήφειαν."

his grace for those not yet born and to make holy their entrance into existence.”³¹¹ As joy itself, Christ’s presence reverses the grief of childbirth, thereby inaugurating a new creation in type and shadow. The reality of this new creation will become manifest in his resurrection from the dead.

The second and more expansive way in which Cyril deals with the curse addressed to the woman appears in the encounter between the risen Christ and Mary Magdalene in the garden on Easter morning (Jn 20:1-18). Cyril highlights a number of parallels between the garden of Eden, the garden of Christ’s arrest, and the garden in which his tomb was located. With regard specifically to the reversal of the curse directed toward the woman, and in this case extended to the female gender, Cyril focuses on the link between the first and third. Cyril understands a woman’s tears to be an expression of the accursed state insofar as pain or grief associated with delivering a baby involves tears. Even though God’s curse was addressed to each of the guilty parties in the first transgression—the serpent, the woman, and the man—Cyril typically focuses blame on Adam and Satan, and far less frequently highlights Eve’s culpability. Nevertheless, the divine curse addressed to Eve affected all of womankind and therefore needed to be reversed:

And more glorious still, first in her (I mean Mary), the entire female race, so to speak, is crowned with double honor and delivered from their ancient frailties. First she mourned, with Christ as the reason for her tears, but she turned her grief into joy when she was told to stop crying by the one who in ancient times imposed the sentence that made women easily overcome by attacks of sorrow. It was said to the woman somewhere by God, “In pain you shall bring forth children.” But just as he subjected her to sorrows in paradise then, when she put herself in service to the words of the serpent and became a servant of the devil’s

³¹¹ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 90), Pusey 1, 201: “ἔδει γὰρ αὐτὴν τὴν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἀνακεφαλαιούμενον, καὶ ὅλην ἀνασκευάζοντα πρὸς τὸ ἄμεινον, μὴ μόνον τοῖς ἤδη πρὸς τὸ ὑπάρξαι κεκλημένοις διανέμειν τὴν εὐλογίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ὅσον οὐδέπω τεχνησομένοις προευτρεπίζειν τὴν χάριν, καὶ ἁγίαν αὐτῶν καταστήσαι τὴν εἰς τὸ εἶναι πάροdon.”

evil works, so also once again in a garden he commands her to stop crying. Releasing her from the curse that subjected her to sorrow, he bids her to become the first messenger of the great good tidings and to tell the disciples the good news of his journey to heaven. This was so that just as the first woman, who was the origin of all, was condemned for being a minister of the devil's words, and through her the entire female gender was condemned as well, so also she who served our Savior's words and announced the tidings that lead to eternal life might free the entire female gender from blame. So the Lord grants to Mary not only that she stop crying and no longer have a heart that is easily disposed to sorrow but also that she have beautiful feet. According to the voice of the prophet, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" though the first woman did not have beautiful feet, since she brought no good news when she advised our forefather to transgress the divine command.³¹²

It is particularly noteworthy that Cyril identifies the "second Eve," not with the Virgin Mary, but with Mary Magdalene.³¹³ Mary Magdalene is rewarded for her steadfast faith in Christ, insofar as she continues to call him "Lord," even though she thinks his body has been removed. And so she becomes the one through whom the feminine is freed from the curse directed toward Eve and from its effects.

Immediately following God's pronouncement of the curse, the first couple were expelled from the garden of Eden, with the way back guarded by cherubim and a flaming,

³¹² CJ 12.1 (Maxwell 2, 362), Pusey 3, 120–21: "καὶ τό γε τούτων ἔτι λαμπρότερον, ἐν αὐτῇ γάρ καὶ πρώτῃ, φημί δὴ τῇ Μαριὰμ, σύμπαν ὡς εἰπεῖν τὸ θηλειῶν γένος διττῇ στεφανοῦται τιμῇ, καὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων ἁρρώστημάτων ἐκομίζετο τὴν διάλυσιν. πρώτη γὰρ οὕτω θρηνήσασα, καὶ τῶν δακρύων τὴν πρόφασιν λαβοῦσα Χριστὸν, μεθίστη τὸ πένθος εἰς θυμηδῖαν, μὴ χρῆναι κλαίειν ἀκούσασα παρὰ τοῦ καὶ πάλαι καταδικάσαντος καὶ ταῖς τῆς λύπης ἐφόδοις εὐκαταγώνιστον ἀποφύγαντος. εἶρητο γάρ που πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα παρὰ Θεοῦ 'Ὑν λύπαις τέξῃ τέκνα.' ἀλλ' ὥσπερ αὐτὴν ὑπετίθει ταῖς λύπαις κατὰ τὸν παράδεισόν ποτε, ταῖς τοῦ ὄψεως διακονησαμένην φωναῖς, καὶ ταῖς τοῦ διαβόλου κακουργίαις ὑπηρετήσασαν, οὕτω δὴ πάλιν ἐν κήπῳ κελεύει μηκέτι κλαίειν αὐτήν. ἀπολύων δὲ καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς ἀρᾶς ἐφ' ἣ λυπεῖσθαι προστέτακτο, τῶν μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν κελεύει γενέσθαι πρωτάγγελον, καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἄνω βάδισιν εὐαγγελίζεσθαι τοῖς μαθηταῖς· ἵν' ὥσπερ ἡ πρώτη καὶ πασῶν ἀρχαιοτάτῃ γυνὴ ταῖς τοῦ διαβόλου φωναῖς ὑπουργήσασα κατεκρίθη, καὶ δι' ἐκείνης σύμπαν τὸ θηλειῶν γένος, οὕτω καὶ αὐτὴ τοῖς τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ὑπηρετήσασα λόγοις, καὶ τὰ εἰς ζωὴν ἀναφέροντα τὴν αἰώνιον ἀπαγγείλασα, σύμπαν τῆς αἰτίας τὸ θηλειῶν ἀπαλλάξῃ γένος. χαρίζεται τοίνυν τῇ Μαριὰμ πρὸς τὸ μηκέτι κλαίειν μηδὲ εἰς λύπας εὐκόλον τὴν καρδίαν ἔχειν ὁ Κύριος, καὶ τὸ ὡραίους κεκτηῖσθαι τοὺς πόδας. κατὰ γὰρ τὴν τοῦ προφήτου φωνὴν 'Ὡς ὡραῖοι οἱ πόδες τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων τὰ ἀγαθὰ·' καίτοι τῆς πρώτης ἐκείνης οὐχ ὡραίους ἐχούσης τοὺς πόδας, οὐ γάρ τι τῶν ἀγαθῶν εὐηγγελίζετο, τὰ πρὸς παράβασιν τῆς θείας ἐντολῆς τῷ προπάτορι συμβουλευσασα."

³¹³ In fact, Cyril's treatment of the Virgin's desolation at the crucifixion portrays Mary as entertaining thoughts doubting Christ's identity and mission. He compares her supposed stumbling to that of Peter when he said, "God forbid it, Lord!" (Mt 16:22), remarking that a woman would be more apt to think this way than a man. See CJ 12 (Maxwell 2, 347–48), Pusey 3, 90–91.

turning sword (Gen 3:23-24). The garden had been the place of both the first transgression and the first punishment of transgression. When commenting on Jesus and his disciples going out to a garden where they would be met by Judas and his group of soldiers and police (Jn 18:1-3), Cyril highlights the fact that the encounter takes place in a garden, thus “fulfilling the type of the original paradise. It was a recapitulation, as it were, of places and a return, so to speak, of all things to their original condition. In paradise the beginning of our suffering occurred, and in the garden the suffering of Christ received its beginning, which brought about a restoration from all that happened to us long ago.”³¹⁴ The end of the curse has its beginning in the garden of Christ’s betrayal and arrest.

In another place, Cyril draws our attention to the connection between the garden of Eden and the garden where the tomb in which Christ was buried (Jn 19:41). Whether this garden is the same as the one where Jesus had been betrayed and arrested is unclear in the biblical text. For Cyril, what matters is that it is a garden, so that our attention is pointed to Eden. In commenting on John’s account of the burial of Christ, Cyril writes,

The author says that this tomb is in a “garden” and that it is “new.” This fact signifies to us in a type and sketch that Christ’s death is the source that grants us entrance into paradise. He “entered as a forerunner on our behalf.” What else besides this could be signified by carrying the body of Jesus into the garden? And the newness of the tomb signifies the strange and untrodden path, as it were, or the return from death to life and the renewal that Christ devised to counter decay. Our death becomes new in the death of Christ, transformed into a kind of sleep with similar power and functions. Since we will live in the future, we are now “alive to God,” according to the Scriptures. That is why the blessed Paul everywhere refers to those who have died in Christ as “asleep.” In ancient times the dreaded specter of death held sway over our nature. For death reigned “from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of

³¹⁴ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 312), Pusey 3, 15: “τὸ τοῦ ἀρχαίου σχῆμα παραδείσου πληρῶν· ἀνακεφαλαίωσις γὰρ ὥσπερ ἐγένετο τῶν τόπων καὶ πάντων, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, ἐπαναδρομὴ πρὸς τὸ ἀρχαῖον. ἐν παραδείσῳ μὲν γὰρ τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς σκυθρωπῶν συμβέβηκεν ἡ ἀρχὴ, ἐν κήπῳ δὲ καὶ τὸ Χριστοῦ πάθος δέχεται τὴν ἀρχὴν, ἀπάντων ἡμῶν τῶν πάλαι συμβεβηκότων εἰσφέρον τὴν ἐπανόρθωσιν.”

Adam.” And we have “borne the image of the man of dust,” enduring death by the divine curse just like he did. When the second Adam appeared to us, the divine man from heaven, and contended for the life of all, he purchased the life of all by the death of his flesh. He destroyed the power of decay and returned to life again. We were then transformed into his image so that we experience a new kind of death, as it were—not one that dissolves us into decomposition forever but one that sends us a sleep that is full of good hope, just like the sleep of him who has renewed this path for us, that is, Christ.³¹⁵

Death and decay are the consequences of the curse. They are the means by which human beings return to their dust, because they have suffered separation from God through the transgression of Adam. For Cyril, Christ must die a real and true death, first because the human nature assumed by the Word is subject to death just like ours is, and second, because descent into death and the realm of the dead constitute the lowest point of his self-emptying. Cyril summarizes the single most important article of faith: “We must—must—believe that he died and was buried.”³¹⁶ Belief in the resurrection is secondary, because it depends upon death in the flesh.

³¹⁵ CJ 12 (Maxwell 2, 355), Pusey 3, 105–106: “ἐν κήπῳ δὲ τοῦτο καὶ καινὸν εἶναι φησιν ὁ συγγραφεὺς, κατασημαίνοντος ὥσπερ ἡμῖν ἐν τύπῳ καὶ ὑπογραμμῷ τοῦ πράγματος, ὅτι τῆς εἰς τὸν παράδεισον εἰσδρομῆς καὶ πρόξενος ἡμῖν καὶ ἀρχῇ γέγονεν ὁ Χριστοῦ θάνατος. ‘πρόδρομος γὰρ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσηλθεν’ αὐτός. τί γὰρ ἕτερον ἢ αὐτὸ δὴ τοῦτο κατασημῆναιεν ἂν τὸ νεκρὸν ἐν κήπῳ διακεκομίσθαι τὸν Ἰησοῦν; διὰ δὲ τῆς τοῦ μνημείου καινότητος, τὸ ἀτριβὲς ὥσπερ καὶ ξένον τῆς ἐκ θανάτου πρὸς ζωὴν ἀναδρομῆς, καὶ ἡ κατὰ τῆς φθορᾶς ἐπινοηθεῖσα καινοτομία διὰ Χριστοῦ σημαίνεται. καινὸς γὰρ ἡμῶν ὁ θάνατος ἐν θανάτῳ Χριστοῦ εἰς ὕπνου τρόπον τινὰ μετατεθειμένος δύνάμιν τε καὶ χρεῖαν. ζῶμεν γὰρ τῷ Θεῷ ζήσιν μέλλοντες, κατὰ τὰς γραφάς. τοιγάρτοι καὶ ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω κεκοιμημένους καλεῖ τοὺς ἐν Χριστῷ τελευτήσαντας. πάλαι μὲν γὰρ κατὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας φύσεως τὸ δεινὸν τοῦ θανάτου κατεθρασύνετο. βεβασίλευκε γὰρ ‘ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ καὶ μέχρι Μωυσέως καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς μὴ ἁμαρτήσαντας ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως Ἀδὰμ,’ καὶ πεφορέκαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, καθ’ ὁμοιότητα τὴν ἐκείνου, τὸν ἐκ τῆς θείας ἀρᾶς ὑπομένοντες θάνατον. ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὁ δεῦτερος ἡμῖν ἐπέλαμψεν Ἀδὰμ, ὁ θεῖός τε καὶ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ τῆς ἀπάντων ὑπεραθλήσας ζωῆς, τῷ θανάτῳ τῆς ἰδίας σαρκὸς τὴν ἀπάντων ζωὴν ἐξεπρίματο, καὶ τὸ τῆς φθορᾶς καταλύσας κράτος ἀνεβίω πάλιν, μετεπλάσθημεν εἰς εἰκόνα τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν, καινὸν ὥσπερ τινὰ θάνατον ὑπομένοντες, οὐκ εἰς ἀτελεύτητον ἡμᾶς καταλύοντα φθοράν, ἀλλ’ ὕπνον ἐμβάλλοντα τὸν ἐλπίδος γέμοντα καλῆς, καθ’ ὁμοιότητα δὲ δηλονότι τοῦ καὶ ταύτην ἡμῖν ἐγκαινίσαντος τὴν ὁδὸν, τουτέστι Χριστοῦ.”

³¹⁶ CJ 12 (Maxwell 2, 356), Pusey 3, 107: “ἔδει γὰρ ἔδει πιστεῦειν ὅτι καὶ ἀπέθανε καὶ ἐτάφη.”

4.3 THE FLIGHT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND LOSS OF THE IMAGE OF GOD

In Chapter 1, we saw how Cyril interpreted the Genesis accounts of creation in such a way as to identify the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26-27) with the divine act of breathing into the nostrils of the first human being (Gen 2:7). It was critical for Cyril to establish that the image of God was superadded rather than inherent in the human creature because only those qualities and characteristics that are extrinsic can be lost. And, indeed, Cyril argues that this image of God is a gift to be preserved by the one receiving it. He explains the Fall in terms of a failure to keep the gift, the consequence of which was its being revoked by the divine giver. “Sin reigned, and thus human nature was shown to be stripped of the indwelling Holy Spirit. ‘For the Holy Spirit of wisdom will flee deceit,’ as it is written, ‘and will not dwell in a body enslaved to sin.’”³¹⁷ In some cases, Cyril describes the Holy Spirit as departing immediately following the words of the curse, while in other cases, the departure is far more gradual, taking generations before being completed.

The loss of the Holy Spirit was catastrophic for humanity. The Spirit is the breath of life, and so humanity fell into death. The Spirit is the principle of stability, and so humanity fell into physical and moral decay. The Spirit is the image of God, and so humanity lost its resemblance to its Creator. Effecting the return of the Holy Spirit to humanity was therefore a critical aspect of the remediation enacted by the Incarnation: “Now when the framer of all resolved (quite beautifully) to ‘recapitulate all things in Christ’ and willed to return human nature once again to its original condition, he

³¹⁷ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 82), Pusey 1, 184: “βεβασίλευκεν ἡ ἁμαρτία, γυμνή τε οὕτω λοιπὸν τοῦ ἐνοικισθέντος Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἡ ἀνθρώπου φύσις ἀνεδείκνυτο.”

promised along with the other gifts also to give human nature the Holy Spirit. For there was no other way to get back to unshaken stability in what is good.”³¹⁸ The ontological and natural stability provided by the Holy Spirit is one of the gifts promised, but it could not be given in the same way as in the beginning. Otherwise, the door would be open for a perpetual cycle of fall and restoration. The Holy Spirit had to be given and received in a new way, one that precludes a future fall. Cyril argues that “God the Word, who knows no turning, had to become human so that by receiving the Spirit as a human he might preserve the good permanently in our nature.”³¹⁹ The Holy Spirit had fled from humanity because of sin, so its return required the absence of sin. Because of his own sinlessness, the Incarnate Word cannot lose the Holy Spirit as a human being. Christ’s own sinlessness is prerequisite to the return of the Holy Spirit to human nature. It is also the basis for an entirely new and different mode of reception in Christ than was the case in Adam. Cyril also explains that this restoration of the Holy Spirit to humanity was necessary: “Since [God] is good, he hastened to gather together the flock on earth, which ran away, with those above. He also decreed to transform humanity once again to the original image through the Spirit. There was no other way to make the divine imprint shine again in humanity as it did at the first.”³²⁰ The restoration of the image of God, the return of life, and the reestablishment of stability in humanity are all in service to the

³¹⁸ CJ 5.2 (Maxwell 1, 309), Pusey 1, 691–92: “ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὁ πάντων γενεσιουργὸς ἀνακεφαλαίωσε τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, καλῶς γε σφόδρα ποιῶν ἐβουλεύσατο, καὶ ἀνακομίσει πάλιν εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἠθέλησε τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν, ἐπαγγέλλεται μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιδώσειν αὐτῇ καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον· οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἐτέρως εἰς ἀκλόνητον στάσιν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀναδραμεῖν.”

³¹⁹ CJ 5.2 (Maxwell 1, 310), Pusey 1, 693: “ἀναγκαίως ὁ τροπὴν οὐκ εἰδὼς Θεὸς Λόγος γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, ἵνα λαβὼν ὡς ἄνθρωπος διασώσῃ παγίως τῇ φύσει τὸ ἀγαθόν.”

³²⁰ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 82), Pusey 1, 183: “καὶ τὴν μὲν δραπετεύσαν ἐπὶ γῆς ἀγέλην ταῖς ἄνω συνάπτειν ἀγαθὸς ὢν ἠπειγέτο· μεταστοιχειοῦν δὲ πάλιν εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν εἰκόνα τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐδοκίμαζεν. ἦν γὰρ οὐχ ἐτέρως τοὺς θεῖους ἀναλάμψαι χαρακτῆρας ἐν αὐτῇ, καθάπερ οὖν ἦσαν καὶ πρότερον.”

purpose of drawing humanity into the divine life, not through a mere return to the earthly paradise, but by admission into heaven itself. Cyril writes of uniting the earthly flock with the flock above. This language evokes the image of Christ as the good shepherd, who has sheep in other folds who require his presence and calling, so that there may be one flock, one shepherd (Jn 10:16).

The return of the Holy Spirit to humanity, and therefore the reestablishment of all its benefits, was inaugurated at Christ's baptism. Brian Daley identifies the return of the Holy Spirit to humanity at the baptism of Jesus to represent “the beginning of its renewal.”³²¹ The reestablishment of stability is the first such benefit, as Maxwell rightly points out. The Holy Spirit had been the principle of stability in Adam, both ontologically insofar as the Holy Spirit preserved Adam in life and existence, and naturally insofar as the Holy Spirit strengthened the reason and will to choose the good. At Christ's baptism, Maxwell says that the Holy Spirit was “rooted once again” in human nature.³²² And yet, Maxwell does not account for how this reestablishment of the Holy Spirit is in any way different from the first gift in Eden. Cyril writes,

But the one who knew no sin received the Spirit as man in order to keep the Spirit in our nature and root in us once again the grace that had left us. I think that is the reason that the holy Baptist profitably adds, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven and remaining on him.” The Spirit flew away from us because of sin, but the one who knew no sin became one of us so that the Spirit might become accustomed to remain in us, since the Spirit finds no reason in him for leaving or shrinking back.³²³

³²¹ Brian E. Daley, “The Fullness of the Saving God: Cyril of Alexandria on the Holy Spirit,” in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 136.

³²² Maxwell, “Sin in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on John,” 379.

³²³ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 82), Pusey 1, 184: “ἀλλ’ ἵνα τῇ φύσει διασώσῃ λαβὼν, ὡς ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ριζώσῃ πάλιν ἐν ἡμῖν τὴν ἀποφοιτήσασαν χάριν ὃ μὴ εἰδὼς ἁμαρτίαν. διὰ ταύτην γὰρ οἶμαι τὴν αἰτίαν προστεθεικέναι χρησίμως τὸν ἅγιον βαπτιστὴν, ὅτι τεθέσθαι τὸ Πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ μένον ἐπ’ αὐτόν. ἀπέπηγέ μιν γὰρ ἐξ ἡμῶν διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, γέγονε δὲ ὡς εἷς ἐξ ἡμῶν, ὃ μὴ εἰδὼς ἁμαρτίαν, ἵνα προσεθισθῇ τὸ Πνεῦμα μένειν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἀφορμὴν οὐκ ἔχον ἀναχωρήσεως ἢ ὑποστολῆς ἐν αὐτῷ.”

The Holy Spirit had refused to “dwell in a body enslaved to sin,” but now, in Christ, the body was entirely free from sin, and could therefore serve as an appropriate temple and dwelling place for the Spirit, as it had been in Adam at the beginning. Christ received the Holy Spirit because “receiving is fitting for a human.”³²⁴ Tanner notes how Cyril distinguishes between what is proper to humanity and what is proper to divinity in this episode. She cites Cyril explaining how Christ receives the Holy Spirit as a human being, but gives the Holy Spirit as God.³²⁵ And, as I argued in Chapter 1, true reception on our part is marked by our desire and effort to keep and preserve whatever has been given to us. When John the Baptist refers to the Spirit remaining on Christ (Mt 3:16), this indicates that Christ’s reception is of a permanent nature, thereby distinguishing it entirely from the meager reception of the Holy Spirit in Adam. Keating highlights Cyril’s use of the perfect tense of the verb (μένειν, to remain) as indicating that the Spirit’s descent “is not simply a single past event; rather, it has inaugurated an ongoing state of affairs, one which has greater significance for the human race.”³²⁶ Keating identifies either two stages or two aspects of the creation in which “(1) the first man is made in the image of and likeness of God; (2) the Spirit breathes life into him, impressing his own divine characteristics upon him.”³²⁷ This conception does not adequately account for Cyril’s insistence that the image of God is not an inherent part of the human creature, but rather was given afterwards. Only if the image of God is extrinsic can humanity’s loss of

³²⁴ CJ 5.2 (Maxwell 1, 309), Pusey 1.692: “καὶ ἦν ἄνθρωπος πρέπον τὸ λαβεῖν.”

³²⁵ Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key*, Current Issues in Theology (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167–68.

³²⁶ Keating, “Divinization in Cyril,” 153.

³²⁷ Keating, “Divinization in Cyril,” 154.

the image of God be possible, because only those things that are natural are firmly rooted, as Cyril explained earlier.

The restoration of the Spirit to humanity marked the reshaping of humanity into the image of God that had been marred and defaced beyond recognition. On its own, humanity does not bear the image of God; rather, that image was impressed upon us by the Holy Spirit. Cyril reiterates his claim that the image of God is not a constitutive element of our nature:

That which has such an earthly origin could never be seen to be in the image of the highest unless it had obtained and received its shape through the Spirit, like a beautiful mask, by the will of God. Since his Spirit is the perfect image of the essence of the Only Begotten...he makes those in whom he dwells to be conformed to the image of the Father, that is, the Son.³²⁸

The gift of the image of God was for the purpose of preparing humanity to enjoy divine adoption through our conformity to the true image. When that image was lost in response to human sinfulness, so also the process of our adoption was put on hold. The reestablishment of the Holy Spirit in all of humanity in and through Christ reforms humanity into the image of God, thereby setting that process of adoption back into motion. Cyril appeals to Psalm 2:7, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you,” to make a point similar to that in the baptism narrative. In that case, Christ received the Holy Spirit as a man and for the sake of humanity. Cyril argues that this statement ought to be understood as referring, not to the “naked” Word, who is eternally begotten of the Father, but rather to the Word *as incarnate*, insofar as he is human “so that in him the

³²⁸ CJ 11.5 (Maxwell 2, 297), Pusey 2, 720: “οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν ὥφθη ποτὲ κατ’ εἰκόνα τὴν ἀνωτάτω τὸ χθαμαλωτάτην οὕτως ἔχον τὴν γένεσιν, εἰ μὴ τὴν διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος μόρφωσιν, προσωπεῖον ὥσπερ τι περικαλλὲς ἔλαχέ τε καὶ ἐκλήρωσατο, βουλήσει δὲ δηλονότι τοῦ Θεοῦ. ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐστὶ τῆς τοῦ Μονογενοῦς οὐσίας εἰκὼν ἀκραιφνὴς τὸ Πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ, τοὺς οἷσπερ ἂν ἐνυπάρξαι συμμόρφους ἀποτελεῖ τῇ τοῦ Πατρὸς εἰκόνι, τουτέστι τῷ Υἱῷ”

Father may receive us into adoption, since all of humanity is in Christ because he is human. Thus, he is said to give the Spirit to the Son, who has the Spirit as his own, so that in him we may obtain the Spirit.”³²⁹ For Cyril, possession of the Holy Spirit is intimately tied to the grace of divine adoption, because it is the means by which we are conformed to the image and likeness according to which we were made, namely the Son. Our likeness to the Son, made possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is our adoption by the Father. Therefore, the return of the Holy Spirit must be accomplished before we can be prepared to become children of God (Jn 1:12). On this point, Farag goes too far in asserting the equivalence of the restoration of the image of God and union with God.³³⁰ If it were the case that union with God was the result of our possession and preservation of the image, one wonders how the fall could have occurred in the first place. Farag is correct in arguing that “communion (κοινωνίας) and union (ένώσεως) with God cannot be achieved without the participation of the Holy Spirit.”³³¹ However, she does not adequately account for the necessity of a different and better kind or degree of the Spirit’s presence in and with human beings. The original image was lost, which strongly suggests that the Holy Spirit was not united to the first human beings so much as it dwelt within them. This distinction between indwelling and union is central to Cyril’s understanding of the Incarnation chiefly because union is permanent while indwelling is temporary. Keating accounts for the difference between Adam’s temporary possession of

³²⁹ CJ 5.2 (Maxwell 1, 309): Pusey 1.692–93: “ἐν ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ καταδέχεται πρὸς υἰοθεσίαν, ὅλη γὰρ ἡ ἰσότης ἐν Χριστῷ, καθόπερ ἡ ἰσότης ἐν ἄνθρωπῳ: οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἔχοντι Πνεῦμα, διδόναι πάλιν αὐτὸ λέγεται τῷ Υἱῷ, ἵνα ἡμεῖς ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ Πνεῦμα κερδάνωμεν.”

³³⁰ Farag, *St Cyril of Alexandria, a New Testament Exegete*, 134.

³³¹ Farag, *St Cyril of Alexandria, a New Testament Exegete*, 134.

the Spirit and image of God and Christ's permanent possession by pointing to Christ's sinlessness, and therefore to the absence of any cause for the Spirit ever to depart.³³²

4.4 SIN, DEATH, AND DECAY

In order to heal the alienation between God and humanity after the Fall, both the cause (sin) and the effect (death) must be eradicated. Because through Adam we have stolen what was not our own, namely the fruit we were forbidden to eat, we find ourselves as transgressors against God. Because everything we have is already a gift, we have no hope of offering up sufficient sacrifice to God out of our own means. We are, therefore, captives in need of a ransom. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, being without sin, has no need to make any sacrifice. Because of our disobedience, we must die, but because of our inability to make a satisfactory offering, God the Word chooses to offer himself in our stead. It is Christ's self-offering on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins that provides the ransom to free us, for "he did not allow [the body] to remain mortal and subject to corruption, thus allowing the penalty of Adam's transgression to continue to pass on to us."³³³ Through the Incarnation, the human need to make a sacrifice and the divine ability to offer it come together in the person of Jesus Christ. Indeed, Cyril describes the Incarnation by writing that God the Word "took the form of a slave and consecrated his own flesh as a ransom for the life of all."³³⁴ This is the means by which Jesus Christ

³³² Keating, "Divinization in Cyril," 156.

³³³ UC (McGuckin, 57), SC 97, 322: "Οὐ γάρ τοι θνητὴν ἀπομεῖναι καὶ ὑπὸ φθορὰν ἀφῆκεν αὐτήν, παραπέμποντος εἰς ἡμᾶς τοῦ Ἀδὰμ τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ παραβάσει δίκην, ὥς σάρκα δὲ μᾶλλον ἀφθάρτου Θεοῦ, τουτέστιν ἰδίαν ἢ γοῦν ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ θανάτου καὶ φθορᾶς ἐπέκεινα θεῖς."

³³⁴ UC (McGuckin, 114), SC 97, 466: "ὥς τὴν τοῦ δούλου λαβόντα μορφὴν, τελειῶσαι διὰ παθημάτων, τῆς ἀπάντων ζωῆς ἀντίλυτρον τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῷ καθιεροῦντα σάρκα."

solves the problem of sin. And going further, by dying in the flesh and then rising, Jesus Christ who is Life brings about the destruction of death itself. Where Adam's act ushered in the dominion of sin and death, Jesus Christ's act rendered sin and death ultimately powerless. Blackwell points out that the eradication of sin was necessary before the Holy Spirit could fully return to humanity. We saw that Christ's baptism served as the beginning of that return, made possible by his own sinlessness. But the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh would have to wait until after Christ's death and resurrection.³³⁵ What happens first in Christ takes place later in and for the rest of humanity.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is efficacious only if he is truly both human and divine in one person. John the Baptist referred to Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (Jn 1:29). Jesus Christ must be human in order to have a real body that he can offer up as a sacrifice. He must have real blood that can be shed for the cleansing of sin. He must have a real life in order to undergo a real death. He must really die in order to rise to new life. And yet, for this sacrifice to be truly salvific, in contrast with the Temple sacrifices, it must be the sacrifice of God the Word in human flesh, because only God can save. Cyril appeals to the idea of "economic appropriation,"³³⁶ the means by which the divine nature can experience the limitations of humanity and the human nature can experience the power of divinity. Through this natural sharing between human and divine, God is said to have both suffered and died.

Cyril writes that Christ offered "his body to death as a ransom for the life of all, so that his body, connected to the life of the Word who is united to it, might open the way

³³⁵ Blackwell, *Christosis*, 80.

³³⁶ UC (McGuckin, 107), SC 97, 448: "οἰκεῖωσιν οἰκονομικὴν"

for corporeal nature to be able to triumph over the bonds of death.”³³⁷ His voluntary self-offering was the means by which Christ might undergo death, thereby sharing in the punishment to which all of humanity was subject. The innocent suffered for the sake of the guilty, the righteous for the sinful. In his own dying, Christ destroyed death, because his flesh was that of the life-giving Word. He died, but he did not remain in death. Instead, he rose again, and in so doing, obediently fulfilled the command of the Father “to kill death through the suffering of his flesh, to destroy the power of decay, to bring to life those who had suffered decay, and to restore them to their ancient glory.”³³⁸ His death in the flesh and subsequent resurrection in the flesh became the means by which all of humanity would be revived. Life itself, which humanity had lost at the flight of the Holy Spirit, was restored to human nature in the resurrection of Christ. And as such, his resurrection became “the way, the beginning, and the door for human nature, in order to return to life and to triumph over the snares of death.”³³⁹ Thus, the death of Christ destroys death insofar as it cannot endure. Rather, because of the resurrection, even though it is still the case that “in Adam all die,” nevertheless, that death is only temporary. Cyril makes this distinction in his interpretation of the story of Jesus raising Lazarus (Jn 11:1-44). When Jesus tells his disciples that Lazarus is asleep, Cyril explains how the power of the resurrection renders death as temporary and fleeting as sleep:

Showing his God-befitting power, he calls the departure of the human soul from the body “sleep.” And that is quite correct, since he who created humanity for incorruption, who made the generations of the world to be full of health, as it is

³³⁷ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 315), Pusey 3, 20–21: “τῆς ἀπάντων ζωῆς ἀντίλυτρον τὸ ἴδιον τῷ θανάτῳ παραδοῦναι σῶμα, ἵνα καὶ ἀκολουθήσαν τῇ τοῦ ἐνωθέντος αὐτῷ Λόγου ζωῇ, τῇ τῶν σωμάτων ὁδοποιήσῃ φύσει τὸ δύνασθαι λοιπὸν καὶ τῶν τοῦ θανάτου κατανεανιεύεσθαι βρόχων.”

³³⁸ CJ 10.1 (Maxwell 2, 209), Pusey 2, 530: “νεκρῶσαι μὲν τῷ τῆς σαρκὸς πάθει τὸν θάνατον, τὸ δὲ τῆς φθορᾶς καταλῦσαι κράτος, ζωοποιήσαι τε τοὺς κατεφθαρμένους, καὶ τὴν ἀρχαίαν αὐτοῖς αὔθις ἀνανεῶσαι δόξαν.”

³³⁹ FL 8.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 153), SC 392, 110: “ὁδὸς καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ θύρα τῇ ἀνθρωπείᾳ φύσει γενόμενος, πρὸς τὸ ἀνατρέχειν εἰς ζωὴν, καὶ τῶν τοῦ θανάτου κατανεανιεύεσθαι βρόχων.”

written, did not think it right to call it “death.” Besides, his statement is true anyway, since before God, the momentary death of our body really is nothing other than sleep, as it is brought to an end just by a mere nod from him who is life by nature, that is, Christ.³⁴⁰

The raising of Lazarus is a sign of both the resurrection of Christ and of the general resurrection to come at the last day. In short, death is nothing in the face of life itself.

4.5 THE TYRANNY OF THE DEVIL

Cyril’s accounts of the fall of the first human beings usually include some reference to the devil and his role in the transgression. While human beings are guilty of disobeying the divine command, it is also the case that Cyril assigns blame to the devil for exploiting human weakness and manipulating or deceiving the first couple into making their fateful choice. As much as the human beings justly heard the words of the curse, removing the Holy Spirit from them and resigning them to death and decay, so also did the devil deserve just punishment for his rebellion against God and his tyranny over human beings in inciting them to sin.

Nowhere had the dominion of the devil been more established than in Hades/hell/the underworld. Cyril’s rehearsals of the *oikonomia* usually include Christ descending to the dead, despite the fact that this article of faith is absent from the Nicene Creed. J.N.D. Kelly observes that there was a variety of texts expressive of the “Nicene

³⁴⁰ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 84), Pusey 2, 268–69: “δεικνὺς δὲ ἑαυτοῦ τὴν θεοπρεπῆ δύναμιν, ὕπνον καλεῖ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἔξοδον καὶ σφόδρα εἰκότως· θάνατον γὰρ οὐκ ἠξιώσεν εἰπεῖν ὁ κτίσας ἐπὶ ἀφθαρσίᾳ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, καὶ σωτηρίους ἀναδείξας τὰς γενέσεις τοῦ κόσμου. πλὴν ἔστι καὶ ἀληθὴς ὁ λόγος· ὕπνος γὰρ ὄντως παρὰ Θεῷ καὶ ἕτερον οὐδὲν ὁ πρόσκαιρος ἡμῶν τοῦ σώματος θάνατος, ψιλῶ καὶ μόνῳ καταργούμενος νεύματι τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ζωῆς, τουτέστι Χριστοῦ.”

faith” in circulation in the fifth century, and indeed a degree of comfort with a certain flexibility of language. Nevertheless, he argues that Cyril himself “was acquainted with only one valid and binding symbol, which he called the faith set forth by the fathers of Nicaea. He was indeed a stickler for its pure, unadulterated text”³⁴¹ Indeed, Cyril “always invoked [the Nicene Creed] in its pure unadulterated form,” and he insisted upon its exclusive use during his presidency of the Council of Ephesus.³⁴² Cyril’s inclusion of elements of the *oikonomia* that are not explicitly mentioned in the Nicene Creed is not problematic, however; these rehearsals are not held up as new or alternative creeds. Rather, they are summaries of Christ’s work on our behalf.

Keating points out that twenty-three of Cyril’s twenty-nine Festal Letters include explicit reference or allusion to Christ’s descent to the dead.³⁴³ This descent is characterized as a kind of jail break, where the devil is the illegitimate jailor. Christ descended to the dead, first and foremost, as one who had truly died and therefore belonged there, however briefly. Yet, as God and life itself, Christ could not be contained in death, jailed, as it were, like those who had predeceased him. And so his purpose was to destroy death and its power once and for all. Second, Christ descended to the dead in order to free those who had been held captive by the devil, thereby deposing the usurper and putting him into his own prison. Keating points to the temptation to interpret Christ’s emptying the prison of all the devil’s captives as indicating that Cyril espouses some form of universal salvation. Certainly, it seems to be the case that Christ rescues not only the righteous, but all of those who have died. But this rescue is only freedom from the

³⁴¹ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (London,: Longman, 1972), 309.

³⁴² Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 322–23.

³⁴³ Daniel A. Keating, “Christ’s Despoiling of Hades: According to Cyril of Alexandria,” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (January 1, 2011), 254n4.

domination of Satan; it is not equivalent to enjoyment of eternal union with God. We must remember that the general resurrection is universal as well, yet Cyril clearly differentiates between those who will rise to eternal life and those who will rise to condemnation. A universalist understanding of Christ's descent misses the point that Hades had been the dominion of the devil, and those held in bondage there were his prisoners. Keating argues instead that the despoiling of Hades is primarily about Christ's absolute victory over death and the devil, which requires that all prisoners be released from Satan's bonds.³⁴⁴

Christ's descent to the prisoners in Hades is the bottom of the Incarnational descent; it is the "lowest" place to which the Word could empty himself. And it is the turning point in the descent/ascent dynamic. It also discloses the universal nature of the *oikonomia*, so that, by his preaching "to the spirits in Hades...he might be Lord of both the dead and the living."³⁴⁵ And the way to salvation being offered to those who had already died also demonstrates that Christ's mission extends to all: "For it would not have done for this loving-kindness to be shown only to some; the manifestation of the gift had to be extended to all of nature."³⁴⁶ The gift was nothing less than the return of life to those who had lost it. At the very moment when Christ's own death turned to life again, death itself was stripped of its power—past, present, and future. Christ, being life by nature, could never be held in death. He died truly, but "has not remained among the dead; he came back to life, having bidden farewell to the bonds of death and emptied hell."³⁴⁷

³⁴⁴ Keating, "Divinization in Cyril," 158–59.

³⁴⁵ CJ 12 (Maxwell 2, 350), Pusey 3, 95–96: "τοῖς ἐν ᾧδου...πνεύμασιν...καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσει"

³⁴⁶ FL 2.8 (Amidon, FC 118, 66), SC 392, 230: "Οὐ γὰρ ἔδει μερικὴν γενέσθαι τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἐκτείνεσθαι τὴν φύσιν τῆς δωρεᾶς τὴν ἀπόδειξιν."

³⁴⁷ FL 28.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 185), PG 77, 956B: "Οὐ γὰρ ἀπομεμένηκεν ἐν νεκροῖς, ἀνεβίω δὲ μᾶλλον, τοῖς τοῦ θανάτου δεσμοῖς τὸ ἐρρῶσθαι φράσας, καὶ κενώσας τὸν ᾧδην."

For Cyril, the defeat of death and the despoiling of Hades seem to be two sides of the same coin. Because Christ could not be held captive to death, neither could those who had already succumbed to death remain in its clutches. Indeed, rescuing those who had already fallen was the evidence that the power of death had been fully neutralized. Moreover, there is sometimes a sense that Cyril imagines Christ deliberately humiliating the devil through the harrowing of hell, which, “stricken with insatiable greed, and never satisfied with those who had died, has learned, all unwillingly, what it could not bear to learn earlier. For it does not strive to get hold of those who are still falling, but has disgorged those already taken, having suffered a wonderful desolation by the Savior’s power.”³⁴⁸ By freeing those deceased captives through his own return to life, Christ became the “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15:20) and the “firstborn from the dead” (Col 1:18), two of Cyril’s frequently cited verses. Burghardt points out that, by unseating the devil from his position as illegitimate tyrant, Christ has freed all of humanity from Satan’s yoke, thereby freeing human beings to choose the good, where previously, the grip of the devil had been so strong that humanity was effectively compelled to remain in sin.³⁴⁹

Not only did Christ release from captivity those who had been subjected to death by the devil’s tyranny, but he also reversed the devil’s fortunes, casting him into the very prison he had unjustly filled with his human victims. Keating calls this the reconstitution of Hades, where the tyranny of Satan is replaced by the lordship and dominion of

³⁴⁸ FL 5.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 84), SC 392, 284: “Ἀδης δὲ ὁ πᾶσαν ἀπληστίαν νοσῶν, καὶ κόρον ἐπὶ τοῖς τεθνεῶσιν οὐδένα δεξάμενος, ἐδιδάχθη καὶ ἄκων, ὃ μὴ μαθεῖν τῷ πρότερον ἠνέσχετο. γὰρ ὅπως τῶν ἔτι πιπτόντων ἔσται κάτοχος φιλονεικεῖ, ἀλλ’ ἤδη καὶ τοὺς ἀλόντας ἀπήμεσε, τῇ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἰσχύϊ καλὴν ὑπομείνας τὴν ἐρημίαν.”

³⁴⁹ Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 162.

Christ.³⁵⁰ The sin of the devil was not only that he deceived humanity and manipulated them into sin; he incited rebellion against God, having stolen the worship belonging to God alone. A critical aspect of the judgment of Christ in Hades is the separation of humanity from the grip of the devil; the one is justified, while the other is condemned:

God therefore, having threatened to bring his tyranny to an end, when he became man for us, since the time had now arrived in which the murderous charlatan had to be delivered over to severe punishment, “he judged the world in justice.” For he passed judgment on him and on us; and finding him to be unjust and grasping, “cast him into hell and committed him to pits of nether gloom” to be kept for punishment “until the judgment” of the great day, as is written. But those throughout the whole earth he released from the bonds of sin, having justified them by faith and restored them once again to their original holiness.³⁵¹

And yet, even though Christ imprisons the devil, he does so to await the final judgement yet to come. The devil is, in a sense, awaiting trial. So there is here as well both remedial and preparatory aspects of Christ’s work. It is remedial insofar as punishing the devil is a just response to his “unholy machinations” (ταῖς ἀνοσίοις ...μηχαναῖς)³⁵² and it is preparatory insofar as separating humanity from the grasp of the devil is necessary so that future choices made by restored humanity are not influenced by external manipulation.

Cyril insists that the devil must be punished because he “crushed the image and irreverently dared to ruin it, [but that] any form of chastisement is minor for him who displays such madness against God.”³⁵³ The defeat of the devil is marked by the reversal

³⁵⁰ Keating, “Christ’s Despoiling of Hades,” 259–61.

³⁵¹ FL 10.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 177), SC 392, 190: “Ο τοῖνον τῆς τυραννίδος αὐτῷ τὴν συντέλειαν ἀπειλήσας Θεός, ὅτε δι’ ἡμᾶς γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, ὡς ἤδη παρόντος καιροῦ, καθ’ ὃν ἔδει πικρὰς ἐξαιτεῖσθαι δίκας τὸν ἀλαζόνα καὶ μαιφόνον, «ἔκρινε τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ.» Ἐδίκασε γὰρ αὐτῷ τε καὶ ἡμῖν· καὶ τὸν μὲν ἄδικόν τε καὶ πλεονέκτην εὐρών, «σειραῖς ζόφου ταρταρώσας, <κατὰ> τὸ γεγραμμένον, παρέδωκεν εἰς κρίσιν» μεγάλης ἡμέρας τηρεῖσθαι κολασθησόμενον. Τοὺς δὲ κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην τῶν τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἀπέλυσε δεσμῶν, δικαιώσας τῇ πίστει, καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἀρχαῖον αὐθις ἀνακομίσας ἁγιασμόν.”

³⁵² CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 310), Pusey 3, 10.

³⁵³ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 310), Pusey 3, 10: “τὸν δὲ γε συντρίψαντα καὶ ἀνοσίως παραφθεῖραι τετολμηκότα, τουτέστι τὸν σατανᾶν, ταῖς αὐτῷ πρεπούσαις ὑποθεῖναι ποιναῖς, εἰ καὶ μικρὸν οἶμαι γένοιτ’ ἂν πᾶν εἶδος ἐκείνῳ κολαστηρίων τοσαύτην ἐνδειξαμένῳ κατὰ Θεοῦ τὴν ἀπόνοιαν.”

of all of the damage done through his deceit and malice toward humanity. He incited the first couple to sin against God by succumbing to their passions. As a result, humanity heard the curse, “You are dust, and to dust you shall return,” and so humanity became subject to death and decay because they suffered the loss of the gift of the Holy Spirit and found themselves expelled from the garden of Eden. Outside the garden, humanity was especially vulnerable to the attacks of the devil, and his dominion over them grew into tyranny. By freeing the spirits in Hades, and binding the devil in their place, Christ demonstrated his ultimate power over death. And having accomplished these things, it was fitting for Christ to “restore to its original position what had been dragged off to where it should not be, and to free it from the foulness of sin and transform it to its original image, as it was created in the beginning.”³⁵⁴

The image of the flock and shepherd appears again in Cyril’s portrayal of the human predicament. We saw in Chapter 1 that humanity had been “banished from the sacred divine sheep pen, I mean the precincts of paradise.”³⁵⁵ Cyril goes on to explain how

the father of sin laid us down like sheep in Hades and entrusted us to death as our shepherd, as it is said in the Psalms. But the true good shepherd died for us that he might rescue us from the dark pit of death and prepare to add us to the flock of the company of heaven and grace us with mansions above in the presence of the Father, instead of pens situated in the depths of the abyss and the caverns under the sea.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁴ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 310), Pusey 3, 10: “καὶ τὸ ἐφ’ ᾧ μὴ προσῆκεν ἐξεيلκυσμένον εἰς τὴν ἐν ἀρχαῖς καταστῆσαι θέσιν, καὶ ἀπαλλάξαι μὲν ἀμαρτίας τῆς ἀκαλλεστάτης, μεταπλάσαι δὲ ὥσπερ εἰς εἰκόνα τὴν πρώτην, τὸ καὶ ἐν ἀρχαῖς οὕτω πεποιημένον.”

³⁵⁵ CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 63), Pusey 2, 223: “ἐξωκίσθη διὰ τοῦτο τῆς ἱερᾶς τε καὶ θείας αὐλῆς, τῶν τοῦ παραδείσου περιβόλων φημί”

³⁵⁶ CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 63), Pusey 2, 224: “οὐκοῦν ὁ μὲν τῆς ἀμαρτίας πατὴρ ὡς ‘πρόβατα ἐν ἄδῃ’ ἔθετο θανάτῳ ποιμανεῖν ἡμᾶς ἐπιτρέψας, κατὰ τὸ ἐν ψαλμοῖς εἰρημένον. ἀπέθανε δὲ δι’ ἡμᾶς ὁ ἀγαθὸς ὄντως ποιμὴν, ἵνα τῆς ἀφεγγοῦς τοῦ θανάτου χειρὸς ἐξελὼν τοῖς οὐρανίοις συναγελάζεσθαι παρασκευάσῃ χοροῖς, καὶ ἀντὶ σηκῶν τῶν εἰς πυθμένας ἀβύσσου καὶ μυχοῦς θαλάσσης κειμένων, τὰς ἄνω καὶ παρὰ Πατρὶ χαρίσῃται μονάς.”

Once again, we see the idea that there is to be one flock, and that it will unite humanity with the citizens of heaven. At the same time, we also see both the remedial and the preparatory aspects of Christ's work.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the person and work of Christ, and especially on how the *oikonomia* of the Incarnation restores humanity to its original state. Every evil that befell human nature on account of the first sin has been reversed, defeated, nullified, or destroyed. The loss of the Holy Spirit—the breath of life and the image of God—was returned so that, in Christ, humanity could once again become the temple of the Holy Spirit and preserve that gift and its benefits. Following the structure of the Nicene Creed, we began with Incarnation and moved through crucifixion and death and concluded with resurrection. At each stage, some aspect of the human condition was healed and restored. Chapter 5 will complete the movements contained within the Creed by taking up the ascension of Christ into heaven and his return for final judgment. The remediation of human nature has the effect of returning our condition to that moment when God's creation was complete, though before the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit and the gift of the image of God. Thus remediation brings about a new beginning, in accordance with the ancient tradition of calling the day of resurrection the eighth day, the first day of the new creation. Again, this recapitulation is critical to the human story, but it marks a new beginning rather than the end. We will not arrive at that end apart from the preparatory work of Christ laid out in Chapter 5.

5.0 CHRIST'S WORK OF PREPARATION

The preparatory aspects of Christ's work focus on two key actions: first, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and second, the ascension into heaven. We saw in Chapter 4 that the Holy Spirit had returned to humanity in Christ at his baptism by John at the Jordan River. Cyril explains this critical moment by saying that Christ received the Holy Spirit *as man*, even though he was never separated from the Holy Spirit *as God*, because human nature had become inhospitable to the Spirit because of sin. As the sinless one, Jesus Christ was uniquely able to welcome the Holy Spirit's return and to ensure its permanent indwelling in human nature. Cyril highlights the fact that John the Baptist had been told that the identifying sign would be that the Holy Spirit would both descend and remain on Christ. He takes this remaining to indicate that the return of the Holy Spirit would be permanent, and therefore unlike the first descent of the Spirit in Eden where the Spirit fled as the consequence of human sin.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is not a single, straightforward act without ambiguity. Not only does Christ receive the Holy Spirit as man at his baptism, he also gives the Holy Spirit as God. This simultaneous status as giver and receiver parallels his simultaneous status as image and archetype, as discussed in Chapter 1. One of the questions that Cyril addresses is whether Jesus gives the Spirit when he breathed on his disciples on the evening of the resurrection (Jn 20:19–23), or after his ascension, on the day of Pentecost, when the tongues of fire descended (Acts 2:1–4). Cyril has two ways of answering this question, as we shall see, but his emphasis falls on the Johannine, rather than Lukan, account of the gift of the Holy Spirit. What is important for the moment is the fact that

the Holy Spirit had been given to human nature in the baptism of Christ, but that it is given to individual human beings after the resurrection. Herein lies the critical distinction between the universal work of Christ and the benefit of that work (or lack thereof) to particular human beings.

In Chapter 4 I detailed how Christ's work to resolve the problems of sin and death applies universally to all of human nature, because the Incarnation involves the appropriation of human nature by divine nature. Similarly, the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven carries universal significance insofar as it marks the opening of the way for humanity to enter into heaven, from which it had been barred. And in taking his place at the right hand of the Father, Jesus makes universally possible humanity's participation in Christ's eternal reign, which had been prefigured in the divine creation and blessing of human beings (Gen 1:26, 28). But it is individual human beings whose *telos* is to enter into eternal communion with God. Grounded as it is in universal significance, nevertheless, the preparatory work of Christ is oriented toward the particular individual. This preparation is dependent, at least to some degree, upon the willing participation of the human person.

Cyril routinely refers to "those who receive him" (Jn 1:12) to qualify the benefit of the work of Christ as benefitting some but not others. This distinction is made clear in the second coming of Christ and the final judgment. Cyril believes firmly in the notion that there is a real, eschatological, separation of people into two categories: those who will enjoy eternal life and those who will suffer eternal death. This judgment focuses on what people choose to do with the embodied lives they have been given, and so freedom of the human will is very important to Cyril. Thus, the determining factor in this

judgment is the individual willingness to receive Jesus Christ. These are the people who receive the power to become children of God.

It is this power to become children of God that lies at the heart of the preparatory aspect of Christ's work in ascending into heaven and taking his place at the right hand of the Father. Cyril is committed to Jesus's statement, "No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man" (Jn 3:13). Humanity, even in its original, prelapsarian condition, had ever been an earthly creature. Eden was part of the created order, as idyllic as it had been. Heaven is the "place" of the divine nature, and therefore properly foreign to every creature. As we shall see in Section 5.2, Cyril insists that the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven represents the inauguration of a new possibility, namely that human nature could enter into heaven, not by presumption or force, as in the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9), but rather as a naturalized citizen, one who was born elsewhere but called to a new homeland.

5.1 THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In receiving the Holy Spirit at his baptism, Jesus effects the permanent return of the Holy Spirit to human nature. In order for that reception to become efficacious to the individual person, it must be freely received, just as it was freely received by him as man. And such reception is the necessary prerequisite to the fulfillment of the human *telos*, God's purpose in creating human beings for ultimate enjoyment of eternal life in communion with God. The gift of the Holy Spirit, then, is a critical aspect of the divine plan and the preparation of humanity for its own progression toward its *telos*. Cyril asserts:

No one could have union with God except through participation in the Holy Spirit, who implants his own attribute of sanctification in us and refashions into his own life the nature that was subject to decay. In this way he leads those who lack this glory back to God and to being conformed to him. The Son is the perfect image of the Father, and his Spirit is the natural likeness of the Son. That is why the Spirit refashions, as it were, human souls to himself and engraves the divine form into them and seals them with the image of the essence that is highest of all.³⁵⁷

As much as the Holy Spirit is necessary to the fulfillment of the human *telos*, its voluntary reception and preservation by human beings remains necessary as well. Thus, the fulfillment of the human *telos* is a cooperative effort; just as humanity cannot force its way into communion with God, neither does God force such communion upon humanity. This is not to say that the two are equal partners, rather that God and humanity together freely enter into the relationship of eternal union.

Just as the Holy Spirit was given to the first human being in creation, so also is it given to human beings in the restoration and renewal of creation. Appealing to the image of water restoring a parched plant, Cyril describes this gift as the source of “life-giving grace” by which human nature “blooms with all kinds of good things [...namely...] a virtuous habit [and] well-nourished branches of love toward God.”³⁵⁸ We saw in Chapter 1 that the Holy Spirit was the principle of stability in the human creature that is naturally and ontologically unstable. Here we see that same dynamic at work in the restored creature, insofar as the Holy Spirit enables both life and virtue. It is through this gift of

³⁵⁷ CJ 11.11 (Maxwell 2, 302), Pusey 2, 731: “ἔνωσις δὲ ἡ πρὸς Θεὸν οὐχ ἑτέρως ἢ ὑπάρξει τις, ἢ διὰ τῆς μετουσίας τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος τῆς ἰδίας ιδιότητος ἐντιθέντος ἡμῖν τὸν ἁγιασμόν, καὶ εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν ἀναπλάττοντος ζωὴν τὴν ὑποπεσοῦσαν τῇ φθορᾷ φύσιν, οὕτω τε πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐκείνου μὴν ἑπανάγοντος τὸ τῆς ἐπὶ τούτῳ δόξης ἐστερημένον. εἰκὼν μὲν γὰρ ἀκραιφνὴς τοῦ Πατρὸς ὁ Υἱός, ὁμοίωσις δὲ φυσικὴ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τὸ Πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ. διάτοι τοῦτο μεταπλάττον ὥσπερ εἰς ἑαυτὸ τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ψυχὰς, τὴν θείαν αὐταῖς ἐγχαράττει μὴν ἑπανάγοντος, καὶ τῆς ἀνωτάτω πασῶν οὐσίας ἀποσημαίνεται τὸν εἰκονισμόν.”

³⁵⁸ CJ 2.4 (Maxwell 1, 120), Pusey 1, 269: “καὶ τὴν ζωοποιὸν ἐκπίνουσα χάριν, πολυτρόποις ἀγαθῶν ιδέαις περιανθίζεται, καὶ εἰς ἕξιν ἀναβλαστῶσα τὴν φιλάρετον, εὐτραφεστάτους τῆς εἰς Θεὸν ἀγάπης ἀνίησι κλῶνας.”

the Holy Spirit that the image of God, lost due to the first transgression, is returned. Cyril ties this image of God specifically to the person of the Son: “We receive through [the Holy Spirit], as through a seal, our being conformed to the Son, who is the image of the Father, so that our being made in the image and likeness of the creator may be beautifully preserved in us.”³⁵⁹ Once again, we see Cyril refer to our act of receiving. The Holy Spirit is not forced upon anyone even as it is offered to all. Just as in the beginning, humanity had the freedom to receive, neglect, or refuse the gift, so also does humanity enjoy that same freedom in relation to Christ’s post-resurrection gift. The difference between the two occasions, however, lies in the capacity of human nature to remain sinless, a condition made possible solely by the Incarnation and the sinlessness of Christ.

The Scriptural accounts of the gift of the Holy Spirit after the resurrection of Jesus differ in both timing and extent. In the Johannine account, the gift is identified with the Easter evening appearance of the risen Jesus in the midst of his disciples, his breathing on them, and his words, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:19–23). The Lukan account describes the Holy Spirit as descending on the day of Pentecost, when tongues of fire rested on the heads of those gathered and they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1–4). Cyril does not shy away from these apparent contradictions, but addresses them directly. From the Johannine version, Cyril highlights the parallel between the creation account of God breathing into the face of the first human being and that of Jesus breathing on the disciples. In this case, the point is made very clearly that Jesus is both the one “through whom all things were made” in the beginning of creation, as well as the

³⁵⁹ CJ 3.5 (Maxwell 1, 198), Pusey 1.444: “οἷονεὶ σημάτων τινὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν Υἱὸν συμμορφίαν ἀναλαμβάνοντες δι’ αὐτοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ Πατρὸς, ἵνα σώζηται καλῶς ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν καὶ εἰκόνα γεγενῆσθαι τοῦ κτίσαντος.”

one through whom creation was being restored and renewed. He also highlights the necessity of showing that “the Son be seen to cooperate with the Father in giving of the Holy Spirit,”³⁶⁰ thereby demonstrating his divinity and consubstantiality with the Father. It is this moment of breathing onto the disciples that marks the new beginning, the restoration of humanity to its original condition before the first transgression and its aftermath.³⁶¹

In addition to inaugurating the new beginning of creation, the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Johannine account also marks the beginning of church leadership. Cyril understands the Easter evening resurrection appearance to indicate that the risen Jesus has given the disciples both apostleship and priesthood, and that such commissioning requires the gift of the Holy Spirit. They could not fulfill their duties in either office without it:

They could not do anything pleasing to God or overcome the snares of sin until they were “clothed with power from on high” and transformed into something other than what they were...In addition to this we also maintain that they would not have understood the mystery of Christ at all or become scrupulous leaders into this mystery if they had not progressed by the torch of the Spirit to the revelation of truths beyond comprehension and reason. That torch enabled them to ascend to teach what they needed to teach. For “no one can say that Jesus is Lord,” as Paul says, “except by the Holy Spirit.” Since they were going to say that Jesus is Lord, that is, they were going to proclaim him as God and Lord, they had to receive the grace of the Spirit along with the honor of apostleship.³⁶²

³⁶⁰ CJ 12.1 (Maxwell 2, 369), Pusey 3, 134: “τοῦ Πνεύματος χορηγὸν καὶ τῷ Πατρὶ συνδοτῆρα φαίνεσθαι τὸν Υἱόν.”

³⁶¹ CJ 5.2 (Maxwell 1, 310–11), Pusey 1.695–96.

³⁶² CJ 12.1 (Maxwell 2, 367–68), Pusey 3, 131–32: “οὐ γὰρ ἂν τι δράσειαν τῶν ἀρεσκόντων Θεῷ, ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ἂν τῶν τῆς ἁμαρτίας κατανεανιεύσαιτο βρόχων, μὴ τὴν ἐξ ὕψους πρότερον ἐνδυσάμενοι δύναμιν, καὶ εἰς ἕτερόν τι παρ’ ὅπερ ἦσαν μεταστοιχειούμενοι ...πρὸς δέ γε τοῦτο κάκεῖνό φαμεν, ὡς οὐκ ἂν ὅλως συνῆκαν τὸ ἐπὶ Χριστῷ μυστήριον, οὐδ’ ἂν ἀκριβεῖς ἐγένοντο μυσταγωγοὶ, εἰ μὴ διὰ τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος δαδουχίας ἰόντες εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν ὑπὲρ νοῦν καὶ λόγον, πρὸς τὸ διδάσκειν οὕτως ἃ χρῆν ἀναβαίνειν ἰσχύουσαν· λέγει γάρ ‘Οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν Κύριος Ἰησοῦς,’ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Παύλου φωνήν, ‘εἰ μὴ ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ.’ ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν ἔμελλον εἰρεῖν ὅτι Κύριος Ἰησοῦς, τοιούτῃ, ἀνακηρύττειν αὐτὸν ὡς Θεὸν καὶ Κύριον, ἀναγκαιῶς ἤδη λοιπὸν τῷ τῆς ἀποστολῆς ἀξιώματι παρεξυγμένην δέχονται τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος χάριν.”

True and effective Christian leadership depends entirely upon the continual indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Cyril also argues that the gift of the Holy Spirit is not accomplished all at once. This progressive aspect to the gift seems a fitting reversal of the progressive loss of the gift in the generations following the first transgression. In giving the Spirit, Jesus acts first on a small scale in advance of more widespread and general activity. Just as he raised Lazarus from death as a sign of the general resurrection so also does Jesus give the Holy Spirit to the disciples as a sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all flesh. Moreover, Cyril clarifies that the tongues of fire that descended on the apostles at Pentecost “did not signify the beginning of the gift of the Spirit in them, but rather they referred to the beginning of the gift of languages,”³⁶³ which would be necessary to their task of preaching the Gospel. Cyril also writes of the tongues of fire as a sign to the wider Christian community of the office of apostleship and the authority of those who hold it.³⁶⁴

Through these various explanations, we see that Cyril locates the gift of the Holy Spirit to the apostles at Easter evening, but to the broader Christian community at Pentecost. The Acts of the Apostles intimates this group may include about one hundred and twenty people (Acts 1:15). Yet even this differentiation between the occasions on which the Holy Spirit is given does not cover the full range of possibilities, thanks to the spread and growth of the Church in both space and time. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit after his ascension,³⁶⁵ and “he granted the most abundant outpouring of the Spirit on those who wished to receive him. One would receive the Spirit by faith in Christ and

³⁶³ CJ 12.1 (Maxwell 2, 370), Pusey 3, 137: “οὐκ ἀρχὴν ἐν αὐτοῖς τῆς δωρεᾶς σημαίνουσαι, εἰς ἀρχὴν δὲ μᾶλλον ἀναφέρουσαι τοῦ λόγου.”

³⁶⁴ CJ 12.1 (Maxwell 2, 371), Pusey 3, 138.

³⁶⁵ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 252), Pusey 2, 620.

by holy baptism.”³⁶⁶ Here again we see the place of free will. Reception of the gift involves both faith and action on the part of the individual person.

It is important to remember that, amidst all of the ways that Cyril discusses the gift of the Holy Spirit, that gift remains fundamentally provisional. These occasions, whether in the hours and weeks immediately following the resurrection, or in the centuries since that time, are yet considered “first-fruits” (ἀπαρχὴν) and “pledge” (ἀρρῶβῶνα) of what is yet to come.³⁶⁷ To make this point, Cyril combines the image of the vine and branches (Jn 15:1–2) with the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14–30). He refers to the Holy Spirit as the “life-giving sap” that flows from the vine to the branches, enabling them to produce the fruit of good works. But if we inhibit the flow of the Spirit, we become like the servant who buried the talent in the ground. Our branches are cut off, just as the talent was taken away from the servant. In both images, the result is the loss of the Holy Spirit. Cyril explains that what we do with the gift of the Spirit is liable to judgment.³⁶⁸ At the close of the parable of the talents, Jesus says, “For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away” (Mt 25:29, NRSV). This conclusion, when interpreted according to Cyril’s understanding of the provisional nature of the gift of the Holy Spirit as pledge, would suggest that, even though the Holy Spirit becomes accustomed to dwell in human nature by virtue of Christ’s reception at baptism, nevertheless, the gift is not yet made permanent. Thus, Christ’s gift of the Holy Spirit

³⁶⁶ CJ 12.1 (Maxwell 2, 369), Pusey 3, 134: “καὶ δαψιλεστάτην τοῖς ἐθέλουσιν ἐλεῖν τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος ἔκχυσιν ἐπιδοῦς· ἔλοι δ’ ἂν τις αὐτὸ διὰ πίστεως δηλονότι τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος.”

³⁶⁷ FL 2.8 (Amidon, FC 118, 67), SC 372, 232.

³⁶⁸ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 217), Pusey 2, 548–49.

functions in a preparatory manner parallel to that original gift in creation. As such, it requires that the one who receives it willingly keep it until that time when the pledge is fulfilled, as we shall see in Chapter 6.

5.2 CHRIST'S ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN

Cyril argues that the ascension of Jesus into heaven marked the unprecedented entry of humanity into the “place” of God. Cyril routinely uses the term “first fruit” (ἀπαργμα) when writing of Christ’s presentation of himself to the Father. And he goes on to make explicit the fact that the ascension inaugurates a new possibility for human nature and for individual human beings. In ascending into heaven, Jesus “opened up a road for us that human nature did not know before.”³⁶⁹ Again Cyril writes, “Christ was the first one who consecrated for us the road that leads up to there [heaven]. He gave to flesh a place on the road to heaven by offering himself to God the Father as a kind of ‘first fruit of those who are asleep’ and lying in a mound of earth. *He was the first human being to be seen in heaven.*”³⁷⁰ Cyril also uses the term “forerunner” (πρόδρομος) to describe the role that Christ takes on in his ascension.³⁷¹ This term harkens to Hebrews 6:20 and its own reference to Christ’s entry within the veil to function as high priest.³⁷²

³⁶⁹ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 142), Pusey 2, 392: “ἐνεκαίνισε γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁδόν, ἣν οὐκ ᾔδει πρότερον ἢ ἀνθρώπου φύσις.”

³⁷⁰ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 147) emphasis mine, Pusey 2, 403: “ἐνεκαίνισε δὲ πρῶτος ἡμῖν τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν ἄνοδον ὃ Χριστὸς, καὶ τόπον ἔδωκεν ἀνόδου τῆς εἰς οὐρανὸν τῇ σαρκί, ἀπαρχὴν ὥσπερ τινὰ τῶν κεκοιμημένων, καὶ ἐν γῆς χώματι κειμένων, ἑαυτὸν ἀνακαινίσας τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ, **καὶ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ὁφθεὶς τοῖς ἐν οὐρανῷ.**”

³⁷¹ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 52), Pusey 2, 619.

³⁷² This assertion that Jesus Christ was the first to be received into heaven may be challenged somewhat by the stories of Enoch (Gen 5:21–24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:1–11). Enoch had walked with God, and had been taken by God; the author of Hebrews explains that this meant Enoch “did not experience death” (μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον).³⁷² Elijah had been taken in a fiery chariot up into heaven (εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν).³⁷² It

Just as the resurrection of Christ opened the possibility for human triumph over death, so also did his ascension into heaven open the possibility for human entry into heaven and subsequent enthronement alongside Christ to reign with him forever.³⁷³ This possibility is an integral part of the original human *telos*, but had been cut off through the first transgression and its consequences. In his ascension, Christ “[inaugurated] for nature even the ascent into heaven,”³⁷⁴ and made “the bright dwelling-places of the angels accessible to those upon earth.”³⁷⁵ For Cyril, the whole *oikonomia* will be accomplished when human beings share in eternal fellowship and union with God. Christ’s own work to that end is fundamentally preparatory insofar as his entry into heaven in the flesh makes possible our own ascent. His own presentation of himself in the flesh to the Father anticipates his future presentation of individual human beings before the Father. And his taking his seat in the flesh at the right hand of the Father foreshadows our sharing in his kingdom as children of God through him. Cyril explains that the whole point of the Incarnation, the kenotic descent into human life, was that Christ “might be made a beginning for us and a glorious way into his kingdom...in order to raise up human nature

is curious that Cyril does not seem to address either of these two stories and how they ought to be interpreted such that his own assertions regarding the unprecedented status of Christ’s own entry into heaven should prevail.

³⁷³ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 252), Pusey 2, 619.

³⁷⁴ FL 2.8 (Amidon, FC 118, 67), SC 392, 232: “καινοτομεῖ δὲ τῇ φύσει καὶ τὴν εἰς οὐρανούς ἀνάβασιν, ἀπαρχὴν ὥσπερ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος ἑαυτὸν προσάγων τῷ Πατρὶ, τὸν ἀρράβωνα τῆς χάριτος τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς δωρησάμενος τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος μετουσίαν.” Note that Amidon translates “καινοτομεῖ” as “renewed,” but I have used “inaugurated” instead. Amidon’s word choice suggests making new again, which in turn suggests that human nature previously possessed the ascent into heaven. However, both Liddel-Scott-Jones and Lampe offer definitions for the verb that stress novelty and innovation. This kind of newness is not restored, but rather just begun.

³⁷⁵ FL 7.2 (Amidon, FC 118, 136), SC 392, 52: “τὰ λαμπρὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐνδαιτήματα βάσιμα τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς.”

to royal honor.”³⁷⁶ The union of earthly and heavenly was made possible by and through the Incarnation and the union of humanity with divinity.

5.2.1 Christ as High Priest

Cyril insists that what I have termed the remedial work of Christ, namely the solving of the problems of sin and death through his own death, is not the culmination of the *oikonomia*. Rather, Christ goes ahead to prepare a place for us, so that he might take us to himself (Jn 14:2–3). This work of preparation is associated with Christ’s role as high priest, who enters not the earthly sanctuary but into heaven itself (Heb 9:24). He does this so as to present human nature in himself before the presence of the Father.³⁷⁷ Cyril cautions that this presentation is not problematic because, even though as Son and Word, Christ was always in the presence of the Father, nevertheless, he presents human nature in himself on behalf of all of humanity. This presentation is an act of reconciliation. Humanity had been expelled from Eden, where the first couple had enjoyed converse with God. Through their transgression, they removed themselves from the presence of God; Christ ascended into heaven “so that he might place us...once again in the presence of the Father.”³⁷⁸ While it may seem that this presentation supports the notion of a mere restoration to the Edenic state, one must acknowledge that the presence of God is not circumscribed; rather, the presence of God is fundamentally about a relationship. It is the

³⁷⁶ CJ 2.4 (Maxwell 1, 115), Pusey 1, 257–58: “ἀρχὴ πάλιν ἡμῖν καὶ ὁδὸς τῆς εἰς βασιλείαν δόξης ἀναδειχθῆ... ἵνα καὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλίδαν τιμὴν ἀναγάγῃ τὴν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν.”

³⁷⁷ Jonathan Hicks rightly observes that the high priesthood of Christ, as it is portrayed in Cyril’s Old Testament commentaries, is marked also by his self-sacrifice for the defeat sin and death and by his leading believers to true and spiritual worship. I have treated these two themes in Chapters 4 and 3, respectively. See Jonathan D. Hicks, “St Cyril on the Priesthood of Christ and the Old Testament,” *Phronema* 30.1 (2015): 95.

³⁷⁸ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 148), Pusey 2, 404: “ἵνα ἡμᾶς τοὺς...στήσῃ πάλιν ὡς ἐν προσώπῳ τοῦ Πατρὸς.”

estranged relationship between humanity and God that is characterized by removal or separation from God's presence, while the restored and reconciled relationship is conveyed by return to the presence of God. This reconciliation occurs first in the Incarnation. It extends through to the rest of humanity by the mediation and intercession of Christ in his role as high priest.

5.2.2 Christ's Enthronement alongside the Father

In addition to functioning as reconciler and mediator between God and creation, Christ also prepares humanity to receive divine adoption and to share in his dominion and reign. We saw that Christ as high priest presented himself as man to the Father. Cyril describes this presentation as “strange and unaccustomed” (ἄσυνήθως τε καὶ ξένως) and explains that it “was for us and on our behalf so that, being found as a human being, he might hear along with all flesh in his power as the Son the words, ‘Sit at my right hand.’ Thus he transferred the glory of adoption to the entire race through himself.”³⁷⁹ As Word, he was always and properly at the right hand of the Father, but as man, these words were newly addressed to him, and through him, to all of human nature. These words signify the culmination of the whole *oikonomia*. The human *telos* is fulfilled when human beings ascend into heaven, become children of God, and share in eternal communion with God. This fulfillment is not achieved solely by the will and effort of the human person; neither is it achieved solely by the will and work of God. Rather, Cyril understands this *telos* is reached through the willing reception of Christ.

³⁷⁹ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 148), Pusey 2, 404: “δι’ ἡμᾶς δὲ τοῦτο καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα καὶ ὡς ἄνθρωπος εὐρεθῆις, ὡς Υἱὸς ἐν δυνάμει καὶ μετὰ σαρκὸς ἀκούσας καθόλου “Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου,” τῆς υἰοθεσίας τὴν δόξαν ὅλη δι’ ἑαυτοῦ παραπέμψῃ τῷ γένει.”

5.3 FINAL JUDGMENT

One of the Scripture verses to which Cyril frequently returns is taken from the prologue of John's Gospel, where the evangelist writes, "but to all who received him, and believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God" (Jn 1:12). This verse summarizes Cyril's understanding of the purpose of the *oikonomia*, namely that the Incarnation of the Word brings about the fulfillment, consummation, perfection of the human *telos*. That *telos*, present from the beginning of creation, was that the human creature was destined for eternal blessedness through the enjoyment of familial union with God. This *telos* and destiny, however, is never forced on humanity; rather it is offered as a gift to be received freely and preserved. What this means for Cyril is that all of humanity is divided into two basic groups, one that freely receives that which God offers, and the other that freely rejects what God offers. This division lies at the heart of Cyril's understanding of the final judgment that is yet to come.

In closing the majority of his *Festal Letters*, Cyril offers a summary of the economy of salvation. Following the pattern and structure of the Nicene Creed, these summaries usually include a statement about Christ's second coming and the final judgment. Furthermore, the letters proceed into an ethical exhortation, calling his people to the observance of a holy Lent. Taken together, these two concluding parts of the annual letters are themselves an example of the dynamic of giving and receiving that we have seen throughout the project. Cyril highlights what God in Christ has given for all of humanity, and then invites his hearers and readers to receive those great gifts through continued conversion and heightened zeal in both faith and life.

In keeping with the articles of the Nicene Creed, Cyril takes it as a given that Christ will return to earth to judge all of humanity in justice: “But that he will also come, according to the Scriptures, and will render to each according to his deeds, once he has set up the divine tribunal for everyone, there can be no doubt.”³⁸⁰ Not only is this final judgment coming, such judgment will be based upon human action (or inaction). A favorite way for him to convey this idea is with reference to our being “in the body.” It is the external expression of love for one’s neighbors, who are also “in the body,” that carries such weight in Cyril’s account of Christ’s coming judgment.³⁸¹ This is not to say, however, that the internal disposition of the mind and heart is unimportant or irrelevant; quite the contrary. Cyril places faith in Christ at the center. His understanding of that faith is that it is both integrated and fruitful. Thus a person’s inward faith is not realized if it is not expressed in outward action. Neither can it be said to have been fully received if it does not engender obedience to the divine commands to love God and neighbor. In short, Cyril’s insistence that both inward dispositions and outward actions contribute to one’s standing in the final judgment coheres well with his understanding of the human person as composed of both soul and body. Thus both soul and body, integrated together as one individual, must give account “before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what one has done in the body.”³⁸²

³⁸⁰ FL 10.5 (Amidon, FC 118, 193), SC 392, 240: “Ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἥξει, κατὰ τὰς Γραφάς, ἐκάστῳ τε ἀποδώσει κατὰ τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ, τὸ θεῖον ἅπασιν βῆμα προθείς, οὐδαμὸθεν ἀμφίβολον.”

³⁸¹ This neighbor love expresses a fundamental commonality with all human beings, not just to those within the Church, so that the body that Cyril invokes ought to be understood as the physical human body rather than the body of Christ or a metaphorical usage.

³⁸² Cyril quotes 2 Cor 5:10. FL 18.5 (Amidon, FC 127, 86), PG 77, 820B: “«τοὺς πάντας ἡμᾶς δεῖ φανερωθῆναι ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κομίσηται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἃ ἐπραξεν, εἴτε ἀγαθὸν, εἴτε φαῦλον.»”

The final judgment does nothing more than solidify the choices freely made by each individual human being to receive or to reject Christ, and thereby to receive or to reject eternal life with and in him. That there is an ultimate separation has been rejected by some commentators on Cyril's theology. Some of his works have been interpreted to suggest that he believed in a universal salvation. Keating highlights this fact in his work on Christ's descent to Hades.³⁸³ The works included in this study show that such a reading of Cyril is indefensible. While it is true that he refers quite frequently to the universality of Christ's work, nevertheless, Cyril distinguishes between human nature as a general category, and human beings as discrete individuals and members of that category. Because of Christ's personal union of human and divine, all of human nature experiences the end to death and decay in and through Christ's own death and resurrection. However, Cyril quite clearly explains that universal resurrection is not the whole story. For example, in his interpretation of the instructions regarding the observance of Passover (Exodus 12:43–49), Cyril points out that the stranger, the sojourner, and the hireling are excluded from observance, while slaves are included upon undergoing circumcision. Cyril explains that the strangers are non-Christians, the sojourners are uncommitted or wavering Christians, and the hirelings are Christians whose faith and works are not integrated in that they act to be seen by others rather than as the fruit of genuine belief. On the other hand, Cyril notes that the slaves, those bought with money, represent the redeemed, whose circumcision represents the removal of their

³⁸³ Keating, "Christ's Despoiling of Hades," 253–54. For an in-depth treatment of the question of universal salvation, see also Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 120 (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

shame.³⁸⁴ The separation between those who may participate in Passover and those who forbidden from doing so points to the ultimate separation enacted at the final judgment, a separation that is inconsistent with the idea of universal salvation.

The distinction between what is universal and what is particular comes clearly into focus in the *Commentary on John*. We get a taste of Cyril's semantic precision as an exegete when he deals with John 3:36 ("Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God's wrath."):

When it comes to believers, he says that they will have eternal life. When it comes to unbelievers, however, the statement takes a different form. He does not say that they will not "have" life since they will be raised by the common resurrection; rather, he says they will not "see" life, that is, they will not arrive at so much as the mere sight of the life of the saints, they will not touch their blessedness, they will remain without a taste of life spent in bliss. That is really life. But to live again in punishment is worse than any death since it holds the soul in the body only for the sensation of suffering.³⁸⁵

Here we see Cyril refer to "the common resurrection," which is universally experienced by all of humanity. And yet Cyril also identifies the different characteristics of mere life, common to all, and those of life in its truest sense, which is lived in blessedness and bliss. He continues in this vein by defining terms such that "life" is equated with sharing in Christ's glory, while "the wrath of God" refers to the sufferings of those who reject him.³⁸⁶ Again, in another place, Cyril highlights that, while all the dead will be raised and called out of their graves, those whose lives were marked by shameful and wicked

³⁸⁴ FL 9.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 172), SC 392, 172.

³⁸⁵ CJ 2.4 (Maxwell 1, 116), Pusey 1, 259–60: "περὶ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ πιστεύοντός φησιν, ὅτι ζωὴν ἔξει τὴν αἰώνιον, περὶ δὲ τοῦ ἀπειθήσαντος, ἑτέραν ὁ λόγος ἔχει τὴν ἔμφασιν. οὐ γὰρ ἔφη ζωὴν οὐχ ἔξειν αὐτόν· ἐγερθήσεται γὰρ τῷ κοινῷ τῆς ἀναστάσεως νόμῳ· ἀλλὰ ζωὴν οὐκ ὄψεσθαι φησιν, τουτέστιν, οὐδ' ὅσον εἰς θεωρίαν ψυχὴν τῆς τῶν ἁγίων ἐφίξεται· ζωῆς, οὐχ ἄνεται τῆς ἐκείνων μακαριότητος, ἄγευστος διαμενεῖ τῆς ἐν εὐφροσύναις διαγωγῆς· ζωὴ γὰρ ὄντως ἐκείνη· τὸ δὲ ἐν κολάσεσιν ἀναπνεῖν, θανάτου παντός ἀνιαιρότερον, ἐπὶ μόνῃ τῇ τῶν κακῶν αἰσθήσει ψυχὴν συνέχον ἐν σώματι."

³⁸⁶ CJ 2.4 (Maxwell 1, 116), Pusey 1, 261.

behavior will “endure endless punishment,” while those whose lives were “illustrious in virtue [will] receive a reward for their virtue, eternal life.”³⁸⁷

This differentiation between what happens to and for all, versus what happens to and for some, is perhaps made clearest in Cyril’s treatment of the bread of life discourse in John 6. He addresses the objection of some that Christ’s claim (that those who eat his flesh have eternal life) contradicts the general resurrection. Cyril answers,

We say yes to this; all flesh will live again. The prophetic word foretells that the dead will be raised. We consider that the mystery of Christ’s resurrection extends to the whole of humanity, and we believe that first in him our entire nature has been freed from decay. All will rise in the likeness of him who was raised for our sakes and has all people in himself, in that he is a human being. And just as in the first-formed we fell into death, so also in the firstborn for us, all will rise again from the dead, but ‘those who have done good to a resurrection of life,’ as it is written, ‘and those who have done evil to a resurrection of judgment.’³⁸⁸

Human nature universally experiences the defeat of death and decay and the restoration to life. Yet the quality of that life as it is enjoyed or suffered by individual human beings differs dramatically.

Cyril clearly believes that God desires the salvation of the whole world. Yet Cyril also believes that an inherent quality of the human creature is self-direction, and that this self-direction renders human beings like God in an important sense. God is never moved or forced into action. As we saw in Chapter 1, the human creature was “entrusted with the reins of its own will—that too is part of the image, since God has control over his own

³⁸⁷ CJ 2.8 (Maxwell 1, 157), Pusey 1, 349: “τὴν ἀτελεύτητον ὑφέζοντες δίκην...οἱ δὲ διαπρεπεῖς ἐν ἀρεταῖς τῆς ἐπιεικείας μισθὸν ἀντικομιούμενοι τὴν αἰώνιον ζωὴν.”

³⁸⁸ CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 232), Pusey 1, 520: “Ἀλλὰ ναὶ πρὸς ταῦτα ἐροῦμεν, ἀναβιώσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ· ἐγερθήσεσθαι γὰρ τοὺς νεκροὺς ὁ προφητικὸς προαγορεύει λόγος. λογιούμεθα γὰρ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν διήκειν τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα τὸ διὰ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ μυστήριον, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ πρώτῳ πᾶσαν ἀπολελῶσθαι πιστευόμεν τῆς φθορᾶς τὴν ἡμετέραν φύσιν. πάντες γὰρ ἀναστήσονται, καθ’ ὁμοιότητα τοῦ δι’ ἡμᾶς ἐγληγμένου καὶ πάντας ἔχοντος ἐν ἑαυτῷ, καθάπερ ἦν ἄνθρωπος. καὶ ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ πρωτοπλάστῳ κατεκλίθημεν εἰς θάνατον, οὕτως ἐν τῷ πρωτοτόκῳ πάλιν, τῷ δι’ ἡμᾶς, ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναβιώσονται σύμπαντες· ἀλλ’ οἱ μὲν τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς, καθάπερ γέγραπται, “οἱ δὲ τὰ φαῦλα πράξαντες εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως.”

will.”³⁸⁹ We saw also, that the exercise of force, whether in imposing or in seizing, is a quality closely associated with the devil. God, by contrast, invites, offers, persuades. The human person is free to accept or to reject because that power over our own actions is part of our natural similarity to God and therefore cannot be lost outright. Human beings have the power and the right to choose to reject God’s invitations and gifts. These choices have their consequences, referred to as “punishment” and “reward.” Because God is just, and because Christ’s second coming ushers in the final judgment in justice, Cyril refers to the consequence of rejecting Christ as “punishment” and that of accepting Christ as “reward.” There is a sense in which the story of Adam and Eve is played out by each and every person; each person freely chooses whether to receive and keep God’s commandments, thereby demonstrating love for God, or to reject them and show one’s disdain for that relationship. Not unlike the judgment meted out against Adam and Eve, the final judgment either invites one into ultimate union and fellowship with God, or it respects one’s desire for independence from God and separation from God’s presence. In the sections that follow, we shall see how each outcome is portrayed in Cyril’s thought.

5.3.1 Punishment

In the final judgment, each of us will be required “to render an account of our own lives,”³⁹⁰ in other words, to offer a defense for our actions and inactions, freely undertaken or avoided. Human justice uses the language of reward for good and punishment for evil, and so that common vocabulary appears here. Human justice,

³⁸⁹ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 188), Pusey 2, 485: “τὰς τῶν ἰδίων θελημάτων πεπιστευμένος ἡνίας· μοῖρα γὰρ τῆς εἰκόνης καὶ αὐτῇ, κατεξουσιάζει γὰρ τῶν οἰκείων θελημάτων Θεός.”

³⁹⁰ FL 22.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 125), PG 77, 872C: “Οὐκοῦν ὥς τῆς ἐαυτῶν ζωῆς ἀποδώσοντες λόγους”

however, differs from divine justice. In the final judgment, we human beings are given what we desire, namely communion and fellowship with God as the perfection of our human *telos*, or separation and independence from God as the rejection of our human *telos*. It is important to note, however, that “punishment” is not meant to imply that God is in any way arbitrary or vengeful; rather, it is meant to communicate that such a choice is, in Cyril’s mind, profoundly unfortunate. Punishment is either the removal of a good, or the imposition of something undesirable. In Cyril’s understanding of the final judgment, only the first part of the definition holds. Punishment, for Cyril, means the permanent estrangement from God, who is the Good itself. Eternity spent in life apart from God is the worst thing a human being could experience, and so it is understood to be punishment, even though it is the outcome freely chosen by those who reject the divine invitation.

The parable of the wedding feast offers Cyril the opportunity to express how the final judgment will be enacted. In Matthew’s version of the parable (Matt 22:1–14), a guest is found not attired in a wedding garment, and the king instructs that he be cast into the outer darkness. Cyril identifies the wedding garment as representing “the glory that comes from the virtues.”³⁹¹ A person who has chosen not to live well and rightly, who has preferred vice over virtue, or whatever is earthly over what is heavenly, that person should expect to “hear those terrible words that the Savior spoke to one of those who had been called: ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’”³⁹² Just as a person chooses what clothing to wear on a given day, so also do we choose our manner of

³⁹¹ FL 14.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 16), SC 434, 130: “τοῖς ἐξ ἀρετῶν ἀνχήμασι”

³⁹² FL 14.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 16), SC 434, 130: “τὴν ἀπευκτὴν ἐκείνην ἀκούοντες φωνὴν ἣν ἐπὶ τινὶ τῶν κεκλημένων εἶρηκεν ὁ Σωτὴρ· «Ἐταῖρε, πῶς εἰσῆλθες ὧδε, μὴ ἔχων ἔνδυμα γάμου;»”

life and behavior. Human action and inaction are expressive of the inner disposition of heart and mind. Put more directly, Cyril speaks of the divine respect for the human will and the choices we make in terms of refraining from force:

He does not think it worthwhile to expend useless labors on those who do not profit from it or to cast grace in this way before those who despise it. It is not right after all, that those who sin so greatly do so without being punished since it is certainly agreed and indisputable that those who knowingly despise him and spurn such a remarkable gift will suffer the most extreme punishment.³⁹³

This notion of spurning a gift is exactly how Cyril understands the fall of the first couple. We saw in Chapter 1 how they had been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, the image of God, and then in Chapter 2 how they failed to keep and preserve that gift through their free choice to reject the commandment of God. The consequences of that choice were detailed as the divine curse, expulsion from the garden, and subjection to the tyranny of the devil. These consequences represent a temporary and partial separation from God. In the final judgment, however, this separation will become permanent and full, except insofar as separated humanity will participate in resurrected life to the most minimal degree. Human rejection of what God has offered to all of humanity in Jesus Christ is itself fundamental to Cyril's definition and understanding of the punishment outcome of the final judgment, simply because of his commitment to the notion that reception of Christ is the means by which one becomes a child of God (Jn 1:12):

After all, those who have not at all received him who came down from heaven to justify everyone by faith—how will they not indisputably die in their sins? Those who have not received the one who can cleanse them—how will they not have eternal pollution from their impiety? To die without being redeemed but still weighed down by the weight of sin—who doubts where that will send the human

³⁹³ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell 1, 134), Pusey 1, 300: “παρελαύνει τοιγαροῦν εἰκότως, εἰς ὠφελουμένους οὐδὲν εἰκαίους ἀναλῶσαι πόνους οὐκ ἄξιῶν, καὶ χάριν δὲ διὰ τούτου τοῖς καταφρονούσι κατατιθείς. οὐ γὰρ ἦν εἰκὸς εἰς τοσοῦτον ἐξαμαρτάνοντας νηποινὶ τοῦτο δράσειν αὐτοὺς, ὁμολογουμένου δὴ πάντως καὶ ἀναμφισβητήτως ἔχοντος, ὥς τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐσχάτοις ἀποίσονται κόλασιν οἱ καταφρονεῖν ἐγνωκότες αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὴν οὕτως ἀξιοθαύμαστον περιπτύοντες δωρεάν.”

soul? The depths of Hades, I am sure, will receive such a one, and they will continue on in great darkness.³⁹⁴

For Cyril, the only way to avoid such an eternally miserable existence is not to reject or to spurn God's gifts and invitations, but rather to receive, keep, and preserve them.

5.3.2 Reward

The power to become children of God, the eternal familial fellowship and union with the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, in short, the perfection of the human *telos*, is the reward given to those who freely choose to receive Christ and to believe in him. And the ways in which each human being has freely chosen either to act or to refrain from acting form the basis for the final judgment. The reward of eternal blessedness and bliss is reserved for those who genuinely desire it. They demonstrate that desire through the exercise of their free will. The final judgment itself, with its differentiated outcomes, is just only if the human person is free to choose how to live. Cyril insists on the freedom of the human will over against those who would argue for fate, and therefore for an absence of human responsibility for action or inaction, as we saw in Section 1.1.3.2 *The Will*. He explains that “the word of doctrine requires that free will and free choice be preserved to the human soul, that it may ask for the just rewards of its good deeds, or if it falls from what is right and heedlessly transgresses the decree of the lawgiver, that it may receive

³⁹⁴ CJ 5.3 (Maxwell 1, 328), Pusey 2, 5: “οἱ γὰρ ὅλως οὐ παραδεξάμενοι τὸν ὡς ἡμᾶς ἀφιγμένον ἐξ οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πάντας δικαιώσῃ διὰ τῆς πίστεως, πῶς οὐκ ἐν ταῖς ἑαυτῶν ἁμαρτίαις ἀναμφιλόγως τεθνήσκονται· καὶ τὸν καθαίρειν εἰδότα μὴ προσηκόμενοι, πῶς οὐ διηνεκῇ τὸν ἐκ τῆς ἑαυτῶν δυσσεβείας ἔξουσι μολυσμόν; τὸ δὲ τεθνάναι μὴ λελυτρωμένον, ἀλλ’ ἔτι τῷ τῆς ἁμαρτίας κατηχτισμένον βάρει, ὅποι παραπέμψῃ τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴν, τίνι τῶν ὄντων ἀμφίβολον; ἤδη γὰρ, οἶμαι, τὸν τοιοῦτον ὁ βαθὺς ἐκδέχεται, καὶ ἐν σκότει διατελέσει μακρῷ”

the most reasonable punishment.”³⁹⁵ God’s justice is never arbitrary, rewarding the wicked or punishing the good. It is, as Cyril intimated, perfectly reasonable.

Cyril’s reliance on John 1:12 for his understanding of the purpose for which God created all of humanity, and therefore of the nature of the reward given at the final judgment, runs throughout the works included in this project. In the *Commentary on John*, Cyril asserts that “life is set forth as a reward to those who believe in Christ,” and he supports this claim by arguing that “the Only-Begotten is life by nature... Therefore, Christ will give life to those who believe in him, since he himself is life by nature and dwells in them.”³⁹⁶ And again, Cyril says that “eternal life is in fact the fruit and reward of faith in Christ, and there is no other way for the human soul to obtain it.”³⁹⁷ Because the enjoyment of eternal life sharing in divine fellowship is dependent upon the human desire to participate, it is clear to Cyril that only those who desire such an outcome should come to experience it. And the reverse is also true, that God would never force someone into a fellowship that was unwanted. The reward that Cyril speaks of is inseparable from Christ himself, and so there is no generic state of bliss or blessedness, there is no generic heaven that does not have Christ as its center and its very identity. Just as Cyril explained that the Son is life by nature, so also is the reward of eternal life the Son himself.

³⁹⁵ CJ 4.1 (Maxwell 1, 226), Pusey 1, 507–8: “περισώζεσθαι γὰρ ὁ δογματικὸς ἀναγκάζει λόγος τὸ αὐτεξούσιον καὶ αὐτοπροαίρετον τῇ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχῇ, ἵνα δικαίους μὲν ἐπ’ ἀγαθοῖς ἀπαιτῇ τοὺς μισθοὺς, σφαλλομένη δὲ τοῦ πρέποντος, καὶ τὸ τῷ νομοθέτῃ δοκοῦν ἐκ ῥαθυμίας ἐκβαίνουσα, τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ κολλάζεσθαι δίκην καὶ εὐλογωτάτην ἀποκομίζοιτο.”

³⁹⁶ CJ 2.4 (Maxwell 1, 115), Pusey 1, 258: “οὐδὲ ἀζητήτως τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς Χριστὸν ζωὴν προκεῖσθαι τὸ γέρας... ζωὴ μὲν γὰρ κατὰ φύσιν ἐστὶν ὁ Μονογενὴς... ζωοποιήσῃ τοιγαροῦν ὁ Χριστὸς τοὺς πιστεύοντας εἰς αὐτὸν, ὥς αὐτὸς ὑπάρχων κατὰ φύσιν ζωὴ, καὶ λοιπὸν κατοικῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς.”

³⁹⁷ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 87), Pusey 2, 274: “Καρπὸς γεμὴν καὶ τιμὴ τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως, ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ, καὶ οὐκ ἄλλως προσγίνεται τοῦτο τῇ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχῇ.”

Finally, Cyril's understanding of the eschatological reward is grounded in the consummation of the human *telos*. We saw in Chapter 3 and earlier in this chapter that Cyril understands the gift of the Holy Spirit to be central to the whole *oikonomia*, that the Holy Spirit is given first as a pledge or deposit (ἄρραβών), and that such a gift is therefore provisional. What one does with that deposit during one's lifetime is a basis for judgment, just as the more general assessment of one's actions for good or ill. In this way, the Genesis story of the first couple and their loss of the deposit through their transgression of the divine command provides both an origin story of human fallenness and subjection to sin, death, and the devil, as well as a glimpse into what lies ahead. In the final judgment, only those who have received and preserved the deposit they have been given will enjoy the fullness of what that deposit represents. That fullness is participation in the divine life and eternal fellowship with the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. This "perfect participation in the Spirit...is not common to all, but it is 'more' than life and is classified as being beyond what is common to all. It will be ascribed only to those who are justified by faith in Christ."³⁹⁸ What is common to all is only the restoration to life at the last day due to the universal nature of Christ's victory over death.

The idea that the Holy Spirit is given in some provisional sense, as a deposit or first installment, and will ultimately be given fully is suggested in Cyril's treatment of the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14–30): "For when we keep ourselves free of fault and stain, and with perfect purity practice the way of life pleasing to God, we will fittingly hear the

³⁹⁸ CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 61), Pusey 2, 220: "τὴν τελεωτάτην τοῦ Πνεύματος μέθεξιν... οὐκέτι πᾶσι κοινόν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τῇ ζωῇ περιττόν καὶ ὡς ἐν τάξει πλείονος τοῦ κοινῇ πᾶσιν ὑπάρξαντος, μόνοις ἀπονεμηθήσεται τοῖς διὰ πίστεως τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν δεδικαιωμένοις."

words addressed to honest slaves: ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your Lord.’”³⁹⁹ The two servants’ faithfulness over the talents with which they had been entrusted can easily be interpreted as representing the faithfulness of the Christian over the deposit of the Spirit, whereas the third servant’s choice to bury the talent in the ground can be seen as representing the rejection or spurning of the gift. The reward of “much” in response to one’s behavior toward “little” is a dynamic parallel to the fulfillment of the promise of which the deposit serves as a pledge. Here again, Cyril differentiates between what is universal and what is particular.

In terms of the deposit of the Holy Spirit, we saw in Chapter 4 that, at his baptism, Christ received the Holy Spirit on behalf of all human nature. This return of the Holy Spirit represents a new beginning of creation, insofar as *nature* enjoyed the presence of the Holy Spirit. What seems to be important at the level of nature is that, in Christ, the Holy Spirit became “accustomed to remain in us, since the Spirit finds no reason in him for leaving or shrinking back.”⁴⁰⁰ Whereas one of the consequences of Adam and Eve’s transgression was the flight of the Holy Spirit, and therefore the loss of the Spirit’s stabilizing and strengthening power, Christ’s own sinlessness ensures that the Holy Spirit will forever have a home in humanity. Cyril cites Joel 2:28, “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,” to indicate what is universal about the restoration of the Holy Spirit to all of human nature. But he goes on to explain that “each person becomes a partial cause of

³⁹⁹ FL 21.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 111), PG 77, 852D–853A: “Ὅταν γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς ἀμώμους καὶ ἀσπίλους τηρήσωμεν, καὶ τὴν ἀρέσκουσαν Θεῷ πολιτείαν πανάγως ἀσκήσωμεν, ὥς γνήσιοι δοῦλοι προσφόρως ἀκουσόμεθα· «Εὖ, δοῦλε ἀγαθὲ καὶ πιστὲ, ἐπὶ ὀλίγα ἦς πιστὸς, ἐπὶ πολλῶν σε καταστήσω, εἰσελθε εἰς τὴν χαρὰν τοῦ Κυρίου σου.»”

⁴⁰⁰ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 82), Pusey 1, 184: “ἵνα προσεθισθῇ τὸ Πνεῦμα μένειν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἀφορμὴν οὐκ ἔχον ἀναχωρήσεως ἢ ὑποστολῆς ἐν αὐτῷ.”

obtaining the God-given blessing or of not getting it at all. Some people do not purify their mind with all goodness, but they love to dwell in the evils of the world. They remain without a share of divine grace, and they will not see Christ in themselves, since they have a heart that is devoid of the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁰¹ Cyril explains that “Those who have gone to their rest with faith in Christ and who have received the first installment (τὸν ἀρράβωνα) of the Spirit during their life in the flesh will obtain the most perfect grace and will be changed to the glory that will be given by God.”⁴⁰² This change refers to “the solidification and permanence of their bodies, since corruption has been destroyed and death has fallen into death.”⁴⁰³ The reward, then, is bestowed on some, rather than all, and amounts to the fullest participation in the divine life, which includes the benefit of eternal stability at all levels of human existence: ontological, insofar as we will never cease to exist, and natural, insofar as our bodies and souls will be perfectly ordered and at peace with one another.

To illustrate the idea that rewarded humanity will be able to enjoy an existence that surpasses nature, Cyril uses the image of the omer of manna that is kept before God (Exodus 16). He explains that human nature is like manna insofar as it is naturally corruptible, lasting only for the day it is gathered, but rotting and becoming worm-filled by the next morning. That natural corruption can be held at bay by the will and power of God, as evidenced by the manna gathered in advance of the Sabbath which lasts

⁴⁰¹ CJ 9.1 (Maxwell 2, 182), Pusey 2, 473: “ἕκαστος γεμὴν ἑαυτῷ παραίτιος γίνεται τοῦ κεκτηῖσθαι τὸ θεόδοτον ἀγαθόν, ἢ καὶ μηδὲν ἐλεῖν. οἱ μὲν γὰρ διὰ πάσης ἐπικείας τὸν οἰκεῖον ἀποκαθαίροντες νοῦν οὐδαμῶς, ἐμφιλοχωροῦντες δὲ λίαν τοῖς ἐν κόσμῳ κακοῖς, ἀμέτοχοι τῆς θείας ἀπομενοῦσι χάριτος, οὐκ ὄψονται Χριστὸν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, ἐρήμην τοῦ Πνεύματος ἔχοντες τὴν καρδίαν.”

⁴⁰² CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 61), Pusey 2, 221 “οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐν πίστει τῇ εἰς Χριστὸν ἀναπαυσάμενοι, καὶ τὸν ἀρράβωνα τοῦ Πνεύματος κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς μετὰ σώματος ζωῆς κομισάμενοι τελεωτάτην ἐναποκομιοῦται τὴν χάριν, καὶ ἀλλαγῇσονται πρὸς δόξαν κομιζόμενοι τὴν παρὰ Θεοῦ.”

⁴⁰³ CJ 3.4 (Maxwell 1, 178), Pusey 1, 399: “τῆς τῶν σωμάτων συμπήξεώς τε καὶ διαμονῆς, λελυμένης δηλονότι τῆς φθορᾶς, καὶ τοῦ θανάτου πεσόντος εἰς θάνατον.”

throughout the day of rest. When God commands Moses that Aaron should fill a gold jar with an omer of manna and place it before the presence of God, Cyril takes this as a shadow of what will become of us. We are naturally corruptible, but

will put on instead the glory of incorruptibility, not by denying the nature of the flesh, but by being refashioned unto the honor of incorruptibility, radiant together with our flesh with an ineffable glory coming from Christ. For ‘he will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body,’ as is written. But the doctrine that, when we have come into the presence of God the Father, we shall remain incorruptible, having put on the Savior’s glory, even though we are by nature corruptible, is one which sacred Scripture shows us no less by the example it offers.⁴⁰⁴

Cyril stresses that our nature will not be changed, but rather that its quality and characteristic of corruptibility will be changed. This distinction preserves the integrity of human nature without changing it into something else. Instead, corruptible human nature will receive the quality and characteristic of incorruptibility as an external benefit. To make this point, Cyril writes that “sacred Scripture always somehow takes gold as a symbol of the divine and inviolable nature” and that therefore, “when Christ, then, embraces us, as of course the golden jar does the manna, then we will remain imperishable, with God gazing upon us and, as it were, setting his eye upon all that has to do with us. For having been removed from his presence through the transgression of Adam, and placed out of his sight, as it were, we sank into corruption.”⁴⁰⁵ When the gold jar of manna is placed before God, Cyril interprets the detail as a restoration of humanity

⁴⁰⁴ FL 10.4 (Amidon, FC 118, 189), SC 392, 224–26: “τὴν τῆς ἀφθαρσίας μεταμφιασόμεθα δόξαν, οὐ τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς ἀρνούμενοι φύσιν, ἀλλ’ εἰς τὸ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας ἀναστοιχειούμενοι καύχημα, καὶ μετὰ σαρκὸς καὶ ἀρρήτῳ τινὶ τῇ παρὰ Χριστοῦ καταστίλβοντες δόξη· «Μετασχηματιεῖ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ», καθὰ γέγραπται. Ὅτι δὲ καίτοι φθαρτῆς ὄντες φύσεως, ἐπεὶ περ γεγόναμεν ἐν προσώπῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς, ἀφθαρτοὶ διαμενοῦμεν, κατημφιεσμένοι τοῦ Σωτῆρος τὴν δόξαν, οὐδὲν ἡμῖν ἦττον κάκεῖνο σαφηνεῖ τὸ παρὰ τῇ θείᾳ κείμενον Γραφὴ παράδειγμα.”

⁴⁰⁵ FL 24.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 144), PG 77, 900B–C: “Δέχεται μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ πῶς τὸ Γράμμα τὸ ἱερὸν, εἰς ὑποτύπωσιν τινα τῆς θείας καὶ ἀκηράτου φύσεως τὸ χρυσίον... Ὅταν οὖν ἡμᾶς περιβάλῃ Χριστὸς, καθάπερ ἀμέλει καὶ ὁ χρυσοῦς στάμνος τὸ μάννα, τότε καὶ ἀφθαρτοὶ μενοῦμεν, ἐφορῶντος Θεοῦ, καὶ τοῖς καθ’ ἡμᾶς οἰονεῖ πῶς ἐνιέντος τὸν ὀφθαλμόν. Ἐκ προσώπου μὲν γὰρ γεγονότες διὰ τὴν ἐν Ἀδὰμ παράβασιν, καὶ οἷον ἐξ ὀμμάτων κείμενοι, κατεκομίσθημεν εἰς φθοράν.”

to God's presence. Moreover, this restoration will be eternal because of the reference to the jar being placed for all the generations, rather than for some limited time.

Whereas Cyril's depiction of the punishment endured by those who refused to receive Christ appeared uniform for all, there is variation in the reward given to those who actively receive Christ. This reward varies by degree, such that God "awards higher praise to those eager to distinguish themselves by a more perfect manner of life, but does not deprive of his kindness even those who do not attain to such virtue."⁴⁰⁶ There seems to be one punishment for those who reject Christ, but degrees of reward for those who accept him. This point is made clear in Cyril's discussion of the "many mansions" in John 14:2. Cyril writes that these mansions indicate that there are "different levels of honor, which each one who desires to live a life of virtue receiving their own place, as it were, and the glory that is appropriate for their accomplishments."⁴⁰⁷

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on how the person and work of Christ prepares us for the perfection of our *telos*. I argued that *oikonomia* does not end in the restoration that was the focus of Chapter 4; rather, it continues into preparation for human beings to receive the ultimate grace of communion with God and of partaking in the divine nature. The ascension of Christ into heaven is the primary event by which he prepares a place for all

⁴⁰⁶ FL 2.7 (Amidon, FC 118, 62), SC 372, 220: "ἐπαίνου μὲν μείζονος ἀξίων τὸν ἐν τοῖς τελειοτέροις διαπρέπειν σπουδάζοντα, φιланθρωπίας δὲ ὁμῶς οὐκ ἀμοιρεῖν ἐπιτρέψας καὶ τὸν ᾧ τοσοῦτον οὐ μέτεστιν ἀρετῆς."

⁴⁰⁷ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 147), Pusey 2, 403: "τὸ διάφορον τῆς τιμῆς... ὑποσημῆναι βούλεται, ἐκάστου τοῦ διαζῆν βουλομένου ἐν ἀρετῇ, τόπον ὥσπερ τινὰ τὸν ἴδιον ἀποληψομένου, καὶ τὴν τοῖς αὐτοῦ πρέπουσαν κατορθώμασι δόξαν."

of human nature, so that where he is, we might also be (Jn 14:2–3). The ascension is the counterpart of the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, divinity descends to earth from heaven and joins humanity; in the ascension, humanity is carried up by divinity from earth to heaven. The Nicene Creed continues with reference to the second coming of Christ and the final judgement. It is here that the distinction between universal restoration of human nature and the salvation, exaltation, and deification of the individual becomes most manifest. In that final judgment, all will be raised, but some will experience a resurrection to eternal life, while others will experience a resurrection to damnation. For Cyril, this final judgment has everything to do with human willingness to receive what has been given by, and offered in, Christ. The question becomes, then, how does one receive Christ and believe in his name such that one might hope to share as fully as possible in the promised power to become children of God? We turn, then, to Part III and the imitation of Christ.

PART III: THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

Part II followed the basic contours of the second article of the Nicene Creed, beginning in Chapter 4 with the Incarnation of the Word, and moving through the passion, death, and resurrection, and continuing in Chapter 5 with the ascension and enthronement, and finally culminating in Christ's second coming for the final judgment. This summary of the Christian faith regarding the Incarnation in the fullest sense, the *oikonomia*, is presented as "for us and for our salvation." The divine plan is intended to make possible the ultimate communion and fellowship of human beings with God. Every aspect of the *oikonomia* is necessary for the fulfillment of the human *telos*, God's purpose in creating human beings. Part II thus functioned as the fulcrum of the project.

Part III takes up the question of how individual human beings receive Christ and the benefits of his work on behalf of all humanity. Here I lay out the means by which we arrive at our perfection, the fulfillment of our *telos*. It is God's desire to save all of humanity from the ravages of sin and death, and to share in eternal, familial fellowship with us. At the same time, God respects the exercise of our free will and so God does not force us into unwanted union. And so while humanity as a universal category is restored in Christ and by Christ, the benefits of that restoration will flow only to those particular human beings who desire them. Here again, we see the dynamic of giving and receiving at play. God gives to all, but not all choose to receive. From John's prologue, "but to

those who received him and believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12). The dynamic of imitation, in both active and passive senses, is now brought to the fore. In Chapter 6, I will argue that inward acceptance of right faith, united to the outward expressions of virtuous living, acts of charity, and participation in the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, form the integral faith that will be rewarded at the final judgment. And in Chapter 7, I will demonstrate how divine grace is at work in making believers imitators of Christ.

The final judgment appears throughout Cyril’s works and provides evidence that there is, indeed, a profound distinction between human nature and human individuals. The reality of ultimate reward or punishment counters the claims of those who would deny human freedom. And it simultaneously empowers us to receive or to reject all that God has offered in Christ. Throughout Part III, I will argue for the centrality in Cyril’s thought of the free choice to receive Christ and to believe in him, by both imitating him, and being made imitators of him. This choice takes shape in the voluntary adoption of and adherence to orthodox Christian faith, and in the concrete practices of Christian life, including the pursuit of virtuous living and active charity, and in participation in both baptism and Eucharist. Despite the profound importance of human volition, nevertheless Cyril remains committed to the primacy and the necessity of divine grace in nurturing and empowering human will and behavior. It is by the working of the Holy Spirit within us that we are conformed to Christ. Nevertheless, we freely choose whether to welcome the Holy Spirit’s presence and activity within us.

6.0 IMITATING CHRIST

For Cyril, the imitation of Christ, the means by which we become increasingly Christ-like, is both an active and a passive process. Furthermore, it is one that engages our whole selves, body and soul. Much of what Cyril has written about the final judgment has focused on our actions, on what we have done or failed to do over the course of our lives. Yet Cyril also insists that our inward motivations and dispositions remain equally important. We saw in Cyril's interpretation of the Passover observance that the hirelings, those who acted out of a desire to be seen by others, were excluded from sharing the meal. Similarly, Cyril appeals to Matthew 7:22–23, where Jesus is teaching about the coming judgment and the reality that a separation will occur, even amongst those who claim loyalty to him. He writes, “You did not seek me, he says, with pure motives, nor did you have a desire to excel in holiness. These are the things by which I would have known you. But since you practiced a mere imaginary piety in order to seek gain, I justly declare that I did not know you.”⁴⁰⁸ This notion of outward action being disconnected from, or indeed contrary to, inward disposition is what Cyril calls “duplicity,” “double-mindedness,” or a strong form of “doubt” (διψυχία).⁴⁰⁹ Being divided or in conflict within oneself is a symptom of the natural instability addressed in Chapter 1. The very fact of our composite nature opens us to the possibility of finding ourselves at odds with ourselves, whether between body and soul, or between thought and action. Single-

⁴⁰⁸ CJ 3.4 (Maxwell 1, 195), Pusey 1, 437: “οὐ γὰρ ἐζητήσατέ με, φησὶ, καθαρῶς, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ τὸ ἐν ἁγιασμῷ διαπρέπειν ἠγαπήσατε, ἔγνω γὰρ ἂν διὰ τούτων ὑμᾶς, ἀλλ’ ἐπεὶ εἰς εὐπορίας εὖρεσιν τὴν ἐν δοκίμῃ καὶ ἐν ψιλαῖς ὑπονοίαις εὐλάβειαν ἐποιήσασθε, καὶ ἠγνοηκέναι δικαίως ὁμολογῶ.”

⁴⁰⁹ Liddell & Scott translate διψυχία as “double-minded,” while Lampe offers “indecision, doubt, hesitancy.”

mindedness, then, is indicative of the stability that comes from integration and wholeness, in short, the strengthening and stabilizing presence of the Holy Spirit.

The contrast between single- and double-mindedness, between stability and conflict, becomes clear in Cyril's exposition of the story of the death and raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:1–44). In this context, Cyril distinguishes between the praiseworthy faith of Mary and the affliction, evil, and disease of Martha's doubt and double-mindedness. Cyril refers to the absence of (mere) doubt in Mary by using the term ἐνδοιαστικὸς, while identifying the more dangerous form of doubt present in Martha as διψυχία. In several of his *Festal Letters*, Cyril uses the strongest language to oppose duplicitous behavior. For example, in *Festal Letter 9* (421 CE), Cyril writes that duplicity is equivalent to idolatry.⁴¹⁰ And in a few lines in *Festal Letter 12* (424CE), Cyril calls it “ignoble” (δυσγενῆ) and “grievous” (δυσδιαφόρητον)⁴¹¹ and “completely shameful and wicked” (πάναισχρόν τε καὶ ἀτοπώτατον).⁴¹² In contrast to duplicity or double-mindedness, in *Festal Letter 14* (426CE), Cyril insists upon the importance of what he calls “an integral faith” (ὁλοκλήρῳ τῇ πίστει), where both outward actions and inward thoughts are united.⁴¹³

Because Cyril's understanding of the human *telos* is rooted in the Johannine notion of becoming children of God, and because his understanding of the centrality of the Word's Incarnation and of human reception of Christ to the perfection of that *telos*, Cyril casts the Christian faith and life as the means by which we become imitators of Christ and thereby children of God by adoption. We saw in Chapter 3 the ways in which

⁴¹⁰ FL 9.5 (Amidon, FC 118, 169–70), SC 392, 162–66.

⁴¹¹ FL 12.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 218), SC 434, 32.

⁴¹² FL 12.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 219), SC 434, 34.

⁴¹³ FL 14.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 20), SC 434, 140.

Jesus Christ reveals to us our proper nature and the ultimate end for which we were created. That revelation was given and made universally available to the whole of humanity. The human response of receiving freely both the pattern and way of life that Christ embodies and models, and also the identity of Christ as the one mediator between God and humanity, will focus our present discussion. In short, our own active role in receiving what has been done for us and what has been offered to us is choosing to believe Jesus in what he says about us and about himself, and choosing to imitate him in the fullest way possible. Our own efforts at imitating Christ are joined by divine grace in conforming us to his image and likeness. This cooperative character of both divine grace and human freedom is critically important to Cyril. While a fuller discussion of grace will follow in the next chapter, the focus now is on the human exercise of free choice to receive Christ.

Cyril writes, “For Christ is formed in you in no other way than through an irreproachable faith and an evangelical way of life.”⁴¹⁴ And similarly, Cyril writes that Christ “will take with him all of us who are distinguished by right faith and illustrious for an evangelical way of life.”⁴¹⁵ Thus “faith” and “life” together form the two means Cyril has identified by which a person is to receive Christ and believe in his name, so as to be given the power to become a child of God (Jn 1:12). Faith and life represent the inner and outer, the spiritual and the bodily, aspects of the whole human person. Cyril insists that the two function together in one integrated and coherent whole. I use the term “faith” to mean the inward disposition of the mind and heart. On the one hand, “faith” is the

⁴¹⁴ FL 10.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 179), SC 392, 194–96: “Μορφοῦται γὰρ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν οὐχ ἑτέρως, εἰ μὴ διὰ πίστεως ἀνεγκλήτου, καὶ πολιτείας εὐαγγελικῆς.”

⁴¹⁵ FL 12.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 234), SC 434, 78: “παραλήγεται πάντας ἡμᾶς μεθ’ ἑαυτοῦ τοὺς ὀρθῇ διαπρέποντας πίστει καὶ πολιτεία λελαμπρυσμένους εὐαγγελικῇ.”

adherence to a set of doctrinal claims. And on the other hand, “faith” is about trusting those claims and the desire to live in accordance with them. I use the term “life” to mean outward expression, actions, things that a person does or refrains from doing.

In addition to this two-fold pattern of faith and life, Cyril also summarizes what is necessary to attain the ultimate reward in a three-fold structure quite similar to the Pauline “faith, hope, and love” (1 Cor 13:13):

There are three means by which we will reach the divine courts above and ascend to the church of the firstborn. I am talking about the practice of every kind of virtue, faith in orthodox doctrine and hope in life. Does that mean that there will be some other bestower or patron or cause or reason that will enable us to accomplish these things besides our Lord Jesus Christ? Of course not. Do not even think it.⁴¹⁶

Whether Cyril uses a two-fold or three-fold pattern to describe the fundamental character of Christian existence, he nevertheless relies upon the centrality and primacy of faith. He treats it as bedrock: “For the knowledge of God is the root of all virtue, and faith is the foundation of piety.”⁴¹⁷ For Cyril, “every virtue is summed up and fulfilled in the form and habit of love,”⁴¹⁸ and every virtue has its beginning and perfection in Christ, who is love and “the fruit of love” (τῆς ἀγάπης ὁ καρπὸς)⁴¹⁹ And hope is tied to the fulfillment of the promise of which the gift of the Holy Spirit is a pledge, namely the fullness of human fellowship and participation in the life of God.

⁴¹⁶ CJ 9 (Maxwell, CJ 150), Pusey 2, 409: “Διὰ τριῶν τοιγαροῦν πραγμάτων ταῖς ἄνω καὶ θεαῖς προσβαλοῦμεν αὐλαῖς, καὶ εἰς τὴν τῶν πρωτοτόκων ἀναβησόμεθα ἐκκλησίαν· διὰ πράξεως δὴ φημι, τῆς κατὰ ποικίλην ἀρετὴν, καὶ πίστεως τῆς ἐν ὀρθότητι, καὶ ἐλπίδος τῆς ἐν ζωῇ. ἄρ’ οὖν ἕτερος ἡμῖν τοῦ δύνασθαι τοιαῦτα δρᾶν γενήσεται χορηγός, ἢ πρόξενος, ἢ αἰτία, ἢ πρόφασις παρὰ τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστόν; οὐμενοῦν· μὴ γάρ τοι νομίσῃς.”

⁴¹⁷ CJ 4.6 (Maxwell 1, 277), Pusey 1, 619: “ρίζα γὰρ ἀπάσης ἀρετῆς ἡ θεογνωσία, καὶ κρητὶς εὐσεβείας ἡ πίστις.”

⁴¹⁸ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 141), Pusey 2, 390: “Ἀπάσης τοιγαροῦν ἀρετῆς ἐν τῷ τῆς ἀγάπης εἶδει τε καὶ τρόπῳ συγκεφαλαιουμένης τε καὶ πληρουμένης”

⁴¹⁹ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 140), Pusey 2, 389.

Cyril holds together both the Pauline emphasis on faith and the emphasis on works that appears in the Epistle of James. Because of Cyril's insistence upon an integral faith, neither the inward, nor the outward, suffices on its own. While he holds that proper faith is the foundation, he also insists that works, like keeping the Lenten fast, for example, are important, too: "For just as 'faith without works is dead,' so also the works, when faith is not already present in us, have no way of benefiting our souls."⁴²⁰ In the sections that follow, I will detail Cyril's understanding of how individual human beings freely choose to receive Christ and believe in his name, based on the two-fold pattern of faith and life. Within that structure, hope and love, especially as outwardly expressed, will feature as aspects of the evangelical way of life that Cyril commends. This pattern is rooted in the revelation of Christ's own life as presented earlier in Chapter 3. That revelation offered the paradigm of a human life of virtue and godliness.

6.1 ORTHODOX DOCTRINE AS INWARD ASSENT TO FAITH

In his discussion of the raising of Lazarus, and of the contrast between the responses of the two sisters, Mary and Martha, Cyril highlights Mary's faith over Martha's "double-mindedness," as we saw earlier in the chapter. It is here that Cyril takes the opportunity to offer a bit of nuance and variation in what he has been calling "faith." He explains,

Now there are two kinds of faith. One kind is dogmatic, consisting of the soul assenting to something, as in the statement, "Whoever believes in the Son is not judged." The other is a gift given by Christ through participation in grace. "To one," he says, "the utterance of wisdom is given through the Spirit, to another

⁴²⁰ FL 9.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 171), SC 392, 168: "Ὡςπερ γὰρ «ἡ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων νεκρά ἐστίν», οὕτω καὶ τὰ ἔργα, μὴ προϋπαρχούσης ἐν ἡμῖν τῆς πίστεως, οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως ὀνίνησί τι τὰς ἡμετέρας ψυχάς."

faith,” which is not only dogmatic, but energetic, accomplishing feats beyond human ability, such as “moving mountains.”⁴²¹

We shall take up the significant question of the role of grace and its relation to the human will and action in the final chapter. For now, we will focus on the first kind of faith that Cyril describes as dogmatic. When Cyril details the content of the faith that he commends to his hearers and readers, he does so with a certain polemic tone. If right faith is a necessary component of the human reception of Christ, then wrong faith jeopardizes one’s place in the final judgment. For Cyril, this is not simply about taking sides; rather, he believes that the rightness of faith is determined by the degree to which it discloses the truth of God’s work in and through Christ on our behalf. He claims that this is not mere partisanship; it is rather “a matter of the salvation of the whole world.”⁴²² If one believes wrongly, then presumably one’s actions, as the fruit of one’s faith, will fall into error. So it is paramount for Cyril that right faith be presented and preserved. We recall especially that his *Commentary on John* was likely addressed to catechists countering Arian, Jewish, and pagan objections.⁴²³

We have seen Cyril argue for the centrality of faith to the whole *oikonomia* and the perfection of the human *telos*. Indeed, there is no means by which the human person could enter the heavenly Jerusalem to enjoy eternal bliss apart from faith. This “faith” that Cyril commends must then be clarified and defined. He writes, “Not only must one believe, [Jesus] says, but he insists that one will have to believe in him. For we are

⁴²¹ CJ 7. fragments (Maxwell 2, 91–92), Pusey 2, 285: “διττὸν δὲ τῆς πίστεως τὸ εἶδος· τὸ μὲν, δογματικὸν, συγκατάθεσιν τῆς ψυχῆς ἔχον περὶ τοῦδε τινος· ὡς τὸ ‘Ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν Υἱὸν οὐ κρίνεται·’ τὸ δὲ, ἐν χάριτος μέρει παρὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ δωρούμενον· ‘Ὡς μὲν γὰρ, φησὶ, διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος δίδεται λόγος σοφίας, ἐτέρῳ δὲ πίστις,’ ἥτις οὐ δογματικὴ μόνον ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων ἐνεργητικὴ, ὡς καὶ ‘ὁρῇ μεθιστάνειν.’”

⁴²² UC (McGuckin, 118), SC 97, 474: “τὸ χρῆμα σωτήριον τῷ κόσμῳ παντί.”

⁴²³ Maxwell, “Translator’s Introduction,” xvii–xix.

justified when we believe in him as God from God, as Savior and redeemer and king of all and truly Lord.”⁴²⁴ It is not vague or generic faith that Cyril highlights, but rather quite specific faith in Jesus, understood according to Cyril’s notion of orthodoxy. Cyril puts this demand in historical context by laying out the progression in the knowledge of God. We saw in Chapter 2 how humanity fell prey to the deceptions of the devil and into the error of polytheism, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator. And we saw also how God’s gift in the form of the Mosaic law offered a correction and revealed the truth of monotheism. That progression continued in revealing not simply that God exists, but also who God is, specifically as Trinity:

Notice how [perfect knowledge of God] does not come about without contemplation of the Son, and it is clear that it does not come about without the Holy Spirit. That is how each person is understood and believed to be in the Trinity, according to the Scriptures...But since those who have worshiped and are now devoted to the one true God do not have perfect knowledge of the one they worship, they are now called to that knowledge by the Savior’s words, that they may learn that the one true creator of all is not unitary but that he is a Father and he has begotten a Son, or rather that they may now behold him accurately in his exact image, that is, the Son. Through the imprint, one may quite easily proceed to complete contemplation of the archetype. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, most appropriately said that those who have been called by faith to adoption and eternal life must learn not only that God is one and true but also that he is a Father. And they must learn whose Father he is, namely, the one who became flesh for us and was sent to set right the corrupt rational nature, that is, the human nature.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁴ CJ 5.4 (Maxwell 1, 334), Pusey 2, 19–20: “καὶ οὐ μόνον ὅτι προσήκει πιστεῦσαι φησιν, ἀλλ’ ὅτι καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τοῦτο γενέσθαι δεήσει δυσχυρίζεται. δικαιοῦμεθα γὰρ πιστεύοντες εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς εἰς Θεὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ, ὡς εἰς Σωτῆρα καὶ λυτρωτὴν καὶ βασιλέα τῶν ὅλων καὶ Κύριον ἀληθῶς.”

⁴²⁵ CJ 11.5 (Maxwell 2, 274), Pusey 2, 669–70: “θέα γὰρ ὅπως οὐ δίχα τῆς ἐφ’ Υἱῷ θεωρίας γίγνεται, δῆλον δὲ ὅτι καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος· ἡ μόνος γὰρ οὕτως ἐν Τριάδι νοεῖται καὶ πιστεύεται κατὰ τὰς γραφάς... ἀλλ’ οἱ τῷ μόνῳ καὶ ἀληθινῷ λελατρευκότες τε ἤδη καὶ προσκείμενοι, ὡς οὐπω τελείαν ἔχοντες τοῦ προσκυνουμένου τὴν γνῶσιν, διὰ τῶν τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ῥημάτων καλοῦνται νυνὶ πρὸς αὐτὴν, οὐχ ὅτι μόνος, εἰς τε καὶ ἀληθὴς ὁ πάντων δημιουργὸς μανθάνοντες, ἀλλ’ ὅτι καὶ Πατὴρ καὶ τίνα γεγέννηκε, μᾶλλον δὲ ἤδη καὶ ἀκριβῶς αὐτὸν ἐν ἀπαλλάκτῳ θεωρήσαντες εἰκόνι, τουτέστι, τῷ Υἱῷ. διὰ γὰρ τοῦ χαρακτῆρος ἴοι τις ἂν καὶ μάλα ῥαδίως ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἀρχετύπων ἀκραιφνῇ θεωρίαν. ἀναγκαιότατα τοίνυν ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς τοὺς διὰ πίστεως κεκλημένους εἰς υἰοθεσίαν καὶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον, οὐ μόνον ἔφη χρῆναι μαθεῖν, ὅτι μόνος ἐστὶ καὶ ἀληθινὸς ὁ Θεός, ἀλλ’ ὅτι καὶ Πατὴρ, καὶ τίνος ἐστὶ Πατὴρ, τοῦ δι’ ἡμᾶς δηλονότι σαρκὸς γεγονότος, ἀπεσταλμένου τε πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν τῆς κατεφθαρμένης φύσεως λογικῆς, τουτέστι τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος.”

For Cyril, the reality is that human adherence to faith claims that contradict this revelation amount to nothing less than outright rejection of Christ. And given that reception of Christ is the basis for the possibility of becoming a child of God, we see once again that the stakes for believing rightly are on the highest order of magnitude. Cyril goes on to present the consequences of the presence or absence of this specific faith:

It is quite clear, then, also from the Savior's words, that if we have a low conception of him and consider him to be a mere human being, by nature bereft of divinity, we will surely and in all likelihood disbelieve him and not accept the Savior and redeemer. What then is the consequence of this? We have fallen away from hope. If salvation is by faith, but faith is gone, what will save us now? But if we believe and lift up the Only Begotten to a God-befitting height, even though he became human, we will journey with a fair wind, as it were, and speed across the rough sea of life, and we will sail to the city above, there to receive the rewards of believing.⁴²⁶

It is here that we see most clearly the stakes of committing to what Cyril understands to be either orthodoxy or heresy. What one believes specifically about the identity of Jesus affects how one understands what he can accomplish on our behalf, and therefore the nature of the relationship that is possible.

In concluding each of his *Festal Letters*, Cyril offers a summary of salvation history. The content of these summaries varies in terms of detail and emphasis, but structurally follows the second article of the Nicene Creed. Given that Cyril served as archbishop in the midst of dogmatic and doctrinal conflicts, both within Christianity and among Christians, Jews, and pagans, it is not surprising that occasions arise where he

⁴²⁶ CJ 5.4 (Maxwell 1, 339), Pusey 2, 30: “Ἔστι τοίνυν προδηλότατον καὶ ἐκ τῶν τοῦ Σωτῆρος ῥημάτων, ὅτι σμικρὰν ἔχοντες ἐπ’ αὐτῷ τὴν ὑπόνοιαν, καὶ ἄνθρωπον εἶναι γυμνὸν, ἔρημόν τε τῆς κατὰ φύσιν θεότητος διενθυμούμενοι, πάντως δήπου καὶ ἀπιστήσομεν εἰκότως αὐτῷ, καὶ οὐ παραδεξόμεθα Σωτῆρα καὶ λυτρωτὴν. εἴτα τί τὸ ἐντεῦθεν; τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀποπεπτώκαμεν. εἰ γὰρ διὰ πίστεως ἡ σωτηρία, φρούδη δὲ ἡ πίστις, τί τὸ διασῶζον ἔτι; πιστεύοντες δὲ καὶ εἰς ὕψος αἵροντες τὸ θεοπρεπὲς τὸν Μονογενῆ, καὶ εἰ γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, ἐξ οὐρίας ὥσπερ ἐρχόμενοι, καὶ τὸ παγγάλεπον τοῦ βίου διαθέοντες πέλαγος, πρὸς τὴν ἄνω μεθορμισόμεθα πόλιν, τὰς ἐκ τοῦ πιστεύειν τιμὰς ἐκεῖ κομιούμενοι.”

finds it necessary to offer more explicit and detailed expositions of what a given article means, or how it ought to be interpreted. It is similarly unsurprising that Cyril also warns of the dangers of inclining toward those whom he counts as heretics; doing so destabilizes the “irreproachable” (ἀνεγκλήτου),⁴²⁷ “right and faultless” (ὀρθὴν καὶ ἀμώμητον)⁴²⁸ faith upon which depends one’s ascent to the heavenly Jerusalem.

At various times, Cyril highlights a few articles of what he refers to as orthodox faith and offers a more detailed exposition than appears in the Nicene Creed. Specifically, these articles focus on the doctrines of the Trinity and of the Incarnation. Cyril repeatedly combats “Arian” claims regarding the relationship between the Father and the Son. For example, in *Festal Letter 11* (423CE), he writes,

The true and really God-loving Christian must believe in one God, the Father almighty, and in one Lord Jesus Christ his Son, and in the Holy Spirit, so as, namely, to think and say that God the Father is truly the source of his own offspring, and is as a root which has obtained the fruit from itself as co-eternal with itself. For of all other things, visible and invisible, he is the Creator, and, by his will, Father. For thus we say that everything is from God. But of his own offspring he is not the Creator, but the Father by nature. For he truly begot him, not by emanation or division or passion, as indeed may be seen in the case of our own selves as well. For a body comes forth from a body, and thus there is division. But with God it is not so, since he is not corporeal, nor is he in a place or a form or circumscription; but as God he is incomprehensibly and ineffably what he is. For it is not possible that the nature which surpasses everything should be affected as we are. The Father therefore has begotten the Son from himself, light from light, image and impress, and radiance of his own subsistence, as is written.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁷ FL 10.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 179), SC 392, 194.

⁴²⁸ FL 15.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 42), SC 434, 204.

⁴²⁹ FL 11.8 (Amidon, FC 118, 212–13), SC 392, 302–304: “Πιστεῦσαι δὲ χρὴ τὸν ἀληθῆ καὶ φιλόθεον ὄντως χριστιανόν, εἰς ἓνα Θεὸν Πατέρα παντοκράτορα, καὶ εἰς ἓνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον· ὥστε δηλονότι τὸν Θεὸν καὶ Πατέρα νοεῖν τε καὶ λέγειν πηγὴν ἀληθῶς τοῦ ἰδίου γεννήματος καὶ ρίζαν ὥσπερ τινὰ συναΐδιον ἑαυτῇ τὸν ἐξ αὐτῆς λαχοῦσαν καρπὸν. Τῶν μὲν γὰρ ἄλλων ἀπάντων ὁρατῶν τε καὶ ἀοράτων γενεσιουργός ἐστι καὶ θελήσει Πατήρ. Οὕτω γὰρ εἶναί φαμεν τὰ πάντα ἐκ Θεοῦ. Τοῦ δὲ ἰδίου γεννήματος οὐκ ἔστι δημιουργός, ἀλλὰ κατὰ φύσιν Πατήρ. Γεγέννηκε γὰρ ἀληθῶς, οὐ κατὰ ἀπόρροιν, ἢ ἀποτομήν, ἢ πάθος, καθάπερ ἀμέλει καὶ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐνεστὶν ἰδεῖν· σῶμα γὰρ πρόεισιν ἀπὸ σώματος· διὸ καὶ μεμέρισται· Θεὸς δέ, οὐχ οὕτω, ἐπεὶ μὴ κατὰ σῶμά ἐστι, μηδὲ ἐν τόπῳ καὶ σχήματι, καὶ περιγραφαῖς· ἀπερινοήτως δὲ μᾶλλον καὶ ἀρρήτως, ὡς Θεός. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν ἐνδέχοιτο

And adding anti-Nestorian concerns, Cyril urges in *Festal Letter 21* (433),

Let no one who is in error persuade you to depart from the right faith. Let us go by the royal road, turning aside neither to the right nor to the left. Let us keep the right faith simple and unadulterated, recognizing it not as an occasion of sectarian disputation, but as the faith of true piety. Let us acknowledge as consubstantial the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For this is what the divine Scriptures have transmitted to us from above. Let us acknowledge the Lord who became a human being and was born for us through the blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. Let us say to him, as is written, “My Lord and my God.”⁴³⁰

While some of Cyril’s expositions of the faith offer greater depth of detail and interpretation, there is also a rather blunt and emphatic assertion of the relative weight of the various articles of orthodox faith. Toward the end of his *Commentary on John*, Cyril insists that the single most important article of faith is that Christ died and was buried. Second to that is that he rose from the dead. Cyril appeals to 1 Corinthians 15:3–4, with the primacy Paul gives to the death and burial of Jesus, to make his point.⁴³¹ Only if the death of Christ is real does the resurrection make any sense or possess any real power. Only if the death of Christ is real is the path cleared of all obstacles that thwart the perfection of the human *telos*. As we saw in Part 2, the remedial work of Christ is necessarily prior to his preparatory work. Human nature had to be restored to a new beginning in order for the possibility of our ascent into heaven could be reopened to us.

And finally, Cyril ties faith together with knowledge, going as far as to call knowledge “life.” This is because Cyril understands true faith to be inherently active,

τὰ ἡμέτερα παθεῖν τὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα φύσιν. Γεγέννηκε τοίνυν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ τὸν Υἱὸν ὁ Πατήρ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, εἰκόνα καὶ χαρακτῆρα, καὶ ἀπαύγασμα τῆς ἰδίας ὑποστάσεως, καθὰ γέγραπται.”

⁴³⁰ FL 21.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 113), PG 77, 856C: “Μηδεὶς οὖν ὑμᾶς πειθέτω πλάνος, τῆς ὁρθῆς ἀποκλίνει πίστεως. Ὁδῶ βασιλικῇ πορευώμεθα, μὴ ἐκκλίνοντες δεξιὰ, μηδὲ ἀριστερά· ἀπλῆν καὶ ἀκαπλήεντον τὴν ὁρθὴν πίστιν τηρήσωμεν, μὴ λογομαχίας αἰρετικῆς ἀφορμὴν, ἀλλ’ εὐσεβείας ἀληθοῦς πίστιν ἐπιγινώσκοντες. Ὁμολογῶμεν ὁμοούσιον τὴν Τριάδα Πατρός, Υἱοῦ, καὶ ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Τοῦτο γὰρ ἄνωθεν ἡμῖν αἱ θεῖαι παραδεδώκασι Γραφαί. Ἐπιγινώσκωμεν τὸν δι’ ἡμᾶς ἐνανθρωπήσαντα καὶ τεχθέντα Κύριον διὰ τῆς μακαρίας Παρθένου Θεοτόκου Μαρίας. Λέγωμεν αὐτῷ, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, «Ὁ Κύριός μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου.»”

⁴³¹ CJ 12 (Maxwell 2, 356), Pusey 3, 107.

leading those who possess that true faith to behave in ways that are life-giving. For Cyril, this specifically means the “evangelical way of life.” He addresses the tension between faith and works, their relationship to one another, and the concern of those who worry about faith without works being dead (Jas 2:17, 26). Cyril writes,

Knowledge is life because it is pregnant with the full power of the mystery and it brings participation in the mystical blessing by which we are joined to the living and life-giving Word...Knowledge, then, is life that also brings the blessing of the Spirit. He dwells in our heart, reshaping those who receive him into adopted children and remolding them into incorruption and piety through the gospel way of life.⁴³²

This kind of faith, then, is lively and energetic, empowering the one who possesses it to take those actions that ultimately lead to life.

6.2 BAPTISM AS EXTERNAL EXPRESSION OF FAITH

Cyril’s insistence upon the wholeness and integrity of faith and life requires that the inward disposition of the heart and mind find expression in outward form. He writes that it is not enough for one to believe as we have detailed in the previous section, though that faith is necessary. One must also act in accordance with faith, especially in those ways commanded by Christ himself. The Synoptic Gospels inaugurate Christ’s public ministry with his baptism in the Jordan River (Matt 3:13–17; Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21–22), while John’s Gospel focuses on the descent of the Holy Spirit and the revelatory power of that sign (Jn 1:29–34). In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus teaches that the kingdom of

⁴³² CJ 11.5 (Maxwell 2, 274), Pusey 2, 669: “ζωὴ γὰρ ἡ γνῶσις, ὡς ὅλην ὠδίνουσα τοῦ μυστηρίου τὴν δύναμιν, καὶ εἰσκομίζουσα μὲν τῆς μυστικῆς εὐλογίας τὴν μέθεξιν, δι’ ἧς τῷ ζῶντι καὶ ζωοποιῷ προσοικειούμεθα Λόγῳ...ζωὴ τοιγαροῦν ἡ γνῶσις εἰσκομίζουσα πρὸς τούτῳ τὴν διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος εὐλογίαν. κατοικεῖ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, ἀναμορφοῦν εἰς υἱοθεσίαν τοὺς δεχομένους αὐτὸ, καὶ ἀναπλάττον εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ εὐσέβειαν διὰ πολιτείας εὐαγγελικῆς.”

heaven is open to those who are born of water and spirit (Jn 3:1–15). And finally, in the “Great Commission” (Matt 28:16–20), Jesus instructs his apostles to make disciples of the nations, and to baptize them in the Trinitarian name.

For Cyril, participation in baptism is an act that is freely chosen, whether by the candidate, or by the candidate’s family as in the case of infants and children.⁴³³ A person’s submission to baptism, understood in this sense, is the outward expression of the faith that is inwardly present and operative. Baptism is the means by which a person demonstrates faith publicly in the liturgical confession of faith in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Submission to baptism also demonstrates one’s desire to receive the teaching and promises of Christ, including especially the necessity of new birth and the gift of the deposit of the Holy Spirit. Insofar as the human individual (or others on behalf of a child) freely chooses to request and participate in baptism, it is the central and foundational act of the evangelical way of life that opens the way for humanity’s ascent to union with God. Baptism is one of those events that highlights the cooperation between human and divine activity. On the one hand, baptism is one of the places where the freedom of the human will to choose to reject or accept the divine gift is made manifest. At the same time, Cyril firmly believes that baptism conveys grace that acts on those who receive it. Certainly baptism is full of divine grace, but that grace does not act on the human person without positive consent. That consent is voiced and enacted in the liturgical setting of the baptism. One’s willingness to receive baptism is emblematic of one’s willingness to receive all that baptism is and does.

⁴³³ As we shall see shortly, Cyril’s text suggests that baptizing the very young is common practice.

To make this point about the necessity of free choice, Cyril appeals to three Gospel stories: the healing of the man born blind (Jn 9:1–41), the raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:1–44), and the post-resurrection restoration of Peter after his denial (Jn 21:15–19). After Jesus has healed the blind man, and after the blind man has been cast out of the synagogue by the Pharisees, Jesus finds him and

initiates him into the mysteries... He poses the question [“Do you believe in the Son of Man?”] in order to receive assent. This is the way of faith. That is why those on their way to divine baptism are first asked whether they believe, and when they assent and confess, we then admit them to grace as genuine... Now he asks the formerly blind man not simply whether he was willing to believe, but he mentions in whom. After all, faith is “in the Son of God”—not in a human being like one of us, but in the incarnate God. In this way, the mystery concerning Christ is complete.⁴³⁴

A little further on, Cyril explains how Jesus has revealed not only his own identity, but also the pattern that the Church should imitate. Not only should those who make the baptismal confession do so out of true faith rather than “by throwing empty words into the air,” but also with the genuine understanding and recognition that they make their “confession of faith to God, even though [they] are interrogated by men (who hold the priestly office, I mean), when we say, ‘I believe,’ during the reception of holy baptism.”⁴³⁵ And because this confession is made to God, in the presence of both human and angelic witnesses, it is incumbent that such faith be held firmly and “unwaveringly” (*ἀπλανῶς*).⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 51), Pusey 2, 198: “μυσταγωγεῖ... προσάγει δὲ τὴν πεῦσιν ἵνα λάβῃ τὴν συναίνεσιν. οὗτος γὰρ τοῦ πιστεύειν ὁ τρόπος. διὰ γάρ τοι τοῦτο τοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ θεῖον ἰόντας βάπτισμα προδιερωτώμενους παρέργως εἰ πεπιστεύκασι, συναινοῦντάς τε ἤδη καὶ διωμολογηκότας, ὡς γνησίους ἤδη τῇ χάριτι παραπέμπομεν... ἐρωτᾷ τοιγαροῦν τὸν ποτε τυφλὸν οὐχ ἀπλῶς εἰ βούλοιο πιστεύειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τίνα, προστίθῃσιν. ἡ γὰρ πίστις εἰς τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ οὐχ ὡς εἰς ἄνθρωπον ἓνα τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς, ἀλλ’ ὡς εἰς Θεὸν ἐνανθρωπήσαντα. πλήρης γὰρ οὕτω τὸ ἐπὶ Χριστῷ μυστήριον.”

⁴³⁵ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 88), Pusey 2, 276: “διάκενον ἡμᾶς εἰς ἀέρα ριπτοῦντας φωνὴν... Θεῷ τῆς πίστεως τὴν ὁμολογίαν... κἂν δι’ ἀνθρώπων ἐρωτώμενοι, τῶν ἱερᾶσθαι λαχόντων φημί, τό Πιστεύω λέγομεν ἐν τῇ παραλήψει τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος.”

⁴³⁶ FL 30.3 (Amidon, FC 127, 201), PG 77, 976D.

With such emphasis on the importance of asking for and receiving assent to the articles of Christian faith, the question arises as to whether it is fitting to baptize infants and children, or any other people who may be unable to speak for themselves. There is no question for Cyril that such a practice is indeed fitting. And it is here that he turns once again to the example laid out in the story of the raising of Lazarus. Jesus asks Martha whether she believes that he is the resurrection and life, and that those who believe in him will live and never die (Jn 11:25–26). In this brief interrogation is another type established for the Church:

when a newborn infant is brought either to receive the chrism of the catechumenate or the [chrism] at the consummation of holy baptism, the one who brings the child says “amen” on its behalf. And for those who are going to be baptized because they are seized by extreme sickness, certain people make the renunciation [of Satan] and declare attachment [to Christ], lending their own voice, as it were, out of love to those assailed by sickness. That is what we see happening in the case of Lazarus and his sister.⁴³⁷

Certainly faith is joined to love in baptism, whether one presents oneself or another to receive it. This love lies at the heart of Cyril’s treatment of the risen Christ’s conversation with Peter. Cyril reminds his readers that the love a person feels and expresses is commensurate with forgiveness that a person has received (cf. Lk 7:47). Put in the context of Peter’s own forgiveness for having denied Jesus three times, the threefold question, “Do you love me?” is offered as the root of the Church’s practice “to ask for a threefold confession of Christ from those who have chosen to love him by coming to holy baptism... Therefore, by the triple confession of the blessed Peter, his

⁴³⁷ CJ 7.fragmenta (*Maxwell* 2, 88), Pusey 2, 276–77: “ὅτε γὰρ ἀρτιγενὲς προσάγεται βρέφος, ἢ τῆς κατηχήσεως τὸ χρίσμα λαβεῖν, ἢ τοι τὸ τῆς τελειώσεως ἐπὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ βαπτίσματι, ὁ προσάγων ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τὸ Ἀμὴν ἀναφωνεῖ. ὑπὲρ δὲ τῶν ἐσχάτῃ νόσῳ κατειλημμένων, μελλόντων τε διὰ τοῦτο βαπτίζεσθαι, καὶ ἀποτάττονται τινες καὶ συντάττονται, τὴν οἰκείαν ὥσπερ ἐξ ἀγάπης κιχρῶντες φωνὴν τοῖς νόσῳ πεπεδημένοις· ὅπερ ἔστι κατιδεῖν γεγονὸς ἐπὶ τε Λαζάρου καὶ τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτοῦ.”

transgression of denial, which also happened three times, was nullified.”⁴³⁸ The implication is that our own threefold confession of faith at our baptism, whether spoken ourselves or on our behalf by another, will have the same effect of nullifying our past transgressions.

Finally, presenting oneself or another for baptism signals a desire for and a willingness to receive the deposit (ἄρραβών) of the Holy Spirit that featured significantly in Chapter 3. In his own baptism, Jesus received the Holy Spirit as a man so that the Holy Spirit might become accustomed to dwell within humanity once again and might not have reason to flee ever again. And in the locked room after the resurrection, he breathed onto his disciples, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:22). These two moments show how the Holy Spirit is given to all of humanity at the level of nature, as well as to discrete human beings as individual members of the category. In Chapter 7 we will examine how the presence of the Holy Spirit functions under these two circumstances. For now, the focus is on the human expression of desire for the deposit of the Holy Spirit and the ways in which people might keep and preserve that gift, rather than despising it like the servant who buried his master’s talent in the ground (Mt 25:14–30). This deposit or pledge of the Holy Spirit is given into our care in this life; what we freely choose to do with that deposit is another way of referring to the account that we must give at the final judgment, as we saw at the end of Chapter 5. Adam and Eve failed to keep the gift of the Holy Spirit, resulting in its flight from all of human nature until its return in the baptism of Jesus. Adam and Eve lost the gift entirely because it was something extrinsic to them and

⁴³⁸ CJ 12.1 (Maxwell 2, 384), Pusey 3, 165–66: “ἐντεῦθεν εἰς τὸ χρῆναι τρίτον διερωτᾶν τὴν εἰς Χριστὸν ὁμολογίαν τοὺς ἀγαπᾶν αὐτὸν ἐλομένους, διὰ τοῦ καὶ προσελθεῖν τῷ ἁγίῳ βαπτίσματι...οὐκοῦν διὰ μὲν τῆς εἰς τρίτον ὁμολογίας τοῦ μακαρίου Πέτρου τὸ ἐν τριπλῷ γεγονὸς εἰς ἀπάρνησιν κατηργήθη πλημμέλημα.”

their nature; but because the Word united human nature to itself, the Holy Spirit remains in and with his own flesh. This means that all of human nature now enjoys a kind of safety net where the gift of the Holy Spirit is concerned. While we cannot lose the Holy Spirit entirely because of the solidarity Christ shares with all of us, nevertheless, we may or may not benefit from its presence to the degree that we receive it as gift and pledge. Furthermore, while we receive the Holy Spirit fully, rather than in part, our participation in the Spirit is only partial in this life. The hope is that we will enjoy the fullest possible participation in the divine life, which is the reward to which the deposit points.

6.3 EUCHARIST AS EXTERNAL EXPRESSION OF FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

For Cyril, the Eucharist occupies a central place in the Christian faith and life. Moreover, Christian participation in the eucharistic celebration, and specifically reception of the eucharistic elements, is necessary to the process whereby the faithful receive the power to become children of God. One cannot receive Christ without receiving him in the Eucharist. And if one does not receive him in the Eucharist, one has no capacity to receive the power to become children of God. Just as baptism is a ritual act that one freely chooses, in addition to being a means of grace, so also is the Eucharist a ritual act that one freely chooses. Discussion of eucharistic grace will follow in Chapter 7, whereas our current task is to argue for eucharistic reception as the external expression of faith, hope, and love.

Eucharistic reception is a profoundly intimate act, insofar as a person takes the elements into the mouth and consumes them. This intimacy is only heightened by the

faith claim that the elements are not ordinary bread and wine, but nothing less than the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Intimate union with Christ is available both in the present, by way of the Eucharist, and in the final consummation of all things. Desire for such intimacy lies at the heart of Cyril's interpretation of Mary of Bethany's show of devotion in anointing Jesus and wiping his feet with her hair (Jn 12:1–8). He writes that the Evangelist includes such details as her name and the perfume to highlight how "Mary had such a thirst for Christ that she 'wiped his feet with her hair,' seeking to unite to herself more firmly the spiritual blessing [Eucharist] that comes from his holy flesh. Indeed, she often sat at Christ's feet intently and without distraction and was drawn into kinship with him."⁴³⁹ Not only is Mary's inward disposition one of desire for Christ, but also her outward behavior expresses this "thirst," thus offering Mary as an example of the kind of integral faith discussed early in the chapter. So if people "have the desire to be stronger than decay and to strip off death itself, which fell on us because of transgression, they will have to come to participation in the one who can give life, who both destroys decay and nullifies death."⁴⁴⁰ Death and decay are defeated only by Christ in his death and resurrection, as we saw in Chapter 4. If one desires freedom from these two enemies of creation, one must freely choose to receive Christ in both faith and life, inner disposition and outer expression.

⁴³⁹ CJ 7.fragmenta (Maxwell 2, 82), Pusey 2, 263–64: "εἶχε δίψαν ἡ Μαρία περὶ τὸν Χριστὸν, ὅτι ἐξέμαξε τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ταῖς ἰδίαις θριξὶ, ζητοῦσα τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας σαρκὸς πνευματικὴν εὐλογίαν προσηλῶσαι πρὸς αὐτὴν γνησιότερον· καὶ γὰρ (264) πολλαχοῦ φαίνεται θερμότερον τῷ Χριστῷ προσεδρεύουσα καὶ ἀπερισπάστως, τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπισπωμένη οἰκειότητα."

⁴⁴⁰ CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 229), Pusey 1, 514: "εἴπερ ἔχουσι θελητὸν τὸ κρείττους εἶναι τῆς φθορᾶς, καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν ἐκ παραβάσεως ἐπισκῆψαντα θάνατον ἀποδύσασθαι, δεήσει βαδίζειν αὐτοὺς εἰς μετάληψιν τοῦ ζωοποιεῖν ἰσχύοντος, καὶ ἀφανίζοντος μὲν τὴν φθορὰν, καταργούντος δὲ καὶ τὸν θάνατον·"

Cyril uses eucharistic reception as a key aspect of the final judgment, where those who choose to receive are separated from those who choose to reject.⁴⁴¹ This separation is rooted in Christ's own words, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have eternal life in you" (Jn 6:53). Cyril explains, "They remain completely without a share or a taste of life in holiness and blessedness who have not received Jesus through the mystical blessing."⁴⁴² Eucharistic reception is an act of faith in Christ's words, hope for the eternal life that he promises, and love through voluntary obedience to his command (cf. Jn 14:15). Eucharistic reception is the means by which a person is united with Christ, by taking his body and blood and being "mixed together, as it were, and mingled with him through participation so that they are found in Christ, and Christ in them."⁴⁴³ Given that the fundamental understanding of the grace of the Eucharist is that it conveys life through participation in Christ himself, the free choice to receive or to reject the Eucharist is of ultimate consequence insofar as it exemplifies one's desire for eternal life with and in Christ, or the opposite.

Because the eucharistic elements contain the power to give life, Cyril believes that one ought to receive them well. This means two things: first, that one receive frequently, and second, that one receive confidently. Cyril chastises those who would refrain from receiving the Eucharist out of an excess of piety, or out of an over-developed sense of unworthiness. He urges

those who are baptized and have tasted grace [to] know that if they go to church sluggishly and barely at all, if they stay away for a long time from the blessing [Eucharist] of Christ, if they feign a reverence deserving of punishment, they will,

⁴⁴¹ FL 8.5 (Amidon, FC 118, 148), SC 392, 96.

⁴⁴² CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 236), Pusey 1, 529: "ἀμέτοχοι γὰρ παντελῶς καὶ ἄγευστοι διαμένουσι τῆς ἐν ἁγιασμῷ καὶ μακαριότητι ζωῆς, οἱ διὰ τῆς μυστικῆς εὐλογίας οὐ παραδεξάμενοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν."

⁴⁴³ CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 239), Pusey 1, 535: "συνανακρινάμενος ὥσπερ καὶ ἀναμιγνύμενος αὐτῷ διὰ τῆς μεταλήψεως, ὡς ἐν Χριστῷ μὲν αὐτὸν εὐρίσκεσθαι, Χριστὸν δὲ αὐτῷ πάλιν ἐν αὐτῷ."

by refusing to participate in him mystically, decline to be made alive and exclude themselves from eternal life. This refusal, although it may seem to be the fruit of reverence on their part, turns into a snare and a stumbling block. They should instead hurry to obtain strength and zeal so that they show themselves intent on being cleansed from sin. They should also try to practice the most beautiful way of life and so to run with all boldness to participation in life.⁴⁴⁴

Cyril goes on to ask,

When then will you be worthy? We will reply to whoever says this. When will you present yourself to Christ? If you are always going to be frightened by your stumbling—and you will never stop stumbling (since “who can understand their errors?” as the holy psalmist says)—you will be found completely without participation in the saving sanctification. Therefore, you should decide to live a more reverent life in accordance with the law and so participate in the blessing, believing it to drive away not only death but also our diseases.⁴⁴⁵

This concern over unworthy reception of the Eucharist is not entirely unwarranted, however; Paul warns against partaking in an unworthy manner (1 Cor 11:27). Cyril insists that one ought to cleanse and purify oneself from sin “lest, taking hold of the sacred mysteries with unwashed hands and dishonoring his divine sacrament in our carelessness, we draw upon our own heads the punishment befitting the impious.”⁴⁴⁶

Nevertheless, Cyril’s response to concern over unworthy reception of the Eucharist

⁴⁴⁴ CJ 3.6 (Maxwell 1, 213), Pusey 1, 476: “οἱ βεβαπτισμένοι καὶ τῆς θείας ἀπογευσάμενοι χάριτος, ὅτι βαδίζοντες μὲν ὀκνηρῶς καὶ μόλις ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, ἀποφοιτῶντες δὲ καὶ εἰς χρόνους μακροὺς τῆς εὐλογίας τῆς διὰ Χριστοῦ, καὶ τὴν ἐπιζήμιον εὐλάβειαν πλαττόμενοι, διὰ τοῦ μὴ βούλεσθαι μετέχειν αὐτοῦ μυστικῶς, ὅτι τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς ἑαυτοὺς ἐκπέμπουσι, ζωοποιεῖσθαι παραιτούμενοι· περιτρέπεται δὲ εἰς παγίδα καὶ εἰς σκάνδαλον, καίτοι καρπὸς εὐλαβείας δοκοῦσά πως εἶναι παρ’ αὐτοῖς, ἡ παραίτησις. χρὴν γὰρ δὴ μᾶλλον ἐπείγεσθαι τὴν ἐνοῦσαν αὐτοῖς εἰσκομίζειν δύναμιν τε καὶ προθυμίαν, ὅπως ἂν φαίνοντο γοργοὶ πρὸς ἀποκάθαρσιν ἁμαρτίας, καὶ πειρᾶσθαι μᾶλλον ἀστειοτάτην ἐπιτηδεύειν τοῦ βίου τὴν ἀγωγὴν, τρέχειν τε οὕτω λοιπὸν καὶ σφόδρα τεθαρρήκōτως εἰς μετάληψιν τῆς ζωῆς.”

⁴⁴⁵ CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 239), Pusey 1, 536: “Πότε τοίνυν ἄξιός ἐστι, καὶ παρ’ ἡμῶν ὁ τοῦτο λέγων ἀκούσεται, πότε σαυτὸν παραστήσεις τῷ Χριστῷ; εἰ γὰρ μέλλοις αἰεὶ καταπτοεῖσθαι τοῖς ὀλισθήμασιν, ὀλισθάνων δὲ οὐκ ἀποπαύσῃ· “Τίς γὰρ συνήσει παραπτώματα,” κατὰ τὸν ἅγιον ψαλμοδόν, ἀμέτοχος εὐρεθήσῃ παντελῶς τοῦ διασώζοντος ἁγιασμοῦ. οὐκοῦν λογιῇ μὲν εὐσεβέστερον σύννομον ἐπιτηδεύειν βίον, μεταλήψῃ δὲ οὕτω τῆς εὐλογίας, οὐ θανάτου μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν νοσημάτων ἀποκρουστικὴν εἶναι πιστεύσας.”

⁴⁴⁶ FL 19.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 89), PG 77, 824A “ἵνα μὴ ἀνίπτοις χειρσὶ τῶν ἱερῶν ἀπτόμενοι, καὶ τὸ θεῖον αὐτοῦ μυστήριον ἀτιμελῶς ἀτιμάζοντες, τὴν τοῖς ἀνοσίοις πρέπουσαν κόλασιν αὐτοὶ ταῖς ἰδίαις ἐπαντλήσωμεν κεφαλαῖς.”

would be to urge a person toward more wholesome living, rather than away from receiving the very thing that has the power to strengthen one in the effort.

Finally, Cyril argues that eucharistic reception is expressive of orthodox faith, especially as summarized in the proclamation of Thomas on Easter evening, “My Lord and my God” (Jn 20:28). We saw earlier in Section 6.1 *Orthodox Doctrine* that the most important tenet of faith is the death of Jesus. Only on that foundation does the resurrection have meaning (cf. 1 Cor 15:17). Furthermore, if neither the death nor the resurrection were real and true, then there can be no “hope of everlasting life” or of the “revitalization of human bodies which is achieved by participation in his holy flesh.”⁴⁴⁷ Cyril writes about the interaction between Jesus and Thomas in deeply eucharistic tones.

In the Eucharist, Christ gives his own flesh into the hands of believers, so that

we too may firmly believe that he has truly raised his own temple. It should be quite clear that communion in the mystical blessing is a confession of Christ’s resurrection by what he said when he instituted the pattern of the mystery... Therefore, participation in the holy mysteries is a true confession and remembrance of the Lord’s death and resurrection for us and on our behalf.⁴⁴⁸

Christ commands his disciples to continue in the pattern he established, and obedience to that command is an expression of love (cf. Jn 14:15). Furthermore, participation in the eucharistic remembrance proclaims faith in Christ crucified and risen. And finally, reception of the Eucharist is an act of hope for the fullness of eternal life.

⁴⁴⁷ UC (McGuckin, 58), SC 97, 324: “ἐλπίδα...τῆς ἀτελευτήτου ζωῆς...ἢ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων σωμάτων ζωοποίησις, ἢ κατὰ μέθεξιν τελουμένη τῆς ἀγίας αὐτοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ αἵματος.”

⁴⁴⁸ CJ 12.1 (Maxwell 2, 374), Pusey 3, 145: “ἡμεῖς ἀραρότως πιστεύσωμεν ὅτι τὸν ἴδιον ἀληθῶς ἤγειρε ναόν. ὅτι γὰρ ἡ κοινωνία τῆς μυστικῆς εὐλογίας ὁμολογία τίς ἐστι τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ, σαφὲς ἂν γένοιτο, καὶ μάλα ῥαδίως, δι’ ὧν αὐτὸς ἔφη τὸν τοῦ μυστηρίου τύπον ἐπιτελέσας δι’ ἑαυτοῦ· διακλάσας γὰρ τὸν ἄρτον, καθὰ γέγραπται, διεδίδου, λέγων ‘Τοῦτό μου ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.’ ἔστι τοίνυν ὁμολογία τις ἀληθῆς καὶ ἀνάμνησις τοῦ τεθνάναι τε καὶ ἀναβιῶναι δι’ ἡμᾶς καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὸν Κύριον, τῶν ἀγίων μυστηρίων ἢ μέθεξις.”

6.4 ACTIVE VIRTUE AS EXTERNAL EXPRESSION OF LOVE

Cyril closes each of his *Festal Letters* with an ethical exhortation that explicitly connects articles of faith, and our eschatological hope for eternal life, with virtue and works of charity on the part of the believer. He routinely encourages care for the poor, sick, widows and orphans, prisoners, etc, “because you also are in the body” (Heb 13:3). His urging of loving behavior and action is rooted in a fundamentally empathic equality among human beings as fellow creatures. Even more important, Cyril grounds his calls for virtuous living in the example of Christ, and in the Christian bond with him. The faithful in Christ are called to live lives that are fruitful and expressive of the faith, hope, and love they have in and for Christ. Jonathan Morgan highlights the active role that believers have in the perfection of their *telos*, and he points to the asceticism that runs through Cyril’s *Festal Letters* as a key element in his soteriology. Morgan rightly concludes that Cyril understands the relationship between human and divine activity to be synergistic.⁴⁴⁹ The imitation of Christ is both active and passive: active insofar as believers seek to live according to the ways set forth by Christ himself; passive insofar as believers are conformed by grace to Christ as paradigm and archetype, to be taken up in the next chapter.

In terms of the active imitation of Christ that believers pursue in their own lives, ascetical disciplines including fasting and acts of charity are routinely included in Cyril’s ethical exhortations that appear in the concluding sections of his *Festal Letters*. This is an entirely expected theme for such writings, given that the point of these letters was for

⁴⁴⁹ Jonathan Morgan, “The Role of Asceticism in Deification in Cyril of Alexandria’s *Festal Letters*,” *The Downside Review* 135.3 (2017): 145.

Cyril to announce the date of the Easter celebration, and therefore to call his people to the observance of the Lenten fast. The possibility that Cyril spent as much as five years of his young adulthood studying among the monks of the Nitrian desert would only render his encouragement to ascetical discipline even less surprising.⁴⁵⁰ The discipline of fasting is important to Cyril because it is such a powerful tool in the Christian life. It is beneficial to the whole person. For Cyril, fasting is both remedial and preparatory. It is remedial insofar as it corrects the disordered relationship between flesh and spirit, such that the weakened flesh must yield to the spirit.⁴⁵¹ It has cleansing and healing effects on both body and soul, and Cyril commends especially the Lenten fast, instructing his people “to welcome to our souls, with the liveliest determination, the all-holy fast...to act as a purgative remedy. For it battles against the inordinate movements of the mind, does away with the law that runs riot in the members of the flesh, and lulls the crowd of unruly pleasures in us.”⁴⁵²

Fasting also has a preparatory role. Cyril warns that entry into the holy of holies is prohibited while one is unclean. Ascetical discipline restores purity, thereby preparing one to enter and to contemplate the mysteries of Christ.⁴⁵³ The effect of fasting on one’s capacity to receive knowledge cannot be underestimated. When the spirit is no longer dominated by the flesh, it becomes free to flourish. Cyril writes that fasting “produces those who are concerned for everything that is good, and, by brightening the atmosphere

⁴⁵⁰ McGuckin suggests this tradition may not be conclusively proven. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, 4.

⁴⁵¹ FL 1.3 (Amidon, FC 118, 42), SC 372, 160.

⁴⁵² FL 7.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 126), SC 392, 22: “ἡ μετὰ γοργοῦ τοῦ φρονήματος ἐν βοηθημάτων τάξει καθαίρειν εἰδότων· ταῖς ἑαυτῶν ψυχαῖς τὴν πάνταγνον εἰσοικίζειν νηστείαν...Μάχεται μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ἐκτόποις τοῦ νοῦ κινήμασιν· ἀναιρεῖ δὲ τὸν ἐν τοῖς μέλεσι τῆς σαρκὸς ἀγριαίνοντα νόμον· καὶ τὸν ὄχλον τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἀτιθάσσω ἡδονῶν κατευνάζουσα, μονονουχὶ μέγα τι καὶ διαπρύσιον ἀναβοῶσά φησι.”

⁴⁵³ FL 9.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 156), SC 392, 126.

of the mind, introduces the beloved light of the true vision of God, through which alone one may gain the correct and unobtainable knowledge of the sacred doctrines.”⁴⁵⁴ This benefit can be seen in the examples of both Moses and John the Baptist. Cyril describes fasting as the means by which Moses was made ready to stand before God, and the reason Jesus declared John the Baptist the greatest. Fasting develops and strengthens all the virtues. It is “the imitation of the angelic way of life [and] the fountain of temperance, the source of continence, the banishment of lust.”⁴⁵⁵

Virtues, generally speaking, are grounded in love, and therefore have God as their source. As Morgan observes, Cyril’s understanding of virtue is inseparable from that of “god-likeness.”⁴⁵⁶ Cyril holds that virtuous living, full of active charity toward one’s neighbors, is an imitation of Christ. This is because “he who is the fruit of love will himself also be love, since the Son of the Father is like the one he is from. Therefore, he will be shown forth in our lives chiefly through love, and he engraves on us the mark of fellowship with him in virtues, which is to hold fast to love for one another.”⁴⁵⁷ Cyril goes on to conclude that any boasting in one’s own ascetical accomplishments is in vain if it is not tied together with acts of charity toward one’s neighbors. He says instead that “the boast of love is the face and image of Christ the Savior in us.”⁴⁵⁸ Christ is himself

⁴⁵⁴ FL 24.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 138), PG 77, 889C: “καὶ ἀπαξ ἀπλῶς παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ καθίστησιν ἐπιμελητὰς, καὶ τὸν τῆς διανοίας αἰθέρα καταλαμπρύνουσα, τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς θεοπτίας ἀξιέραστον φῶς εἰσοικίζεσθαι ποιεῖ. Δι’ οὗπερ ἂν τις καὶ μόνου τὴν ὀρθὴν καὶ ἀνεπίδεκτον τῶν ἱερῶν δογμάτων ἐπιστήμην κερδανεῖ.”

⁴⁵⁵ FL 1.4 (Amidon, FC 118, 42), SC 372, 162: “τῆς ἰσαγγέλου πολιτείας τὸ μίμημα, σωφροσύνης πηγὴ, ἐγκρατείας ἀρχή, λαγνείας ἀναίρεσις.”

⁴⁵⁶ Morgan, “The Role of Asceticism,” 146.

⁴⁵⁷ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 140), Pusey 2, 389: “αὐτὸς περ ἔσται τῆς ἀγάπης ὁ καρπὸς, ἀγάπη καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπάρχων κατὰ τὸν ἐξ οὗπερ ἐστὶ Πατὴρ ὁ Υἱὸς, διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης μάλιστα ταῖς ἡμετέραις ψυχαῖς ἐνημανθήσεται, καὶ τῆς οἰκειότητος τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐγχαράττει τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τὰ γνωρίσματα, τὸ ἀπρὶς ἔχεσθαι τῆς φιλαλληλίας.”

⁴⁵⁸ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 141), Pusey 2, 391: “πρόσωπον οὖν ἄρα καὶ εἰκὼν ἐν ἡμῖν τοῦ Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ, τῆς ἀγάπης τὸ καύχημα.”

the model of active charity, and this model is enjoined on the faithful in the new commandment that he issues, that his disciples love as he has loved.

Cyril returns to Philippians 2:5–11 and 2 Corinthians 8:9 to illustrate the way in which Christ’s love was made manifest. In contrast to the law that requires that one love neighbors as oneself, Cyril writes that Jesus loved neighbor more than self: “Otherwise he would not have descended to our humble state when he was in the form of and equal to God the Father, nor would he have undergone such a bitter death of the flesh for us...Nor would he have become poor when he was rich if he did not love us very much, even more than himself.”⁴⁵⁹ This is the manner of life that Christ commends to those who choose to follow him. In behaving with active charity, one behaves in imitation of Christ, whose virtue and love are perfect. Moreover, a refusal to act in charity, particularly toward those who are suffering in poverty, is a grievous fault. Not only does Cyril refer to it as cruel and inhuman, but “a bestial idea, hateful to God, and repellent to that nature that loves mercy.”⁴⁶⁰

Cyril commends love toward those who suffer, and especially toward the poor, chiefly because this is the pattern established by Christ in the Incarnation. He entered into our condition in order to help us. Cyril’s understanding of active charity is quite intimate. Based on the example of Christ, who “shared our poverty, in order that, by subjecting himself to his own laws, he might persuade us to hasten straight to every sort of virtue,”⁴⁶¹ Cyril urges his readers and hearers to enter into the experiences endured by

⁴⁵⁹ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 139), Pusey 2, 386: “οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐν μορφῇ καὶ ἰσότητι τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς ὑπάρχων πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν κατέβη ταπείνωσιν, οὐδ’ ἂν ὑπέστη πικρὸν οὕτως ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὸν τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατον...οὐδ’ ἂν ἐπτόχευσε πλούσιος ὢν, εἰ μὴ πολὺ λίαν ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς ὑπὲρ ἑαυτόν.”

⁴⁶⁰ FL 19.3 (Amidon, FC 127, 94), PG 77, 832A: “θηριοπρεπὲς τὸ φρόνημα καὶ Θεῷ κατεστυγημένον, καὶ μαχομένην ἔχον τὴν φιλοικτίρμονα φύσιν.”

⁴⁶¹ FL 27.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 172), PG 77, 937B–C: “συνεπτόχευσεν ἡμῖν, ἵνα θεσμοῖς ἰδίοις ὑπενεγκῶν, εὐθὺ μὲν ἀπάσης ἀρετῆς ἀναπείσῃ τρέχειν.”

those in their midst. This is an act of intimate solidarity rather than mere benefaction. This is not to diminish the role and importance of almsgiving, simply to highlight the heightened intensity of relationship between giver and recipient. Indeed, Cyril's portrayal of ideal Christian charity evokes the Incarnation itself. Perhaps the clearest example where Cyril exhorts to this kind of solidarity appears in *Festal Letter 24* (436): "Let us be distressed at the misery of the needy...let us share the tears of those in trouble, let us show mercy to those in prison, and let us share the suffering of those in infirmity, reviving them with every possible form of care, and, in a word, practicing every form of virtue."⁴⁶² Cyril's notion of what it means to engage in good deeds, or to behave virtuously, is taken directly from the model and paradigm of Jesus Christ. And so to act in these ways is a demonstration of one's own desire to follow him and to conform one's life to his so far as that is possible.

Finally, charitable activity is presented in terms of sacrifice, thank offering, and even worship. This occurs regularly in the *Festal Letters*. So, for example, the concluding ethical exhortation in *Festal Letter 4* (416) presents virtue and acts of charity by appealing to the necessity "to render deepest thanks, and to offer to God, as a sort of just return for having cherished us and loved us so."⁴⁶³ And in another, he encourages us to "honor our benefactor in return with gifts of equal value...[to] honor our Savior with the brave deeds of our works...as we make this thing a distinguished offering and a truly

⁴⁶² FL 24.4 (Amidon, FC 127, 145), PG 77, 901A: "Ταῖς τῶν δεομένων ταλαιπωρίαις ἐπιστυγνάσωμεν. Ἀνοιξώμεν τοῖς ἐν θλίψει τὸ σπλάγχνον, ἐποικτείρωμεν ὀρφανούς, ἀνακτησώμεθα χήρας, τῶν ἐν θλίψει τὸ δάκρυον μερισώμεθα, τοὺς ἐν δεσμοῖς ἐλεήσωμεν, τοῖς ἐν ἀρρώστιας συναλγήσωμεν, ταῖς ἐνδεχομέναις θεραπείαις αὐτοὺς ἀνακτώμενοι, καὶ ἀπαξαιπῶς πᾶν εἶδος ἐπιτηδεύοντες ἀρετῆς."

⁴⁶³ FL 4.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 81), SC 372, 274: "πῶς οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον ἡμᾶς μεγάλα μὲν ποιεῖσθαι τὰ εὐχαριστήρια προσάγειν δὲ τῷ τετιμηκότῳ Θεῷ, καὶ οὕτως ἡμᾶς ἀγαπήσαντι, καθάπερ τινὰ δικαίαν ἀμοιβήν."

spiritual sacrifice.”⁴⁶⁴ Human acts of charity reflect our gratitude to God for such tremendous generosity.

In his *Festal Letter 2* (415), Cyril lays out his interpretation of Levitical laws governing offerings and sacrifices. He argues that virtuous Christian lives are gifts to be offered to Christ in thanksgiving for his death. And he interprets the various details about what should be offered, and how those offerings should be made, in terms of Christian service. He reads Leviticus 2:1 regarding a grain offering, which includes flour, oil, and incense, in a spiritual manner. The flour stands for the many virtues that contribute to one piety, just as all the bits of flour contribute to one loaf of bread. The oil that one is to pour on the flour signifies good cheer, joy, and hope. And finally, the frankincense symbolizes “the fragrance arising from good deeds.”⁴⁶⁵ Cyril goes on to address several additional details that appear in Leviticus 2:11–13, namely the instructions that the flour should be free from leaven and honey, but should include salt. The leaven symbolizes vice, while the honey symbolizes the seeming sweetness of sinful pleasures. On the other hand, the requirement of salt stands for reasoning, good sense, and divine fear that ought to season “the minds of God’s ministers.”⁴⁶⁶ Cyril continues in this vein as he progresses through the Levitical instructions.

When taking up the laws concerning holocausts (Lev 6:1–2), Cyril reads them as referring to our own self-offering to God. Those who give themselves wholly to God are rightly called holocausts, and the detail about leaving the offering on the altar for the

⁴⁶⁴ FL 13.3 (Amidon, FC 127, 10), SC 434, 104–106: “ἰσοστάθμοις δωροφορίαις ἀντιτιμῶντες τὸν εὐεργέτην... τοῖς ἐξ ἔργων ἀνδραγαθήμασι τὸν ἑαυτῶν Σωτῆρα καταγεραίρωμεν, ἐκπρεπὲς ἀνάθημα καὶ θυσίαν ὄντως πνευματικὴν τὸ χρῆμα ποιοῦμενοι.”

⁴⁶⁵ FL 2.4 (Amidon, FC 118, 56), SC 372, 202: “ἐπιπαττόμενος τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων εὐωδίαν παραδηλοῖ.”

⁴⁶⁶ FL 2.4 (Amidon, FC 118, 57), SC 372, 206: “τὴν διάνοιαν τῶν ἱερουργούντων Θεῷ.”

whole night signifies that such people give themselves for a whole lifetime, allowing the fire of the Holy Spirit to burn in them continually. They are enjoined not to allow that fire to cool through the inclination toward sin or duplicity or any other breakdown in the integral faith that Cyril so vigorously promotes.⁴⁶⁷ The idea that charitable activity should be so intimately tied to worship and the offering of sacrifices of thanksgiving is quite natural to Cyril, as indeed to the Christian community in general. He teaches about the law requiring payment of the half-shekel tribute for the sanctuary (Ex 30:13) when taking up the story of Jesus, Peter, and the fish with the shekel in its mouth (Mt 17:24–27). Cyril urges that we “consider worship to be a kind of tribute and spiritual fruit bearing and say that it is a form of service...Worship is a sort of gate and road for service by works since it is the beginning of servitude toward God.”⁴⁶⁸ Hence the inward disposition of love for God and neighbor are tied together with outward acts of service to God and to neighbor.

⁴⁶⁷ FL 2.5 (Amidon, FC 118, 59), SC 372, 210–12.

⁴⁶⁸ CJ 2.5 (Maxwell, CJ 1.126), Pusey 1, 283: “ὡς τέλος καὶ καρποφορίαν πνευματικὴν λογιούμεθα τὴν προσκύνησιν, καὶ λατρείας εἶδος ὑπάρχειν ἐροῦμεν αὐτήν...πύλη γὰρ ὥσπερ τις ἐστὶ καὶ ὁδὸς τῆς ἐν ἔργοις λατρείας ἢ προσκύνησις, ἀρχὴν ἔχουσα δουλείας τῆς ὡς πρὸς Θεόν.”

7.0 BEING MADE IMITATORS OF CHRIST

Before any discussion of divine grace, human freedom, and their interactions can begin, it is important to make clear that the whole project of laying out the human role is grounded in the reality presented in Chapter 1 that humanity was and is utterly incapable of attaining our *telos* apart from God. We saw that the Incarnation itself is the only means by which this human perfection is possible because of the solidarity that Christ has with us through his humanity, and with God through his divinity. The ontological and natural instabilities that we endure are surmounted only in the person of Jesus; apart from him, the human *telos* is utterly out of reach. That means that God's initiative and action not only precede our own, they also make true human freedom itself possible. While the exercise of the human will is one of the natural likenesses to God, nevertheless the stability of the Holy Spirit given to humanity in the image of God makes human choice a truly free act. Human instability limits human freedom; conflicting needs and desires have the potential to sway our decision-making, even to the point of compulsion. It is under the tyranny of Satan, with his deceptive manipulations and acts of outright force that the human person is effectively unfree. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, human nature is freed from the grip of the devil and empowered to choose freely. And because of his reception of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, human nature is also strengthened and stabilized such that choosing well becomes possible once again. In short, all of our treatment of grace and freedom, and of their interaction, must be taken with these important caveats in mind.

Thus far, we have placed tremendous emphasis on the role and centrality of the human “yes” to God in Christ, on the importance of freely and deliberately receiving Christ so as to become children of God, such that the question of grace and its own place in this schema arises. The debate surrounding grace and free will, chiefly associated with Augustine and Pelagius in the Latin West, was not unknown to Cyril. Augustine’s and Cyril’s episcopal tenures overlapped for nearly two decades, from Cyril’s elevation in 412 through Augustine’s death in 430. Augustine wrote to Cyril requesting documentation from the synod of Diospolis (415), which had acquitted Pelagius but condemned his teachings. And the Council of Ephesus, at which Cyril had presided, had recorded the name of Pelagius, but apparently had not debated his views.⁴⁶⁹ With respect to typically Pelagian ideas and concerns, Cyril’s *Festal Letter* 6 (418) gives considerable attention to the freedom of the human will. Hans van Loon identifies several of the important movements, which we have discussed earlier in the project. Both Augustine and Cyril argue in favor of free will over against fate, for without freedom there can be no punishment for vice, nor reward for virtue. He also identifies forgetfulness as the root of sin. In both cases, Cyril blames the devil for his role in deceiving humanity into erroneous belief, and in clouding the mind so that looking up toward the good becomes impossible.⁴⁷⁰ And yet Cyril insists that it is God’s power that rescues humanity from these dangers and infirmities.⁴⁷¹ Most helpfully, van Loon highlights the stabilizing power that comes from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, though he does not use quite this language. He makes the point that the Spirit was strengthening Adam “to every sort

⁴⁶⁹ Hans van Loon, “The Pelagian Debate and Cyril of Alexandria’s Theology,” in *Studia Patristica* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 63–64.

⁴⁷⁰ Van Loon, “The Pelagian Debate and Cyril of Alexandria’s Theology,” 71.

⁴⁷¹ Van Loon, “The Pelagian Debate and Cyril of Alexandria’s Theology,” 72.

of virtue.”⁴⁷² Thus the human capacity to exercise free will is dependent upon divine grace through the indwelling Spirit. This is one reason that the baptism of Christ is so important; in it, the Holy Spirit returns to human nature, never to depart. From that moment on, all of humanity receives at least a degree of the Spirit’s stabilizing power to exercise the will with some degree of freedom.

While van Loon focuses on the question of the extent to which the Pelagian controversy impacted Cyril’s theology on the question of grace and free will, Boulnois prefers to address the question of human freedom from a different angle, namely the contexts in which Cyril takes up these questions himself. She is largely uninterested in the specific role of Pelagius, but does address the question of human freedom across a broader spectrum of Cyril’s works than we have addressed here. Nevertheless, her conclusion is that human effort and God’s grace are both necessary and complementary. And she appeals to the example of Judas, who deliberately chose to reject God’s help when he could have sought it out.⁴⁷³

It is because Cyril so strongly prefers divine persuasion over satanic force that the role of the human person in choosing to believe in and receive Christ is so important. Nevertheless, Cyril also recognizes the primacy of grace; without it, there would be nothing to choose in the first place. In the coming sections, what had been presented in terms of the human choice, whether in receiving both baptism and Eucharist, or engaging in acts of charity, will be treated in terms of the grace conveyed to, and operative within, participants. We saw in the previous section that Cyril locates the source of all virtue and love in Christ. Similarly, Cyril looks to the spear piercing Christ’s side, with the flow of

⁴⁷² Van Loon, “The Pelagian Debate and Cyril of Alexandria’s Theology,” 75.

⁴⁷³ Boulnois, “Liberté, origine du mal et prescience divine,” 61–82.

both water and blood, to signify that both baptism and Eucharist find their origin in Jesus himself: “God presented us with this event as an image and first fruits, as it were, of the mystical blessing [Eucharist] and holy baptism. After all, holy baptism truly belongs to Christ and comes from Christ, and the power of the mystical blessing [Eucharist] springs from his holy flesh.”⁴⁷⁴ On the one hand, the acts of submitting to baptism, or of consuming the Eucharist, or of extending charity, are external expressions of faith, hope, and love, while on the other hand, they are also expressive of human consent to the activity of God in and through these behaviors and rites of the Church. It is to this divine activity that we now turn.

7.1 BAPTISMAL GRACE

The previous section argued for the critical place of human exercise of free choice in the Christian faith and life. In that context, participation in baptism was presented as the outward expression of the faith one has adopted. Yet the fact remains that baptism acts upon the candidate. Just as the Scriptures and the work of Christ possess both remedial and preparatory functions, so also does baptism. In terms of remediation, Cyril describes baptism as freeing us from the weight and power of our sinfulness, reclaiming us from the tyranny of the devil, and restoring us to our primal state. Baptism is remedial in that it corrects past wrongs. On the other hand, Cyril discusses the gift of the Holy Spirit and what that gift enables in us in terms of preparation. The gift of the Holy Spirit,

⁴⁷⁴ CJ 12 (Maxwell 2, 354), Pusey 3, 103: “τῆς μυστικῆς εὐλογίας καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος εἰκόνα καὶ ἀπαρχὴν ὥσπερ τινὰ τιθέντος ἡμῖν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸ γεγεννημένον. Χριστοῦ γὰρ ὄντως ἐστὶ καὶ παρὰ Χριστοῦ τὸ ἅγιον βάπτισμα, καὶ τῆς μυστικῆς εὐλογίας ἡ δύναμις ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας ἡμῖν ἀνέφν σαρκός.”

specifically as pledge, is preparatory for our reception and enjoyment of the ultimate gift of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of that pledge.

7.1.1 Remediation

In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus says that one must be born again of water and Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of heaven (Jn 3:5).⁴⁷⁵ The imagery of new birth suggests a new beginning, a new start, a break with the past and the opportunity to move forward again, but in a new way. Furthermore, the imagery of washing makes concrete the erasure of the past and its evidence and effects. The presence of dirt or filth tells the story of where one has been and what one has done, while its removal also signifies a fresh start. Cyril refers to baptism as the “bath of rebirth” (τοῦ λουτροῦ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας)⁴⁷⁶ that overpowers the tyranny of sin and the devil. He identifies it as the means by which Christ “washed us of the defilement of our failings of the past.”⁴⁷⁷ In addition to the language of water and washing, Cyril also appeals to that of fire, especially as conveyed by John the Baptist, who contrasted his own baptism with that of Jesus, who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matt 3:11). Cyril takes this reference to fire to mean that the Holy Spirit burns away all that is “rankly overgrown” (ὕλομανοῦσαν) in our souls and “devours what is like useless matter, consuming the pollution of sin.”⁴⁷⁸ Through both water and fire imagery, Cyril makes the point that baptism has a fundamentally cleansing character and power.

⁴⁷⁵ Cyril’s treatment of this pericope appears in CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 96–104), Pusey 1, 216–232.

⁴⁷⁶ FL 1.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 50), SC 372, 182.

⁴⁷⁷ FL 12.6 (Amidon, FC 118, 234), SC 434, 76: “τῶν πάλαι πταισμάτων ἀπονίψας τὸν μολυσμὸν·

⁴⁷⁸ FL 30.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 198), PG 77, “τότε δὴ τότε πυρὸς εἰσπεσοῦσα δίκην. καθάπερ ἄχρηστον ὕλην καταβόσκειται, καὶ δαπανᾷ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τοὺς μολυσμοὺς.”

This cleansing aspect of baptism, this means of “washing away our past failures,”⁴⁷⁹ serves a remedial function. We saw in the discussion of the first couple and their transgression in Chapter 1 that the Holy Spirit fled from them. While Christ’s own baptism welcomed back the Holy Spirit to its dwelling place in human nature, there remains the need for the individual to partake of and benefit from that act. In baptism, the individual is cleansed from past sin and made new once again. Cyril writes that “it is unlawful for the impure to enter into the mansions above but only for those who have a pure conscience through love for Christ and who are sanctified by the Spirit through holy baptism.”⁴⁸⁰ Thus the removal of the impurities of sin in and through baptism is prerequisite to the human ascent into heaven. We see here the integral faith that Cyril had commended, where the inward disposition is united to its outward expression, in the hope that baptismal promises of new life and forgiveness of sins might be fulfilled in the candidate.

Cyril also uses the language and imagery of healing in speaking of the ways in which baptism acts on those who participate in it. This, too, is a remedial function, insofar as healing removes disease or injury and restores health and wholeness. The kind of healing that is offered in baptism is two-fold. This feature of baptism is tied directly to the kind of creature we are. Cyril writes,

Since human beings are composite and not simple by nature, mixed from two things—namely, a body with senses and an intellectual soul—they need a twofold healing for the new birth, corresponding to both of the aforementioned. So the human spirit is sanctified by the Spirit, and the body is sanctified by the water, which in turn is also sanctified. Just as water that is poured into a kettle receives an impression of the fire’s power by association with the tips of the flame, so also

⁴⁷⁹ FL 13.3 (Amidon, FC 127, 10), SC 434, 104: “ἀπονίζοντι δὲ τῶν πάλαι πταισμάτων.”

⁴⁸⁰ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 120), Pusey 2, 348: “οὐ γὰρ τοῖς ἀκαθάρτοις εἰς τὰς ἄνω μονὰς εἰσιέναι θέμις, ἀλλὰ τοῖς διὰ τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν ἀγάπης καθαρὸν ἔχουσι τὸ συνειδὸς, καὶ ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Πνεύματι διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος.”

through the activity of the Spirit, perceptible water is transformed into a divine and ineffable power and sanctifies those with whom it comes into contact.⁴⁸¹

The remedy that Christ both provides and commands is adapted to our needs and offers correction to the whole, integrated person.

7.1.2 Preparation

Once the individual baptismal candidate is made clean by the washing away of past sinfulness, and by the rescue from the clutches of the devil, that person is restored to that primal beginning, to the moment when God breathed the Holy Spirit and image of God into the face of the human creature. In baptism, the candidate receives the Holy Spirit as a deposit (ἁρραβὼν). Whereas the first couple could not preserve the Spirit because it was something external and therefore unrooted, now the new Christian receives the capacity to keep and guard the deposit by virtue of the Incarnation of the Word. In Christ, human nature is united to divinity such that the Holy Spirit no longer has reason to flee. This gift inaugurates a new possibility for relationship between the human person and the Holy Spirit. In interpreting Jesus saying that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist (Matt 11:11), Cyril writes that “the least” is “the one who is already baptized, even though that person is not yet outstanding in works.” That person is greater than John insofar as being born of the Holy Spirit is far greater than being born of a human mother. As such, the baptized person “has become a participant in the divine

⁴⁸¹ CJ 2.1 (Maxwell 1, 98), Pusey 1, 219: “ἐπειδὴ γὰρ σύνθετόν τι καὶ οὐχ ἀπλοῦν κατὰ φύσιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἐκ δύο κεκερασμένος, αἰσθητοῦ δηλονότι σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς νοερᾶς, διπλῆς αὐτῷ πρὸς ἀναγέννησιν ἐδέξασε θεραπείας, συγγενῶς πῶς ἐχούσης πρὸς ἅμφω τῶν δεδηλωμένων. Πνεύματι μὲν γὰρ ἀγιάζεται τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ πνεῦμα, ὕδατι δὲ αὐτὸ πάλιν ἡγιασμένῳ, τὸ σῶμα. ὥνπερ γὰρ τρόπον τὸ ἐν τοῖς λέβησιν ἐκχεόμενον ὕδωρ ταῖς τοῦ πυρὸς ὁμιλῆσαν ἀκμαῖς τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ἀναμάττεται, οὕτω διὰ τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνεργείας τὸ αἰσθητὸν ὕδωρ πρὸς θεῖαν τινὰ καὶ ἀπόρρητον μεταστοιχειοῦται δύναμιν, ἀγιάζει τε λοιπὸν τοὺς ἐν οἷς ἂν γένοιτο.”

nature, having the Holy Spirit dwelling in them and now being called a temple of God.”⁴⁸² With the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, the person receives such benefits as illumination and virtuous living, such that the image of Christ is formed and made progressively clearer.⁴⁸³ The Holy Spirit empowers a person to claim and to hold fast to the faith and life that Cyril argues are necessary to the reception of that power to become a child of God.

One of the consequences of the tyranny of Satan as detailed in Chapter 1 was the debilitation of our rational faculties. Cyril offered as evidence the fact that humanity fell into the error of polytheism, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator. By contrast, the Holy Spirit is the one who leads humanity into all truth (Jn 16:13), illuminating the human mind with its own divine light. To make this point, Cyril uses the story of the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:1–26) and interprets the water as the “grace of the Holy Spirit,” who gives “a supply of divine knowledge springing up in them.”⁴⁸⁴ This intellectual illumination leads believers into ever deeper knowledge and understanding of divine doctrines, and protects them against the temptations and distractions offered by heretical teachers. This work of the Holy Spirit strengthens those in whom it dwells to remain steadfast in the “right” and “irreproachable” faith referenced in the previous section. In addition to the power of the Holy Spirit to teach and to lead believers in matters of faith, it also enables fruitfulness in action. In the same story, Cyril

⁴⁸² CJ 5.2 (Maxwell 1, 311), Pusey 1, 697: “καὶ θείας γέγονε φύσεως κοινωνός, ἐνοικοῦν ἔχων ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, καὶ ναὸς ἤδη χρηματίζων Θεοῦ.”

⁴⁸³ FL 10.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 178–79), SC 392, 194–96.

⁴⁸⁴ CJ 2.4 (Maxwell 1, 121), Pusey 1, 272: “τὴν τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος χάριν... ἧς εἴπερ τις γένοιτο μέτοχος, ἀναπηγάζουσιν ἔξει λοιπὸν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τῶν θείων μαθημάτων τὴν χορηγίαν.”

interprets the reference to “living water” to stand for the enlivening power of the Holy Spirit:

Through this gift alone does human nature—though it is nearly parched to its very roots and already rendered dry and barren of all virtue by the evil work of the devil—run back up to the original beauty of its nature. It drinks in the life-giving grace and blooms with all kinds of good things. It springs up into a virtuous habit and sends forth well-nourished branches of love toward God.⁴⁸⁵

When one receives the Holy Spirit in the rite of baptism, one signals one’s willingness for the Holy Spirit to act graciously. For Cyril, the most important preparatory work the Spirit does is to ready us to receive the eucharistic body and blood of Christ, and thereby to receive eternal life in union with God and one another in and through him. For Cyril, the relationship between baptism and Eucharist is perhaps as important as each is in itself. Baptism is the beginning that points beyond itself, both to the Eucharist and to the reality of which the Eucharist is an aid and a foretaste. Cyril uses the narrative of the Israelites crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land as a paradigm for the relationship between baptism and Eucharist. In the wilderness, the Israelites ate manna; once they crossed the river and were circumcised, they kept the Passover, the manna ceased, and they ate the produce of the land. Cyril takes this passage to commend, not physical circumcision, but rather spiritual circumcision. He goes on explain that this circumcision will never take place “as long as we have not yet been carried over the mystical Jordan but are still on the other side of the holy waters [of

⁴⁸⁵ CJ 2.4 (Maxwell 1, 120), Pusey 1, 269: “δι’ ἧς καὶ μόνης ἡ ἀνθρωπότης, καίτοι τοῖς ἐν ὄρεσι πρέμνοις αὐαινομένη παραπλησίως, ξηρά τε ἤδη καὶ πάσης ἄγονος ἀρετῆς ταῖς τοῦ διαβόλου κακουργίαις ἀναδεδειγμένη, πρὸς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐπανατρέχει τῆς φύσεως κάλλος, καὶ τὴν ζωοποιὸν ἐκπίνουσα χάριν, πολυτρόποις ἀγαθῶν ιδέαις περιανθίζεται, καὶ εἰς ἕξιν ἀναβλαστῶσα τὴν φιλόρετον, εὐτραφεστάτους τῆς εἰς Θεὸν ἀγάπης ἀνίστησι κλῶνας.”

baptism].”⁴⁸⁶ When God tells Joshua, “On this day I have removed from you the insult of Egypt” (Josh 5:9), Cyril interprets this to mean that what is removed

was their servitude, their susceptibility to oppression due to weakness and their labor in clay and brick. Do you see from what great evils the power of circumcision, understood spiritually, frees? It snatches the human soul from the hand of the devil. It frees and releases us from sin, which tyrannizes within us. And it renders us superior to all oppression from evil demons... And these are not the only benefits of circumcision; it also makes us partakers in the divine nature through participation in Christ our Savior [in the Eucharist]... It is impossible, after all, to participate in the true lamb who takes away the sin of the world or to find the fresh unleavened food of the gospel proclamation without first crossing the mystical Jordan, receiving circumcision from the living Word and rubbing off, as it were, the insult of Egypt like a stain on the soul.⁴⁸⁷

Baptism is the necessary prerequisite to Eucharist, in part because it embodies the renunciation of the symbolic Egypt—understood as the realm of sin and the devil—and the affirmation of Christ. Only when one has completely rejected even the memory of Egypt, symbolized by the death of the Exodus generation, can one be ready to cross the Jordan and enter the Promised Land. “On the sacramental level, if the Eucharist is the summit to which baptism leads, baptism marks the point of transfer, that initial indwelling of God which makes us in truth, for Cyril, new creations, ‘children of God’, and partakers of the divine nature.”⁴⁸⁸ Another way in which Cyril holds baptism as preparatory for Eucharist comes in his exposition of the post-resurrection appearances of

⁴⁸⁶ CJ 4.7 (Maxwell 1, 286), Pusey 1, 639: “οὐπω τὸν μυστικὸν διαβιβάσθέντες Ἰορδάνην, ἀλλ’ ἐπέκεινα γεγονότες τῶν ἁγίων ὑδάτων.”

⁴⁸⁷ CJ 4.7 (Maxwell 1, 286–87), Pusey 1, 639–40: “τὴν δουλείαν δηλονότι, καὶ τὸ ἐξ ἀσθενείας ἔτοιμον εἰς πλεονεξίαν, καὶ προσέτι πόνους τοὺς ἐπὶ πηλῷ καὶ πλινθείᾳ. ὁρᾷς ὅσων ἀπαλλάττει κακῶν τῆς ἐν πνεύματι νοουμένης περιτομῆς ἡ δύναμις; ἐξέλκει μὲν γὰρ τῆς τοῦ διαβόλου χειρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴν, ἐλευθέραν καὶ ἀνειμένην τῆς τυραννοῦσης ἐν ἡμῖν ἁμαρτίας ἀποτελεῖ, καὶ πλεονεξίας ἀπάσης τῆς ἐκ πονηρῶν δαιμονίων ἀμείνω δεικνύει... καὶ οὐκ ἐν τούτοις ὅλα τὰ ἐκ τῆς περιτομῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ θείας φύσεως ἀποτελεῖ κοινωνοὺς διὰ μετοχῆς τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ... οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐτέρως δύνασθαι μετασχεῖν τοῦ ἁμνοῦ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ τοῦ αἵροντος τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ τὴν ἄζυμόν τε καὶ νέαν τῶν εὐαγγελικῶν κηρυγμάτων εὐρέσθαι τροφήν, μὴ προπαρελθόντας μὲν τὸν μυστικὸν Ἰορδάνην, τὴν δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ζῶντος Λόγου λαβόντας περιτομὴν, καὶ προαποτριψαμένους τρόπον τινά, καθάπερ κηλῖδα ψυχῆς, τὸν ὀνειδισμόν Αἰγύπτου.”

⁴⁸⁸ Keating, “Divinization in Cyril,” 169.

Jesus to Mary Magdalene and Thomas. In his encounter with Mary Magdalene, Jesus tells her not to hold on to him, because he had not yet ascended (Jn 20:17). By contrast, when appearing before Thomas, Jesus invites him to touch him and to put his hand in his side (Jn 20:27). Boulnois has identified Cyril's interpretation of the encounter with Mary Magdalene as original.⁴⁸⁹ Cyril explains that the difference between the two is that Mary had not yet received the Holy Spirit when she desired to touch Jesus, but Thomas had received it, and so was invited to touch the body of Christ.⁴⁹⁰ In this passage, Cyril ties together both of the ways in which Jesus gives the Holy Spirit; Mary is described as receiving it according to the Luke-Acts, post-Ascension outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, while Thomas is described as receiving the Spirit on Easter evening along with the other disciples (despite his physical absence) when Jesus breathed on them (Jn 20:22). The fact of Mary Magdalene's lack of the Spirit at the time of her expressed desire to touch Jesus is taken "as a type of the holy churches and of the mystery concerning himself,"⁴⁹¹ so that those who have not been baptized are not invited to partake in the Eucharist.

Cyril ties Christ's command to Mary to the law of Moses commanding that no uncircumcised person partake of the Passover lamb. Spiritual circumcision happens only when the Spirit dwells within a person "by faith and holy baptism." Cyril continues,

Accordingly we keep from the holy table even those who understand the divinity of Christ and have confessed their faith (that is, the catechumens) when they have not been enriched with the Holy Spirit. After all, he does not dwell in those who are not yet baptized. But once they are made participants in the Holy Spirit, nothing prevents them from touching Christ our Savior. That is why to those who wish to partake in the mystical blessing, the ministers of the divine mysteries

⁴⁸⁹ Marie-Odile Boulnois, "L'eucharistie, mystère d'union," 151.

⁴⁹⁰ CJ 12.1 (Maxwell 2, 374), Pusey 3, 145–46.

⁴⁹¹ CJ 12 (Maxwell 2, 361), Pusey 3, 119: "τύπον ταῖς ἀγίαις ἐκκλησίαις καὶ τῷ καθ' ἑαυτὸν μυστηρίῳ."

announce, “The holy things to the holy people,” teaching that participation in the holy things is appropriate for those who are sanctified by the Spirit.⁴⁹²

Thus the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is inaugurated at baptism has the effect of preparing the person to receive the indwelling of Christ himself, particularly in and through participation in the Eucharist. Keating argues that this relationship whereby baptism is seen as preparatory to Eucharist necessarily makes baptism the pivotal moment of transformation in believers, where they become “new creations, ‘children of God’ and partakers of the divine nature.”⁴⁹³ It is important to bear in mind that, as much as Cyril uses the language that Keating cites here in the sense of what has been accomplished in and for us, nevertheless, Cyril also insists that the moment of baptism is a beginning rather than an end. One must always hold the notion of pledge in mind. All these things have been given, in pledge rather than in fullness. The fulfillment of the pledge comes only at the final judgment.

7.2 EUCHARISTIC GRACE

In the Eucharist, believers receive the body and blood of Christ, and in so doing, receive life itself. Despite the fact that much of the scholarly debate in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries focused on how one ought to interpret Cyril’s eucharistic

⁴⁹² CJ 12 (Maxwell 2, 361–62), Pusey 3, 119: “τοιγάρτοι καὶ τῆς ἱερᾶς τραπέζης ἐξείργομεν καὶ τοὺς ἐγνωκότας μὲν αὐτοῦ τὴν θεότητα καὶ ὁμολογήσαντας ἤδη τὴν πίστιν, τουτέστι, τοὺς ἔτι κατηχουμένους, μὴ μὴν καὶ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα πλουτήσαντας. τοῖς γὰρ οὐπω βεβαπτισμένοις οὐκ ἐνοικεῖ. ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἀποδειχθεῖεν μέτοχοι, τότε καὶ ἅπτεσθαι τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ τὸ κωλύον οὐδέν. τοιγάρτοι καὶ τοῖς μετασχεῖν ἐθέλουσιν εὐλογίας τῆς μυστικῆς, οἱ τῶν θείων μυστηρίων προσφωνοῦσι λειτουργοὶ ΤΑ ἍΓΙΑ ΤΟΙΣ ἍΓΙΟΙΣ, πρεπωδεστάτην εἶναι διδάσκοντες τῶν ἁγίων τὴν μέθεξιν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Πνεύματι.”

⁴⁹³ Keating, “Divinization in Cyril,” 169.

theology with regard to the question of real presence,⁴⁹⁴ this question invites bemusement, given that Cyril offers no equivocation whatsoever in his understanding of the nature of the eucharistic elements; he refers to them as the body and blood of Christ in the most literal sense. Boulnois goes so far as to express astonishment that some scholars could have argued against Cyril's realism.⁴⁹⁵ As Concannon argues, Cyril's Christology is deeply shaped by his eucharistic doctrine. If the union of humanity and divinity in Christ is not true and permanent, such that the Word makes human nature, and therefore human flesh, its own, then the Eucharist is empty of all power. It is only because the flesh is united to the Word who is life itself, thereby receiving the property of life as its own, that the Eucharist has any power to convey life to those who receive it. Cyril argues that "the flesh profits nothing" (Jn 6:63) is true, when taken to mean that the flesh in and of itself offers no benefit. Rather, because the flesh is the Word's very own, it rightly possesses the power to give life.⁴⁹⁶ This "life" ought to be understood in the fullest sense; not only is it physical life, but also spiritual and moral life. Cyril includes as a benefit of eucharistic reception, and thereby of participation in Christ, the strengthening of the human soul, such that resisting temptation and especially the passions becomes possible, through Christ's overthrow of the devil.⁴⁹⁷ Therefore, to receive the Eucharist is to choose to receive Christ and his benefits within oneself. And the chief benefit is life through participation in his body and blood.

The grace of the Eucharist accomplishes a number of things for the person who partakes. First and foremost, eucharistic grace bestows life and incorruptibility, because

⁴⁹⁴ Concannon, "The Eucharist as Source," 318.

⁴⁹⁵ Boulnois, "L'eucharistie, mystère d'union," 149.

⁴⁹⁶ CJ 11.9 (Maxwell 2, 291), Pusey 2, 707.

⁴⁹⁷ FL 10.2 (Amidon, FC 118, 183), SC 392, 206.

the body and blood belong to the Word and therefore receive the Word's own natural powers, activities, and characteristics. In addition, and intimately tied to this first benefit, the grace of the Eucharist unites partakers to Christ, which in turn is the basis for the human union with the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, in short, the perfection of the human *telos*. It is by virtue of our relationship to Christ, as natural Son of God, that we hope to receive the power to become children of God through the grace of divine adoption. These two activities form the primary movements of eucharistic grace.

7.2.1 Primary Movements: Life and Incorruptibility

The grace of the Eucharist bestows life and incorruptibility upon the person who partakes of it. Cyril uses healing stories, such as the raising of the widow's son at Nain (Lk 7:11–17), to highlight the power of Christ's flesh to give life. Cyril explains that this power is not reserved only to the spoken word or command, but resides also in his body. He goes on to argue, “And if through the mere touch of his holy flesh he gives life to that which has decayed, how will we not gain the life-giving blessing more richly when we also taste the blessing? After all, he will surely transform those who participate in the blessing [Eucharist] so that they will have his own good attribute, that is, immortality.”⁴⁹⁸ Cyril is always keen to preserve the unity and single subjectivity of Christ's person, so highlighting the simultaneous and cooperative activity of both word and body in the act of healing supports his position.

⁴⁹⁸ CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 237), Pusey 1, 530–31: “καὶ εἰ διὰ μόνης ἀφῆς τῆς ἁγίας σαρκὸς ζωοποιεῖται τὸ διεφθαρμένον, πῶς οὐχὶ πλουσιωτέραν ἀποκερδανοῦμεν τὴν ζωοποιὸν εὐλογίαν, ὅταν αὐτῆς καὶ ἀπογευσώμεθα; μεταποιήσκει γὰρ πάντως εἰς τὸ ἴδιον ἀγαθόν, τουτέστι τὴν ἀθανασίαν, τοὺς μετεσχηκότας αὐτῆς.”

The gift of life and incorruption to those who receive the Eucharist is of critical importance to Cyril, both in his understanding of the Eucharist and of the person of Christ. Indeed, they are so intimately tied as to be virtually inseparable. For Cyril, the Incarnation makes the Eucharist an efficacious means of grace, while the efficacy of the Eucharist requires that the Incarnation be understood according to Cyril's description. The two understandings mutually reinforce one another. Cyril's approach to these two angles tends to be positive in the *Commentary on John* and negative in *On the Unity of Christ*. By positive, I mean that the gift of life and incorruptibility is possible according to the kind of Christology that Cyril promotes. And by negative, I mean that this gift is not possible according to the Christologies of his opponents.

From the positive angle, Cyril lays out the process by which the body of Christ, given up for all of humanity in the crucifixion, gives life to individual human beings. He explains,

Since the life-giving Word of God has taken up residence in the flesh, he has transformed it so that it has his own good attribute, that is, life. And since, in an ineffable mode of union, he has completely come together with it, he has rendered it life-giving, just as he himself is by nature. For this reason, the body of Christ gives life to those who participate in it. His body drives out death when that body enters those who are dying, and it removes decay since it is fully pregnant with the Word who destroys decay.⁴⁹⁹

The idea of the *communicatio idiomatum*, usually reserved to the relationship between human and divine attributes and their predication to the one Christ,⁵⁰⁰ is expanded and extended to the human individual. In the Incarnation, the Word assumes human nature,

⁴⁹⁹ CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 232), Pusey 1, 520: “ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ὁ ζωοποιὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος ἐνέκηκε τῇ σαρκί, μετεσκεύασεν αὐτὴν εἰς τὸ ἴδιον ἀγαθόν, τουτέστι τὴν ζωὴν, καὶ ὅλος αὐτῇ κατὰ τὸν ἄρρητον τῆς ἐνώσεως λόγον συμβεβηκὼς ζωοποιὸν ἀπέδειξε, καθάπερ οὖν ἐστὶ κατὰ φύσιν αὐτός, διὰ τοῦτο ζωοποιεῖ τοὺς μετέχοντας αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα Χριστοῦ· ἐξελαύνει γὰρ τὸν θάνατον, ὅταν ἐν τοῖς ἀποθνήσκουσι γένηται, καὶ ἐξίστησι τὴν φθορὰν, τὸν τὴν φθορὰν ἀφανίζοντα Λόγον τελείως ὠδῖνον ἐν ἑαυτῷ.”

⁵⁰⁰ McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, 153n45.

thus making human flesh its very own. By virtue of that union, the flesh possesses the divine attribute of life. And because the flesh of Christ is life-giving, when his flesh is united to our own flesh through our consumption of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, our flesh receives that very same divine attribute of life. The important distinction between the two unions, of course, is that Christ's human nature, and therefore his human flesh, had no independent existence prior to the Incarnation, whereas we exist as discrete individuals before entering into eucharistic union. What that means is that, in Christ, there is no separate flesh to receive the attribute of life. It is always the flesh of the Word and therefore always possesses life as its own, by virtue of the union. In our case, however, we do receive the gift of life and incorruptibility because we do not possess either as our own natural quality. Furthermore, as Boulnois rightly points out, we do not receive the capacity to give life or incorruptibility, as the Word's own flesh does. This is because the union of Word with flesh is of a different kind than that between the believer and the eucharistic flesh. We participate in the life and incorruptibility that properly belong to the Incarnate Word as his own natural properties.⁵⁰¹ Cyril writes,

[Christ] is indivisible after the incarnation except for the knowledge that the Word, who comes from the father, and the temple, which comes from the virgin, are not the same in nature. That is because the body is not of the same substance as the Word of God. But they are one by that coming together and ineffable concurrence. And since the flesh of the Savior has become life-giving (in that it has been united to that which is by nature life, namely, the Word from God), when we taste of it, then we have life in ourselves, since we too are united to that flesh just as it is united to the Word who indwells it.⁵⁰²

⁵⁰¹ Boulnois, "L'eucharistie, mystère d'union," 169.

⁵⁰² CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 236), Pusey 1, 529–30: "ἀδιαίρετος γὰρ μετὰ τὴν ἐνανθρώπησιν, πλὴν ὅσον εἰς τὸ εἶδέναι τὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ἦκοντα Λόγον καὶ τὸν ἐκ τῆς παρθένου ναὸν, οὐ ταυτὸν μὲν οὖν ὄντα τῇ φύσει· οὐ γὰρ ὁμοούσιον τῷ ἐκ Θεοῦ Λόγῳ τὸ σῶμα· ἐν δὲ τῇ συνόδῳ καὶ τῇ ἀπερινοήτῳ συνδρομῇ· καὶ ἐπεὶ περ ζῶσποιδος γέγονε τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡ σὰρξ, ἅτε διὰ τῇ κατὰ φύσιν ἡνωμένη ζωῇ, τῷ ἐκ Θεοῦ δηλονότι Λόγῳ, ὅταν αὐτῆς ἀπογενεσώμεθα, τότε τὴν ζωὴν ἔχομεν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς συνενούμενοι καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτῇ, καθάπερ οὖν αὐτῇ τῷ ἐνοικήσαντι Λόγῳ."

From the negative approach, Cyril asks the question, “If the flesh that is united to him, ineffably and in a way that transcends thought or speech did not become the very flesh of the Word, directly, then how could it be understood as life-giving?”⁵⁰³ If the Eucharist is to convey life and incorruptibility, then the body and blood of Christ must possess the power to give life. Cyril argues against the idea that someone other than the Word incarnate calls himself the “living bread” because otherwise the consequence would render Christ untruthful. He concludes with another question, asking, “How could the flesh of anyone else ever give life to the world if it has not become the very flesh of Life, that is of him who is the Word of God the Father?”⁵⁰⁴ Cyril develops this idea further by appealing to the very notion of what it means to give or to bestow something. He believes that true giving is possible only when the thing being given is properly the giver’s own. One can only supply another if one is the source. This idea supports my contention that giving is a properly divine action, while receiving is a properly human one, because God is the source of all things. In terms of eucharistic grace, this means that the giver of life and incorruptibility cannot also have been a recipient of those benefits; rather, life and incorruptibility must truly be one’s own to give or to supply. Cyril makes this point in his defense against Nestorius and argues that it was “the Lord himself who saved us” (Is 63:9 LXX). Cyril charges his opponent with suggesting that the title “Son of Man” refers to someone other than the one savior, “one who is subject to corruption himself, someone who receives life as a gift along with us.”⁵⁰⁵ Cyril concludes his

⁵⁰³ UC (McGuckin, 131), SC 97, 506–508: “Εἰ γὰρ οὐκ ἀμέσως ἰδίᾳ τοῦ Λόγου γέγονεν ἡ ἀπορρήτως αὐτῷ καὶ ὑπὲρ νοῦν καὶ λόγον ἐνωθεῖσα σὰρξ, πῶς ἂν νοοῖτο ζωοποιός;”

⁵⁰⁴ UC (McGuckin, 131), SC 97, 508: Πῶς δ’ ἂν καὶ ζωοποιήσῃε τὸν κόσμον ἢ ἐτέρου τινὸς σὰρξ, εἰ μὴ γέγονεν ἰδίᾳ τῆς ζωῆς, δῆλον δὲ ὅτι τοῦ ἐκ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ὄντος Λόγου.”

⁵⁰⁵ UC (McGuckin, 132), SC 97, 510: “ἐνὸς τῶν ὑπὸ φθοράν, χάριτι μεθ’ ἡμῶν λαβόντος τὸ ζῆν.”

christological argument by appealing to the Eucharist as the life-giving flesh of Christ. That flesh could only have become life-giving, and therefore of benefit to those who receive it, “except that it became the very flesh of the Word who gives life to all things.”⁵⁰⁶

In his exposition of John 6:35, “Whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst,” Cyril first takes up the question of thirst by looking back to the conversation Jesus has with the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:1–30). In that discourse, the water that Jesus promises to give is identified as “either the sanctification of the Spirit or the divine and Holy Spirit himself.”⁵⁰⁷ Hence, thirst is tied to the absence either of the Holy Spirit or of the Spirit’s work of sanctification. Cyril continues by taking up the question of hunger. He writes that ordinary hunger, which leads people to provide for their bodily needs to keep death at bay, will become obsolete thanks to their “participation of his holy body and blood, which raise a person completely to incorruptibility.” Hence, they will never hunger. Rather,

The holy body of Christ then gives life to those whom it enters and preserves them to incorruptibility when it is mixed with our bodies. After all, it is understood to be the body of none other than him who is life by nature. It has in itself the full power of the Word, who is united to it. It is endowed with the Word’s qualities, as it were, or rather it is filled with his activity by which all things receive life and are kept in existence.⁵⁰⁸

There is a sense, then, in which participation in the Eucharist, grounded as it is in baptismal preparation, fulfills the promise of Christ that both hunger and thirst will come

⁵⁰⁶ UC (McGuckin, 132), SC 97, 510: “εἰ μὴ γέγονεν ἰδίᾳ τοῦ ζωοποιούντος τὰ πάντα Λόγου.”

⁵⁰⁷ CJ 3.6 (Maxwell, CJ 1.212), Pusey 1, 475: “ἔοικε δὲ πάλιν ὕδωρ ὀνομάζειν ἐν τούτοις, τὸν διὰ Πνεύματος ἁγιασμόν, ἢ αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖόν τε καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα.”

⁵⁰⁸ CJ 3.6 (Maxwell 1, 213), Pusey 1, 475: “ζωοποιεῖ τοιγαροῦν τὸ ἅγιον σῶμα Χριστοῦ τοὺς ἐν οἷς ἂν γένοιτο, καὶ συνέχει πρὸς ἀφθαρσίαν, τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἀνακιννάμενον σώμασι. σῶμα γὰρ οὐχ ἑτέρου τινός, ἀλλ’ αὐτῆς νοεῖται τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ζωῆς, ὅλην ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῇ τὴν τοῦ ἐνωθέντος Λόγου δύναμιν, καὶ πεποιωμένον ὥσπερ, μᾶλλον δὲ ἤδη καὶ ἀναπεπλησμένον τῆς ἐνεργείας αὐτοῦ, δι’ ἧς τὰ πάντα ζωοποιεῖται καὶ πρὸς τὸ εἶναι φυλάττεται.”

to an end because he “nourishes us to eternal life both by supplying us with the Holy Spirit and by participation in his own flesh, placing into us participation with God and destroying death that comes from the ancient curse.”⁵⁰⁹

Cyril’s way of speaking of the grace of the Eucharist in giving life and incorruptibility to those who partake also includes language that looks backward, to the restoration of the original state of human nature, as well as forward to the resurrection to eternal life. So much of what we have seen of Cyril’s discussion of the grace of life and incorruptibility has a timeless quality to it. And yet we should not overlook what appears time-bound. After all, Cyril suggests that the Eucharist will come to an end, just as its type in the manna came to an end once the people crossed into the Promised Land.⁵¹⁰ Cyril credits the Eucharist as the means by which Christ would “remold the whole living being completely unto eternal life and render humanity, which was created to exist forever, superior to death.”⁵¹¹ This power of the Eucharist is something that Cyril ardently commends, explaining that those who freely choose to partake “may now be made participants of the divine nature and thus be raised to incorruptibility and life and be remolded into the original form of our nature.”⁵¹² Restoration to the original created state is part of the process that was outlined in the previous chapter, and such remediation is prerequisite to the perfection of the human *telos*. Yet Boulnois places excessive emphasis on restoration in arguing for the impact of union with God: “it is always in the

⁵⁰⁹ CJ 3.6 (Maxwell 1, 211–12), Pusey 1, 473: “ἀποτρέφων ἡμᾶς εἰς μακραίωνα ζωὴν, διὰ τε τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος καὶ μεθέξει τῆς ἰδίας σαρκὸς, ἐντιθείσης ἡμῖν τὴν Θεοῦ μετοχὴν, καὶ νεκρότητα τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἀρχαίας ἀφανιζούσης ἀρᾶς.”

⁵¹⁰ CJ 3.6 (Maxwell 1, 211–12), Pusey 1, 472–73.

⁵¹¹ CJ 3.6 (Maxwell 1, 211), Pusey 1, 472: “ὅλον ἐξ ὅλου τὸ ζῶν εἰς ζωὴν ἀναπλάττων τὴν αἰώνιον, καὶ θανάτου κρείττονα τὸν εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἀεὶ πεποιημένον ἄνθρωπον ἀποδεικνύς.”

⁵¹² CJ 3.6 (Maxwell 1, 214), Pusey 1, 479: “ἵνα τῆς εὐλογίας μετεσχηκότες τῆς ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, κοινωνοὶ μὲν ἤδη τῆς θείας ἀποτελοῦντο φύσεως, ἀνακομίζοιντο δὲ οὕτως εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ ζωὴν, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς φύσεως μεταπλάττοντο σχῆμα.”

perspective of man's return to the first state before the fall that union with God takes on its full importance."⁵¹³ Rather, Cyril argues that it is the partaking of the Eucharist, which unites believers to Christ through his life-giving flesh, that gives believers the hope and confidence that "we will surely be raised."⁵¹⁴ The hope of the Eucharist points to the eschatological union with Christ that is begun and preserved in this life until it is made permanent in the next.

7.2.2 Primary Movements: Union

In Chapter 4, I demonstrated how the Incarnation is the principle of Christ's role as mediator between human beings and God, insofar as Christ's human nature is the point of solidarity with all of humanity. There is, then, a union between Christ and every human being at the level of shared or common human nature. In the Eucharist, though, union with Christ becomes available to the individual human person. The one who partakes of the Eucharist receives Christ's body, which creates a mutual incorporation where Christ is in the person and the person is in Christ. Boulnois has argued convincingly that the eucharistic union between Christ and the partaker is intertwined with, and indeed dependent upon, both the Christological union of the Word with its flesh, and the union among the divine persons of the Trinity. She articulates the important distinctions between these unions as a way of highlighting the power of the Eucharist to join believers both to Christ and to one another. This eucharistic union is the most challenging because it draws together what is inherently separate by virtue of our circumscription in bodies.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹³ Boulnois, "L'eucharistie, mystère d'union," 153. "c'est toujours dans la perspective du retour à l'état premier de l'homme avant la chute que l'union à Dieu prend toute son importance."

⁵¹⁴ CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 238), Pusey 1, 533: "ἀναστησόμεθα πάντως."

⁵¹⁵ Boulnois, "L'eucharistie, mystère d'union," 147.

Cyril employs several images to convey the idea of mutual incorporation, including the vine and its branches, two pieces of wax melted together, and yeast in a lump of bread dough. The first image of the vine and branches (Jn 15:1–8) is based on the idea that eucharistic participation constitutes a mutual abiding in Christ (Jn 6:56). And it is through this organic union that life itself flows from Christ the vine to the variety of human branches. Moreover, this union with Christ imparts the Holy Spirit’s “power for bearing spiritual fruit.”⁵¹⁶ In the second image, two distinct pieces of wax are combined and then melted, resulting in one new piece of wax. Cyril explains that participation in the Eucharist is similar in that the two pieces of wax are now indistinguishable. Such union is necessary so that the bestowal on human nature of incorruptibility and life might take place.⁵¹⁷ And finally, Cyril uses the image of yeast in bread dough, where the yeast is the Eucharist and the dough is the person:

Just as Paul says, ‘A little yeast⁵¹⁸ leavens the whole lump,’ so also the least portion of the blessing [Eucharist] mixes our whole body into itself and fills us with its own activity. In this way Christ comes to be in us, and we also in him, since it would indeed be true to say that the yeast is in the whole lump [of dough], and the lump, by the same reasoning, comes to be in all the yeast.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 212), Pusey 2, 538: “δύναμιν εἰς καρποφορίαν πνευματικὴν”

⁵¹⁷ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 214), Pusey 2, 542.

⁵¹⁸ It is important to remember that Cyril uses images and metaphors in a variety of ways to make a variety of points. In one instance, he may use an image such as yeast in a negative way to illustrate impurity, for example. Yet in another instance, such as this one, he may use the same image to make quite a different point. Readers of Cyril should take care to follow his analogies only so far as he intends them to go. Pressing them further usually proves problematic on one way or another. See, for example, McKinion, *Words, Images, and the Mystery of Christ*, 76–79.

⁵¹⁹ CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 239), Pusey 1, 535: “ὥσπερ οὖν ὁ Παῦλος φησιν, ‘ὅτι μικρὰ ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα ζυμοῖ,’ οὕτως ὀλιγοστή πάλιν εὐλογία σύμπαν ἡμῶν εἰς ἑαυτὴν ἀναφύρει τὸ σῶμα, καὶ τῆς ἰδίας ἐνεργείας ἀναπληροῖ, οὕτω τε ἐν ἡμῖν γίνεται Χριστὸς, καὶ ἡμεῖς αὖ πάλιν ἐν αὐτῷ. καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἀληθεύων ἐρεῖ τις ὅτι καὶ ἐν παντὶ μὲν ἐστὶν ἡ ζύμη τοῦ φυράματος, καὶ τὸ φύραμα δὲ κατὰ τὸν ἴσον λόγον ἐν ὅλῃ γίνεται τῇ ζύμῃ.”

This way of speaking of union with Christ is especially helpful in dealing with the question of bodily union. Participation in the Eucharist not only unites believers to Christ's own body, but also to one another.

We are all united in the one Christ through his holy body since we receive the one indivisible body in our own bodies, and so we owe our members to him rather than to ourselves... And when we come into participation with his holy body, we obtain a bodily union... Christ is the bond of union because he is God and a human being in the same person.⁵²⁰

Boulnois notes that this imagery of melted wax and of yeast in dough was problematic when applied to the christological union, but helpful when applied to the eucharistic union. This is because “mixture” in Christology jeopardizes the distinctions between human and divine natures in the union. But the eucharistic union is one of participation, and so “mixing” suggests something altogether different.⁵²¹ Boulnois concludes that the Eucharist “transforms the obstacle of corporeality, a factor of separation, as the supreme means of union.”⁵²²

This bond of union is not limited to the body; rather, because Christ is one person, both human and divine, whatever union we have with him because of his flesh also brings about union because of his divinity. It is the Word's own flesh that partakers of the Eucharist receive into themselves. And the Word is the supplier of the Spirit, who is the basis for spiritual union: “When the one Spirit dwells in us, the one God and Father of all will be in us through his Son, gathering all who participate in the Spirit into unity with one another and with himself... We are not only human, but we are called sons of God

⁵²⁰ CJ 11.11 (Maxwell 2, 304–5), Pusey 2, 735–36: “ἐνὶ γὰρ οἱ πάντες ἐνούμενοι τῷ Χριστῷ διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου σώματος, ἅτε δὴ τὸν ἕνα λαβόντες καὶ ἀδιαίρετον ἐν ἰδίοις σώμασιν, αὐτῷ δὴ μᾶλλον ἢ περ οὖν ἑαυτοῖς τὰ ἴδια χρεωστοῦμεν μέλη... ὅτι δὲ καὶ τὴν κατὰ σῶμα νοουμένην ἔνωσιν... Χριστὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ τῆς ἐνότητος σύνδεσμος, Θεὸς τε ὑπάρχων ἐν ταῦτῳ καὶ ἄνθρωπος.”

⁵²¹ Boulnois, “L'eucharistie, mystère d'union,” 166.

⁵²² Boulnois, “L'eucharistie, mystère d'union,” 172: “Elle transforme ainsi l'obstacle de la corporéité, facteur de séparation, en moyen suprême d'union.”

and heavenly men because we have been made sharers in the divine nature.”⁵²³ The grace of the Eucharist, then, creates union between partakers and Christ, and through him, creates union with Father and Spirit. Cyril appeals to the critical role of Christ as mediator, “uniting us to himself since he is a human being, and to God his Father since he is God by nature.”⁵²⁴ Thus the union between partakers and Christ is both bodily and spiritual, and the eucharistic reception of Christ amounts to nothing less than the glorification of human nature and the human person “by becoming participants and sharers in the nature that is above all.”⁵²⁵

7.2.3 Secondary Movements

Cyril also identifies, to a lesser degree, several other benefits of eucharistic grace. These include quelling the passions as a means of healing what has become ill and injured, and kindling “reverence toward God” (τὴν εἰς Θεὸν εὐλάβειαν).⁵²⁶ In his discussion of Jesus using his saliva to heal the blind man (Jn 9:1–12), Cyril refers to eucharistic grace as illumination.⁵²⁷ Here, Cyril points out that Jesus could have healed with a mere word, but chose instead to demonstrate the power of his flesh to give sight to the blind, thereby “teaching that his body is the supplier of illumination even with a mere touch. That is

⁵²³ CJ 11.11 (Maxwell 2, 305), Pusey 2, 737: “ἐνὸς γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐναυλιζομένου τοῦ Πνεύματος, εἷς ὁ τῶν ὅλων Πατὴρ ἐν ἡμῖν ἔσται Θεὸς δι’ Υἱοῦ πρὸς ἐνότητα συνέχων, τὴν εἰς ἄλληλα καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν, τὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος μέτοχα... οὐκ ἄνθρωποι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ υἱοὶ Θεοῦ καὶ οὐράνιοι χρηματίζοντες ἄνθρωποι, διὰ τὸ τῆς θείας φύσεως ἀποπεφάνθαι κοινωνοὺς.”

⁵²⁴ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 306), Pusey 3, 3: “ἑαυτοῦ μὲν ἡμᾶς ἐξαρτήσας ὡς ἄνθρωπος, Θεῷ δὲ ὡς Θεὸς ἐνυπάρχων φυσικῶς τῷ ἰδίῳ γεννήτορι.”

⁵²⁵ CJ 11.12 (Maxwell 2, 306), Pusey 3, 3: “τῆς ὑπὲρ πάντα φύσεως μέτοχοι καὶ κοινωνοὶ γεγονότες.”

⁵²⁶ CJ 4.2 (Maxwell 1, 239), Pusey 1, 536.

⁵²⁷ “Illumination” usually refers to baptism, but here Cyril uses it to express the power specifically of Christ’s body, which gives light and life to those who receive Christ’s body in the Eucharist.

because it is the body of the true light, as we have said.”⁵²⁸ Christ’s body has no power in itself to illuminate; it is only because it is the body of the Word that it can supply this benefit. And finally, Cyril identifies divine assistance, especially in terms of protection from the assaults of the devil, as a grace given to believers in the Eucharist. He writes of Satan’s strategy of attacking the weakest aspect of a person, and of targeting especially those unaided by eucharistic grace. This grace “most of all is the effective antidote to the murderous poison of the devil.”⁵²⁹ He goes on to explain the devil’s haste in driving people to act as quickly as possible, with the departure of Judas from the Last Supper (Jn 13:30) as a prime example. Cyril describes how Satan

forces Judas, who was under his control, to proceed to such an unholy act immediately after receiving the bread. He was probably afraid of his repentance as well as the power of the blessing [Eucharist], lest this, shining like a light in the heart of the man, might persuade him to choose to do good or at least give birth to an honest mind in a man who was seduced into betrayal.⁵³⁰

In this discussion of the power of the Eucharist to defend against the devil, we also see Cyril contrast the divine and satanic modes of operation; Satan’s behavior is characterized with language of force, control, and seduction, whereas that of grace with persuasion. Here again, we must note the importance, for Cyril, of human freedom, even in the context of the power of grace to work in us.

⁵²⁸ CJ 6.1 (Maxwell 2, 32), Pusey 2, 158: “διδάσκων ὅτι καὶ φωτισμοῦ πρόξενον καὶ διὰ ψιλῆς τῆς ἀφῆς τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἐστὶ. σῶμα γάρ ἐστι φωτὸς ἀληθινοῦ, καθάπερ εἰρήκαμεν.”

⁵²⁹ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 130), Pusey 2, 369: “καταργεῖ γὰρ μάλιστα δὴ τοῦτο τοῦ διαβόλου τὸν ἀνδροκτόνον ἰόν.”

⁵³⁰ CJ 9 (Maxwell 2, 133), Pusey 2, 375–76: “τὸν Ἰούδαν μετὰ τὸ ψωμίον εὐθὺς ἀναγκάζει λοιπὸν, ὡς ὑπὸ χεῖρα λαβὼν, ἐπὶ τὴν οὕτως ἀνόσιον ἰέναι πρᾶξιν, δεδιὼς κατὰ γε τὸ εἶκος ὁμοῦ τῇ μεταγνώσει καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῆς εὐλογίας δύναμιν, μὴ ἄρα πως ἐν τῇ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καρδίᾳ φωτὸς ἀναλάμψασα δίκην, ἀγαθουργεῖν ἀναπείσῃ προελέσθαι μᾶλλον αὐτὸν, ἢ γοῦν τὸ φρόνημα τὸ γνήσιον ἐντέκη, τῷ καὶ προδοῦναι λοιπὸν ἀναπεπεισμένῳ.”

7.3 GRACE FOR VIRTUE AND GOOD WORKS

The evangelical way of life requires active charity toward one's neighbor, not in the sense that such works alone could ever win one a place in heaven, but rather as the means by which faith in Christ is made manifest in the individual. Good works, then, are the outgrowth of faith in Christ nurtured by the Holy Spirit. As such, these acts of charity are dependent upon the presence and action of divine grace. Cyril uses a number of images to convey the idea that the believer succeeds with, rather than apart from, God's grace. In terms of the struggle between flesh and spirit, and between vice and virtue, Cyril uses the imagery of armor and weaponry. For example, Cyril exhorts, "we must be wont to resist the pleasures that lead to wickedness, and to do so quite vigorously, and to battle against the passions once we have strapped on the armor of the Spirit."⁵³¹ And again, "But those whose armor is the fear of God all but laugh at the attacks of such passions, saying, 'The Lord is my help, and I will not fear what flesh may do to me.'"⁵³²

With this imagery of armor, grace serves a protective role, but the fight still belongs to the believer. Yet Cyril also writes in terms where the believer is presented entirely passively. For example, he uses the story of the three young men in the fiery furnace (Dan 3:8–30) to illustrate the power of divine grace working in us.

For an angel entered the fiery furnace with Hananiah and his companions, tamed the flames, and unexpectedly persuaded the fire to yield to the human bodies. And when Christ has come into our mind and heart through the Holy Spirit, he will certainly lull the savage flames of perverse desire, and, rendering us illustrious

⁵³¹ FL 18.1 (Amidon, FC 127, 75–76), PG 77, 804B: "Χρὴ γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἀντανίστασθαι φιλεῖν, καὶ μάλα νεανικῶς, ταῖς εἰς φαυλότητα καλοῦσαις ἡδοναῖς, καὶ ταῖς τοῦ πνεύματος παντευχίαις ἐνηρμοσμένους καταστρατεύεσθαι τῶν παθῶν."

⁵³² FL 21.3 (Amidon, FC 127, 106), PG 77, 845C–D: "Ἄλλ' οἱ τῷ θεῷ φόβῳ τεθωρακισμένοι, τὰς τῶν τοιούτων παθῶν ἐφόδους μονονουχί γελῶντες, φασί· «Κύριος ἐμοὶ βοηθός, καὶ οὐ φοβηθήσομαι τί ποιήσῃ μοι σάρξ.»"

over the demons' schemes, make us citizens of heaven, and widen the path of every virtue for us.⁵³³

More frequently, however, Cyril writes about divine grace and human effort in a cooperative manner, where the grace enables and empowers the human activity.

Morgan's assessment of the synergistic quality of Cyril's soteriology, while rightly identifying both human and divine activity, offers too rigid a relationship between the two. He offers that what the work of Christ accomplishes is completed by human effort in response.⁵³⁴ While I agree with his broadstrokes description, I would argue that the relationship is far more dynamic and interactive than he suggests. As we will see in Chapter 7, divine grace works in and through believers, especially as they participate in baptism and eucharist. Despite my slight objection, Morgan correctly highlights that God's activity does indeed preceed and enable human response.

Cyril writes about the arrangement of the Ten Commandments in such a way as to highlight the primacy of faith over works, "so that we may not think that we are justified by works or expect that the ungrudging bounty of God is a fruit of our own labors, but rather that we have it by faith. That is why before the commands concerning the reverent way of life, grace has entered by faith as the immediate neighbor of the good things for which we hope."⁵³⁵ In keeping with the discussion of the commandments, Cyril contrasts

⁵³³ FL 18.2 (Amidon, FC 127, 79), PG 77, 808D–809A: "Ἀγγελος μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ἀμφὶ τὸν Ἀνανίαν συνεισβεβληκῶς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρὸς καθημέρου τὴν φλόγα, καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων σωμάτων ἡττᾶσθαι τὸ πῦρ παραδόξως ἀνέπειθεν. Ἡμῖν δὲ εἰς νοῦν καὶ καρδίαν γεγονῶς ὁ Χριστὸς διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, κατευνάσει πάντως τῶν ἀτόπων ἐπιθυμιῶν τὴν ἀτίθασσον φλόγα, καὶ τῆς τῶν δαιμονίων ἐπιβουλῆς ἀποφύνας κρείττονας, οὐρανοῦ πολί-τας ἐργάσεται, καὶ ἀπάσης ἡμῖν ἀρετῆς κατευρύνει τρίβον."

⁵³⁴ Morgan, "The Role of Asceticism," 147.

⁵³⁵ CJ 4.6 (Maxwell, CJ 1.278), Pusey 1, 621: "ἵνα μὴ ἐξ ἔργου δικαιοῦσθαι νομίζωμεν, μηδὲ τῶν οἰκείων πόνων καρπὸν τὴν ἄφθονον τοῦ Θεοῦ μεγαλοδωρεάν, ἀλλ' ἐκ πίστεως μᾶλλον ἑαυτοῖς ἔσεσθαι προσδοκῶμεν. διὰ τοῦτο πρὸ τῶν νόμων τῆς κατ' εὐσέβειαν πολιτείας, γείτων εὐθὺς τῇ πίστει τῶν ἐν ἐλπίσιν ἀγαθῶν ἡ χάρις εἰσβέβηκε."

the Sabbath rest on the seventh day with the significance of the eighth day in explaining the timing commanded for circumcision of newborn boys:

Resting from passions seems to lie somewhat within our powers (since we may cease from evil by inclining our will to the better), but being freed from passions is not at all in our powers; rather, that would be a work that is proper to Christ, who suffered for us in order to refashion everyone to newness of life. Therefore, circumcision was appropriately assigned the eighth day, the renewer day, so to speak, because it ushers in the time of the resurrection, while rest received the seventh day, its neighbor that is a little behind. That is because rest, which is temporary and happens at will, falls a little short of the complete cutting off of passions.⁵³⁶

The reality, for Cyril, is that Christ is the source of all virtue and the supplier, “through the action of the Holy Spirit and the salvific cross,”⁵³⁷ of all power to perform good works. And so to live virtuously and to engage in all kinds of charity is “the imitation of [Christ] which is possible for us.”⁵³⁸

Cyril’s most developed discussion of the relationship between divine grace and human action relies on the Johannine discourse of Jesus as vine and his followers as branches (Jn 15:1–11). It is here that we see both the necessity of faith in Christ and union with him through the Holy Spirit, and also the critical role that Cyril ascribes to human freedom. As much as this imagery of the vine and branches is organic, and the relationships between root, vine, and branches are somewhat obvious in themselves, nevertheless, Cyril insists that the branches choose to be united to the vine, and to receive

⁵³⁶ CJ 4.6 (Maxwell 1, 288), Pusey 1, 643–44: “ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἀργῆσαι πάθους, ἔχει τινὰ μοῖραν τοῦ καὶ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν κεῖσθαι δοκεῖν· καταλήξομεν γὰρ τοῦ κακοῦ τοῖς ἀμείνοσι τῶν ιδίων θελημάτων ἐπιδιδόντες τὴν ῥοπήν· τὸ δὲ ἀπαλλάττεσθαι πάθους, οὐχὶ πάντως ἐφ’ ἡμῖν, ἔργον δ’ ἂν εἴη πρέπον ὄντως Χριστῷ τῷ παθόντι ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα καὶ πάντας ἀναβρύθμῃσιν πρὸς καινότητα ζωῆς. διάτοι τοῦτο τὴν μὲν ὀγδόην ἢ περιτομὴν πρεπόντως ἀπεκληρώσατο, τὸν ἀνακαινιστὴν, ἵν’ οὕτως εἴπω, τῆς ἀναστάσεως εἰσκομίζουσα καιρόν. γείτονα δὲ τὴν ὀπίσω βραχὺ, τὴν ἐβδόμην, ἢ ἀργία. λείπεται γὰρ πῶς καὶ ὀπίσω κεῖται βραχὺ τῆς ὁλοκλήρου τῶν παθῶν ἀποτομῆς, ἢ πρόσκαιρός τε καὶ κατὰ θέλησιν ἀργία.”

⁵³⁷ FL 4.3 (Amidon, FC 118, 74), SC 372, 254: “διὰ τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος καὶ τοῦ σωτηρίου σταυροῦ.”

⁵³⁸ FL 7.1 (Amidon, FC 118, 127), SC 392, 26: “τὴν ἐγχωροῦσαν...μίμησιν.”

the nourishment of the sap that runs throughout, such that they bear fruit. The “Holy Spirit is what unites us to Christ our Savior. The union with the vine of the branches that proceed from it belongs to the faculty of choice, and the vine’s union with us is relational. By a good choice, we have drawn near through faith and have become his offspring, receiving the honor of adoption from him.”⁵³⁹ It is necessary that human freedom allows for the positive or negative response to the divine invitation into union and fellowship; the alternative, that of forced union, would be highly offensive. Not only does the individual branch freely choose to be united to the vine, but it also freely chooses whether to allow the sap to flow in and through it. The union is by faith, and what flows through is the fruitfulness of good works. Cyril ascribes the power to perform acts of charity to divine grace, that sap that flows through the branches. So it is never the case that the branch performs good works apart from the vine; after all, Jesus says, “Apart from me, you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). Nevertheless, one must freely choose to allow that power to work in and through oneself. Cyril explains,

Our union with Christ is habitual, and the power of the connection is by free choice. The union perfects us by faith and love. Faith dwells in our souls, supplying a pure manifestation of the knowledge of God, while the way of love requires us to keep the command that he gave us... We must realize, then, that if we are united to him by faith and we practice the form of our connection with only barren confessions of faith, and we do not clench the bond of union with works of love, we will indeed be branches, but dead and unfruitful ones. For without works faith is dead, as the saint says.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁹ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 210), Pusey 2, 534: “τὸ γὰρ συνενῶσαν ἡμᾶς τῷ Σωτῆρι Χριστῷ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἐστίν. προαιρετικὴ μὲν γὰρ ἡ πρὸς τὴν ἄμπελον κόλλησις τῶν προσιόντων αὐτῇ, σχετικὴ δὲ παρ’ αὐτῆς ἡ πρὸς ἡμᾶς. ἐκ μὲν γὰρ προαιρέσεως ἀγαθῆς προσεληλύθαμεν ἡμεῖς διὰ τῆς πίστεως, γένος δὲ γεγόναμεν αὐτοῦ τὸ τῆς υἰοθεσίας ἀξίωμα παρ’ αὐτοῦ κομισάμενοι.”

⁵⁴⁰ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 217), Pusey 2, 547–48 “Ἐκτικὴ μὲν ἐστὶν ἡμῶν ἡ κόλλησις πρὸς Χριστὸν καὶ προαιρετικὴν ἔχουσα τῆς συναφείας τὴν δύναμιν, τελειοῦσα δὲ ἀγάπῃ καὶ πίστει. καὶ ἡ μὲν πίστις ταῖς ἡμετέραις εἰσοικίζεται ψυχαῖς, ἀκραιφνῇ τῆς θεογνωσίας παρέχουσα τὴν δήλωσιν· ὁ δὲ τῆς ἀγάπης τρόπος, τῆς παρ’ αὐτοῦ διορισθείσης ἡμῖν ἐντολῆς ἀπαιτεῖ τὴν τήρησιν· οὕτω γὰρ που καὶ αὐτὸς τὸν ἀγαπῶντα δεικνὺς ἔφασκεν Ὁ ἀγαπῶν με τὰς ἐντολάς μου τηρήσει. ἰστέον οὖν ὅτι συνενούμενοι μὲν διὰ πίστεως αὐτῷ, καὶ ἐν ψιλαῖς καὶ μόναις ὁμολογίαις τὸ τῆς κολλήσεως εἶδος ἐπιτηδεύοντες, οὐ μὴν καὶ τοῖς ἐξ

On the other hand, Cyril holds up the image of pregnancy and birth to express how virtue and acts of charity burst forth from the fruitful branches.⁵⁴¹ This imagery conveys well the idea that the vine and branches are related in a kind of kinship with one another, such that the properties of the vine might be shared and passed down to the branches. As a mother nourishes her child, the vine “nourishes [the branches] for godliness and works knowledge in them of every virtue and good work.”⁵⁴² As much as Cyril highlights the centrality and necessity of faith, nevertheless that faith must be lively and fruitful, the evidence of which is active and self-giving love toward one’s neighbor:

Being received among the branches, however, will not suffice for our complete joy or for the sanctification that shows how Christ is sanctifying us. I maintain that in addition we must genuinely follow him with perfect and unfailing love. Indeed, in this love the power of our connection or union in the Spirit would be best maintained and preserved.⁵⁴³

It is the branches that do not bear fruit that are separated from the vine and thrown into the fire. The desire for union with Christ, and the desire to live life in imitation of Christ are matters of human freedom, but the power to effect these things resides in and is supplied by divine grace, that sap flowing from the vine to the branches.

ἀγάπης ἀνδραγαθήμασι τὸν τῆς συναφείας δεσμὸν ἐπισφίγγοντες, κλήματα μὲν ἐσόμεθα, νεκρά δὲ ὅμως καὶ ἄκαρπα. δίχα γὰρ ἔργων ἢ πίστεως νεκρά ἐστὶ, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ ἁγίου φωνήν.”

⁵⁴¹ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 223. Pusey 2, 560.

⁵⁴² CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 211), Pusey 2, 536: “τρέφει δὲ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν, καὶ ἀπάσης αὐτοῖς ἀρετῆς καὶ ἀγαθουργίας εἶδῃσιν ἐνεργάζεται.”

⁵⁴³ CJ 10.2 (Maxwell 2, 222), Pusey 2, 558: “οὐκ ἀρκέσει τοιγαροῦν πρὸς ὀλόκληρον ἡμῖν θυμηδίαν, ἥτοι πρὸς ἀγιασμόν, τὸν ὡς ἐπὶ ἐκθέσει τοῦ ἁγιάζοντος ἡμᾶς Χριστοῦ, τὸ εἰσδεχθῆναι μὲν ὡς ἐν τάξει κλημάτων· χρῆναι δὲ πρὸς τούτῳ φημί, καὶ τὸ διὰ τῆς τελείας τε καὶ ἀνελλιποῦς ἀγάπης γνησίως ἀκολουθεῖν. ἐν γὰρ δὴ τούτῳ μάλιστα καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι καὶ σώζοιτο τῆς ἐν Πνεύματι κολλήσεως νοουμένης ἥτοι συναφείας ἡ δύναμις.”

7.4 CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, I set out to demonstrate how Cyril conceives of the process whereby individual human beings might benefit from the universally efficacious work of Christ on behalf of all of human nature. I argued for the human imitation of Christ, both in an active sense, in which we choose to believe in him and to behave in accordance with that faith, as well as in a passive sense, in which divine grace works in us to conform us to his image. Thus human and divine agency together bring about the human reception of the divine gift in the *oikonomia*. For Cyril, the human being is always free to choose whether to receive or to reject the Christian faith and the activities and practices that constitute the Christian life, especially baptism and Eucharist. At the same time, human beings cannot attain their own *telos* apart from God. Divine grace, understood especially as the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, is absolutely necessary to our perfection. Nevertheless, we desire and consent to that work of the Holy Spirit, freely choosing to be and become its dwelling place, lest the divine respect for human freedom be infringed. For Cyril, the human *telos* is summarized as becoming children of God. And that possibility depends upon both faith and life, the free choice to receive Christ and to believe in his name (Jn 1:12). Whatever union we enjoy in this life, whether through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or the mixing of Christ's flesh with our own, though truly means by which we partake of and participate in the divine life, nevertheless remain partial and provisional. The fullness of human union with God in eternal, familial fellowship, of which the Holy Spirit is given in this life as pledge, is reached only at the final judgment, when our *telos* is brought to its perfection.

CONCLUSION

This purpose of this study was to present a coherent account of Cyril's anthropology. Moreover, the anthropology that emerged is distinctly Christological, grounded as it is in the revelation of human nature and *telos* in the Incarnation. Humanity was created according to the archetype of the Son, and will reach its consummation through willing reception of Christ. We saw that Cyril's Christology and soteriology are bound to one another through the motto, "what is not assumed is not healed." And we saw also that human nature can be identified best in Christ himself, insofar as whatever is assumed must be truly and perfectly human. The revelation of human nature that the Incarnation offers is necessary because the image-archetype dynamic that had functioned well in Eden before the Fall could no longer lead us through reason from ourselves to the divine. So God gave humanity the revelation of human nature and purpose in the forms of the written words of Scripture and the Incarnate Word. These gifts were freely offered to humanity, and could be freely received or rejected. Such reception by humanity of God's gifts took the form of imitation and involved the agency and cooperation of human beings and divine grace. By imitation, human beings both receive Christ and believe in his name, such that they receive power to become children of God (Jn 1:12). This divine

adoption represents the purpose for which human beings were created by God. The key contributions of the study are five-fold:

1. The distinction between human nature and human being. I argued throughout the dissertation that this distinction between what is universal and what is particular is absolutely necessary to a clear understanding of Cyril's anthropology, and this distinction is rooted in his Christology and soteriology. Cyril was adamant that the Word did not assume a human being, but rather assumed human nature. The reason for this Christological distinction has to do with the scope of benefit that each formulation could offer. Cyril believed that, if the Word had assumed a human being, who had an existence prior to and separate from the Word, then only that one human being would benefit from having been assumed by the Word. On the other hand, if the Word assumed human nature, then the benefit of that assumption would extend to all of humankind. This christological distinction extends to an anthropological one, such that universal benefit and particular benefit correspond to nature and individual, respectively. And the reason this distinction is necessary involves the second contribution.

2. The freedom of the human will. Natural human likeness to God finds expression in the capacity that human beings have to choose, to decide, and to direct their own actions. Because this likeness is rooted in our nature, it can never be lost entirely, even though it can suffer injury and damage. In God's dealings with humanity, God does not force or impose, but rather offers, invites, and persuades. Given this respect for human freedom, there must be a means by which Christ's work might be offered to all and for all, but in a way that is never forced. This dilemma is solved through the distinction between human nature and human beings. Human nature has the capacity to choose and decide, but it is

human beings who make choices and decisions. This means that the Incarnation, whereby the Word assumed human nature, could accomplish its purposes with universal efficacy. At the same time, because individual human beings are invited into eternal fellowship with God, they retain the freedom to choose whether to accept that invitation or to reject it. Thus the divine gift is given to all, but it is received only by those who desire it. Human freedom to accept or reject is necessary to the justice of divine judgment, at the end of which human beings will be separated and experience either eternal life with God or eternal death apart from God.

3. *The Image of God as extrinsic to human nature.* One of the most idiosyncratic aspects of Cyril's anthropology is his insistence that the *Imago Dei* is not a constitutive element of human nature, but was rather given by God after the human creature was complete. Cyril located this gift in God's breathing the Holy Spirit into the face of the first human being (Gen 2:7). The image of God could not have been proper to our nature if it was possible to lose it. Cyril insists that only those things that are rooted in our nature cannot be lost. And yet, his presentation of the Fall identifies the loss of the image with the flight of the Holy Spirit as the devastating consequence of sin. The absence of the image of God, the absence of the Holy Spirit, is what characterizes the whole of human life and history until the advent of Christ. It is at his baptism at the Jordan River that Christ receives and retains the Holy Spirit on behalf of all of human nature. Cyril identifies the Son as the only natural image of God, following Colossians 1:15. Yet it is through Christ that we receive the Holy Spirit within us, and are transformed by grace and by our own desires and actions into the image of God, that is, conformed to Christ.

4. *The Holy Spirit as pledge or deposit (ἀρραβών).* Cyril had interpreted the image of God as the Holy Spirit who came to dwell in the first human being when God breathed into his nostrils (Gen 2:7). As a consequence of the first transgression, the Holy Spirit fled from human nature and returned only at the baptism of Jesus, where it remained because of his sinlessness. After the resurrection, Christ gives the Holy Spirit to his disciples when he breathes on them, and then to humanity at large at Pentecost. In Christian baptism, Christ gives the Holy Spirit to the new believers as a pledge of full and permanent sharing in divine life in the heavenly Jerusalem. The Christian faith and life should be understood as the means by which we keep and preserve this treasured gift. As in the parable of the talents, those servants who care wisely for a portion of their master's wealth are rewarded with a larger share. The gift of the Holy Spirit in pledge is intended to bring about fruitfulness and is the principle of growth in faith and virtue. The role of the Holy Spirit is to effect participation in the divine life, especially through the eucharistic reception of the life-giving and sanctifying body and blood of Christ. Again, as in the parable of the talents, at the final judgment, Christ will assess what we have done with our deposit. Those who have freely chosen to preserve and nurture the gift will receive the fullness that union with God of which the gift was a pledge. Conversely, those who refused or neglected or rejected the gift will have even that token taken away from them.

5. *The centrality of the ascension of Christ.* Cyril insists that the ascension of Christ into heaven both reveals and inaugurates the consummation of the human *telos*. Through a variety of images, he describes that ascent as utterly novel and unprecedented. Never before had any human being ever been seen in heaven. The ascension is the chief

evidence that Cyril's account of the human story does not end at a mere restoration of human nature to its original, prelapsarian condition; rather, that restoration constitutes a new beginning. The ascension reveals that God's will for humanity is to bring us into heaven itself, to share freely in intimate and eternal union with the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. And the ascension inaugurates that consummation in that Christ prepares the way for the rest of us to follow. In his own person, Christ presents restored and renewed humanity to the Father, and he does so as the firstfruits (1 Cor 15:20) and the firstborn among many brothers and sisters (Rom 8:29). It is through the ascension of Christ into heaven that the promise is fulfilled: "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (Jn 1:12 NRSV).

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