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THE APPROPRIATION  
OF DIVINE LIFE IN  
CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

*Daniel A. Keating*

OXFORD THEOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS

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# The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria

DANIEL A. KEATING

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## Abbreviations

<i>ACO</i>	<i>Acta Conciliorum œcumenicorum</i>
<i>CCL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i>
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>FC</i>	<i>The Fathers of the Church</i>
<i>GCS</i>	<i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller</i>
<i>JTSNS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies, New Series</i>
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>NPNF</i>	<i>A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de Sciences Religieuses</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
<i>SP</i>	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
<i>SPCK</i>	<i>Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>

# Note on Translation and Citation

All translations of Cyril's New Testament biblical commentaries extant in Greek are my own, unless otherwise noted.

Translations of Cyril's *Commentary on Matthew* are based on the critical edition by Joseph Reuss, *Matthäus-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957).

Translations of Cyril's *Homilies on Luke*, where the Greek text is extant, are based on the critical edition by Joseph Reuss, *Lukas-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984). Where only the Syriac of the *Homilies on Luke* is extant, I adopt the English translation of R. Payne Smith, *A Commentary upon the Gospel according to S. Luke by S. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria*, based upon his own critical edition of the Syrian text. Smith's translation was originally published in two volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1859), and reprinted in one volume (New York: Studion, 1983). I will cite page numbers from the 1983 edition. I have occasionally modified Smith's English translation in order to adjust for archaic expressions. Where only the Syriac text is extant, I have also consulted the Latin translation of Homilies 1–80 by R. M. Tonneau (Louvain: n. pub., 1953), which is based on the revised critical Syriac text edited by J. B. Chabot, *S. Cyrilli Alexandrini Commentarii in Lucam*, i, CSCO 140 (Syriac 70) (Paris: n. pub., 1912).

Translations of Cyril's *Commentary on John*, and of the fragments of his commentaries on Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, and Hebrews are based on the edition of P. E. Pusey, *Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli Archiepiscopi Alexandrini in d. Joannis Evangelium*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1872). For translations of the *Commentary on John*, I have consulted the two-volume English translation of Pusey's edition, *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John by S. Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria*, i, trans. P. E. Pusey (Oxford: James Parker, 1874); ii, trans. Thomas Randell (London: Walter Smith, 1885).

Cyril's biblical commentaries will be cited according to the biblical text under discussion (e.g. Cyril's commentary on John 1: 1 will be cited as *In Jo. 1: 1*). Citations of Cyril's *Homilies on Luke*

will normally include both the reference to the English translation of the more complete Syriac text (R. Payne Smith) and to the critical edition of Greek fragments where applicable (Joseph Reuss). Where a Greek fragment exists for the entirety of the text under discussion, Reuss will be cited first; otherwise Smith will be cited first.

In general, references to the primary text under discussion will be placed in parentheses (according to volume and page number) at the end of the line in the main text. References to supplementary texts will be placed in the footnotes.

# Introduction

It was not otherwise possible for man, being of a nature which perishes, to escape death, unless he recovered that ancient grace, and partook once more of God who holds all things together in being and preserves them in life through the Son in the Spirit. Therefore his Only-Begotten Word has become a partaker of flesh and blood (Heb. 2: 14), that is, he has become man, though being Life by nature, and begotten of the Life that is by nature, that is, of God the Father, so that, having united himself with the flesh which perishes according to the law of its own nature...he might restore it to his own life and render it through himself a partaker of God the Father...And he wears our nature, refashioning it to his own life.

*(In Jo. 14: 20; Pusey, ii. 485–6)*

## Cyril of Alexandria in Context

The name Cyril of Alexandria often elicits, from both scholars and non-specialists alike, an immediate and negative response. He is normally pigeonholed as the antagonist in the Nestorian controversy, and his character is commonly estimated as cunning and vindictive. Only a minority of scholars brighten up at the mention of Cyril, as a man whom they have come to admire and esteem for his contribution to Christian doctrine. Introductory courses in church history and the development of Christian doctrine appear to be partly responsible for this negative assessment of Cyril, branding him as the plotting politician and the infamous and implacable persecutor of Nestorius. When the fine points of the fifth-century Christological controversy are long forgotten, it is this impression of Cyril as an unsavoury figure that remains. Whatever final judgement we may come to, Cyril deserves a better

hearing than this, and it is appropriate to provide here a brief sketch of his life and an estimation of his accomplishments.<sup>1</sup>

The early years of Cyril's life are little known to us. His birth is usually placed around the year 378 in Egypt, and the evidence from the character and quality of his writings suggests that he received both the formal rhetorical education of his day and a very intensive education in the Scripture and selected church Fathers who preceded him.<sup>2</sup> According to Cyril's own testimony (*Ep.* 33. 7), he was a bystander at the deposition of John Chrysostom at the Synod of the Oak in 403, in the company of his uncle, Theophilus, the powerful archbishop of Alexandria who was the prime mover against Chrysostom. Cyril seems never to have doubted the legitimacy of Chrysostom's deposition on disciplinary grounds, though he upheld the orthodoxy of his doctrine and gradually acquiesced in the reinstatement of his reputation.<sup>3</sup>

Cyril succeeded his uncle to the throne of St Mark in 412, amidst rioting and against the wishes of the imperial administration in Alexandria. The first years of his reign were marked by sharp controversies: first he worked to dispossess the Novationist sect; then he quarrelled with the Jewish community in Alexandria, expelling them (temporarily) from the city by force after they led a premeditated attack on certain Christians; and finally, he was implicated at least indirectly in the mob slaying of the Neoplatonist philosopher, Hypatia. To what extent Cyril was the primary instigator in these events, and therefore largely responsible for various acts of rioting and violence, is disputed by scholars. Some commentators (for example, Henry Chadwick and Norman Russell) estimate him as largely continuing the ruthless policies of his uncle, Theophilus, and so implicate him directly in these violent and (at times) illegal actions.<sup>4</sup> Others minimize Cyril's role and responsibility in these events. Lionel Wickham, for

<sup>1</sup> Recent treatments of Cyril's life are by John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 1–125, and Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 3–63.

<sup>2</sup> For Cyril's early life, see E. R. Hardy, 'The Further Education of Cyril of Alexandria (412–44): Questions and Problems', *SP* 17 (1982), 116–22, and Rodolph Yanney, 'Life and Work of Saint Cyril of Alexandria', *Coptic Church Review*, 19 (1998), 17–29. For a reconstruction of Cyril's early education, see McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 4, and Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 4–5.

<sup>3</sup> McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 5–6.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (New York: Penguin, 1967), 194; Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 6–9.

example, views Cyril as distancing himself in important ways from Theophilus's policies,<sup>5</sup> while John McGuckin believes that Cyril as a very young bishop was 'trying to bring order into the ecclesiastical administration, but not entirely able to control the popular forces on which his power base depended'.<sup>6</sup> Given the evident bias of the primary testimony from Socrates, the fifth-century church historian, it is difficult to settle the issue of Cyril's responsibility decisively.<sup>7</sup> No one denies that Cyril was politically astute and able to wield his influence effectively in favour of his positions. He was a man of strong opinions, sure of himself and not given to remorse, and he made enemies. I am not persuaded, however, by the common portrait of Cyril as the cunning 'political animal' whose only aim in life was to advance his own power—and that of the church of Alexandria—by whatever means available. He appears throughout his writings, rather, as a leader dedicated to the truth of the Christian gospel and the advance of the Christian church in the world. His zeal and sense of uprightness are, I believe, real and not feigned. This assessment does not absolve him from whatever responsibility he may bear for his actions against the Novationists, the Jews, the pagans, and even Nestorius, but it does run counter to the image of Cyril as the amoral, Machiavellian plotter.<sup>8</sup> The sheer effort he expended over

<sup>5</sup> Lionel Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup> McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy* 7. Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 266, judges that, in the mobbing of the prefect Orestes in 414/15, 'it even appears that the patriarch Cyril, for all his carefully honed political skills, had very little control over the monastic mob and, instead, only reacted to circumstances created by his mercurial ascetic supporters'. Concerning the murder of Hypatia, Haas writes: 'We will never know if Cyril himself orchestrated the attack, or if, like the assault upon Orestes certain partisans unilaterally "resolved to fight for the patriarch"' (p. 313).

<sup>7</sup> McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy* 7, writes: 'Socrates telescopes the issues together in what becomes generally a gloomy picture, but his account is far from unbiased. He has two axes to grind against Cyril, for he is himself a Novationist sympathiser, and a Constantinopolitan in outlook. Both attitudes prejudice him somewhat in his assessment of Cyril's actions.' Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, notes on the one hand that Socrates was taught by the two pagan grammarians, Helladius and Ammonius, who were personally evicted from Alexandria by Cyril's uncle Theophilus in 391 (pp. 161–3), and on the other that Socrates 'is not entirely free from bias in his presentation of the facts, owing to his animosity toward Cyril for persecuting Nestorius' (p. 308). Cf. also Susan Wessel, 'Socrates' Narrative of Cyril of Alexandria's Episcopal Election', *JTSNS* 52 (2000), 98–103, for Socrates' bias against Cyril due to the former's Novationist sympathies.

<sup>8</sup> In 'Trials of Theodore', *Historical Sketches*, ii (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1885), 353, John Henry Newman acknowledges the failings of Cyril in certain of his ecclesiastical acts, but at the same time upholds his virtue and integrity: 'Cyril's faults were not inconsistent with great and heroic virtues, and these he had. He had faith, firmness, intrepidity, fortitude, endurance, perseverance.'

many years in the production of biblical commentary also belies the common caricature of Cyril. A man who is interested only in furthering his own political influence does not spend his entire career commenting on nearly the whole of the Bible for the training of his clergy and the welfare of his church.

From the time of these early controversies (412–15) until the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy in 428–9, we hear very little of Cyril. During this period he composed extensive biblical commentaries, several dogmatic treatises against the Arians, and his annual festal letters. The monumental *Commentary on John*, a pre-Nestorian work, combines biblical commentary with an anti-Arian orientation, and notably already points to Cyril's concern with a form of 'two-sons' Christology that he later discerned and found to be so offensive in the writing and preaching of Nestorius.<sup>9</sup>

What began in 428 as a local dispute in Constantinople between the newly elected bishop Nestorius and a set of clerics, monks, and members of the royal family eventually escalated into an empire-wide controversy involving all five of the great sees of the ancient world: Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Rome.<sup>10</sup> Though the primary disputants were Cyril and Nestorius, by stages the controversy drew in John of Antioch, Juvenal of Jerusalem, and Pope Celestine of Rome, served by his archdeacon, Leo (later to become Pope Leo). Even the great Augustine in North Africa was issued an imperial invitation—which arrived after his death in 430—to attend the Council to be held in Ephesus. The dispute erupted initially over the propriety of using the term *Theotokos* ('God-bearer'), for the Virgin Mary. At certain points in the controversy, Nestorius grudgingly allowed the use of the term *Theotokos* for the Virgin,

<sup>9</sup> Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 216 n. 26. See e.g. *In Jo. 20: 30–1* (Pusey, iii. 154–5) for Cyril's pre-Nestorian rejection of a 'two-sons' Christology. Henry Chadwick, 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy', *JTSNS* 2 (1951), 150–1, testifies that 'Cyril's theological polemic against the Antiochene school had begun long before Nestorius was brought from his monastery near Antioch to become archbishop of Constantinople', thus providing 'important evidence for Cyril's doctrinal interest in the unity of Christ's Person at a time when questions of ecclesiastical politics do not enter into the picture at all'.

<sup>10</sup> For detailed and well-documented studies of the Nestorian Controversy and the Council of Ephesus, see McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 20–107, and Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 31–56.

but he preached and published a series of sermons against it in 429, and he clearly found it unacceptable for expressing the reality of the Incarnation. He recommended, instead, that the term, *Christotokos* ('Christ-bearer') be used of Mary, to remove any notion that Mary gave birth to the divine nature of the Word. For Cyril, to deny that the Virgin was *Theotokos* was tacitly to deny the true Incarnation of the Word—that it was really the Son of God to whom Mary gave human birth—and so to put in jeopardy our salvation.

The differences between Cyril and Nestorius exemplify—and bring into sharp conflict—broader differences between two schools of Christological thought, the Alexandrian and the Antiochene. The Alexandrian school is broadly defined by scholars to include Athanasius, Didymus, Apollinarius, the Cappadocians, and Cyril; the Antiochene school is normally identified with the names of Eustathius of Antioch, Diodore, Theodore, Nestorius, and Theodoret.<sup>11</sup> While there are certain Christological approaches and tendencies that mark each school of thought, the consistency within each school, as well as the lines that divide them, have often been exaggerated.<sup>12</sup> Each writer, regardless of his school, needs to be evaluated on his own terms.

It may be helpful to see the two Christological traditions as responding in different ways to the Arian polemic against the full divinity of Christ. The Alexandrian response was to uphold the full divinity of the Word incarnate and to magnify the union between the Word and flesh, while at the same time denying that the Word *as divine* was in any sense able to suffer. Rather, it was the divine Word *as man* who 'suffered for our sake and our

<sup>11</sup> John Chrysostom, student of Diodore and friend of Theodore, is associated with the Antiochene school of exegesis, but is curiously more Alexandrian in his Christology. Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2nd edn., trans. J. Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975), 421, concludes of Chrysostom: 'This Antiochene, so persecuted by the Alexandrines, is far more Alexandrine than Antiochene in his christology—a new indication of the care with which we must use a word like "school".'

<sup>12</sup> For example, in his classic study, *Two Ancient Christologies* (London: SPCK, 1954), R. V. Sellers fails to make clear distinctions between members of the two schools and so tends to treat the schools as monolithic entities. As Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 357, 367, has shown, there is a surprising occurrence of Antiochene tendencies among certain Alexandrian writers, and Alexandrian tendencies among certain Antiochene writers. For a critique and suggested revision of the classic Alexandrian–Antiochene model, see John J. O'Keefe, 'Impassible Suffering? Divine Passion and Fifth-Century Christology', *Theological Studies*, 58 (1997), 59.



salvation'. The Alexandrian emphasis is on the unity of Christ and what has aptly been called a 'single subject' Christology. The Antiochene response was to distinguish the Word from the humanity as far as possible without destroying the union, in order to make the human soul of Christ the principle of suffering and to remove from the Word any taint of passibility. The arch-foe of the Antiochenes was Apollinarius who had taught a fusion of the Word with a truncated humanity, and so in the eyes of the Antiochenes had both denied a full humanity in Christ and had implicated the divine Word in human passibility. Both approaches, Alexandrian and Antiochene, sought through different means to uphold the reality of our salvation, while at the same time they sought to preserve the impassibility of God in our salvation.

At the heart of the controversy between Cyril and Nestorius was not a political rivalry but a mare's nest of theological issues, and a conviction by each that the other party was denying something essential to the Christian account of salvation. According to Norman Russell,

despite the disclaimers, each believed that heretical conclusions were necessarily implied by the logic of the other's language about Christ. Cyril, rooted in Athanasian soteriology, could not believe that a Christ who was the result of a merely extrinsic union between the Word and humanity, such as Nestorius seemed to teach, was capable of effecting our salvation. Nestorius, for his part, could only see Cyril's arguments through anti-Apollinarian spectacles. If the Word did not unite himself with a human life that was complete in every respect, he could not be our Saviour.<sup>13</sup>

The sparring between Cyril and Nestorius culminated in the Council of Ephesus in the summer of 431. The final outcome of what was actually a protracted set of events, involving two rival councils and extensive negotiation, was the deposition of Nestorius and the approval of the council, presided over by Cyril, which upheld Mary as *Theotokos*. Actual reconciliation of the two parties (Cyril and the Antiochenes) only occurred two years later with Cyril's signing of the Formula of Reunion, a carefully worded statement of Antiochene origin that acknowledged Mary as *Theotokos*, but also spoke of two natures in Christ after the union. Cyril's

<sup>13</sup> *Cyril of Alexandria*, 39–40.

literary production from this point to the end of his life is largely concerned with justifying to his own allies his signing of the accord with the Antiochenes, and with further explaining and defending his doctrine of Christ.

Cyril died on 27 June 444, despised by some but revered by many others. He left behind him an impressive theological legacy that would, in the years immediately following his death, be the subject of fierce contention at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. It is to one aspect of this theological legacy that the present study is devoted.

## The Appropriation of Divine Life

The subject of this study is the appropriation of divine life, as described and set forth in Cyril's New Testament biblical commentaries. Put in more traditional categories, what follows is an investigation into Cyril's doctrine of divinization, or more precisely, his doctrines of sanctification and divinization.<sup>14</sup> Yet for reasons outlined below, the topic is initially set out, not in terms of divinization, but rather in terms of the appropriation of divine life. In using this phrase, I am attempting to give precedence to Cyril's own manner of formulating our share in the divine life. Cyril's writings are punctuated by what may be called his 'narrative of divine life'.<sup>15</sup> The following two selections exhibit the way in which Cyril employs a narrative of divine life to link the inter-trinitarian life of God with our reception of that life through the Incarnate Word and in the Spirit. The first selection shows that the Father, Son, and Spirit are each in proper order 'Life' by nature, while all created beings, which do not have life in themselves, must receive their life from God:

For God the Father is Life by nature, and as alone being so, he caused the Son to shine forth who also is himself Life; for it could not be

<sup>14</sup> As the study will show, Cyril's primary use of the term 'sanctification' is effectively equivalent to what is normally meant by the term 'divinization', and paired together they capture in more traditional terms the subject of our investigation.

<sup>15</sup> Ezra Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing: An Inquiry into the Eucharistic Doctrine of Cyril of Alexandria* (Uppsala: Borgströms, 1977), 53, observes that 'life' is an important divine attribute in the Alexandrian theological tradition (Origen, Athanasius, Theophilus), but notes that Cyril makes more frequent use of the notion of divine, supernatural life than his predecessors.

otherwise with the Word that proceeds substantially from Life. For he must, I say must, also himself be Life, as being one who sprang forth from Life, from him who begat him. God the Father therefore gives life to all things through the Son in the Holy Spirit. And everything that exists and breathes in heaven and on earth, its existence and life is from God the Father by the Son in the Holy Spirit. Therefore neither the nature of angels, nor anything else whatsoever that was made, nor aught that from non-existence was brought into being, possesses life as the fruit of its own nature. But on the contrary, life proceeds, as I said, from the substance which transcends all, and to it only [Life] belongs, and it is possible that it can give life, because it is Life by nature.<sup>16</sup>

The second selection describes salvation through the eternal Word who is ‘Life’ by nature, and who took our human nature in order to restore it to life and to render us partakers of the divine nature:

It was not otherwise possible for man, being of a nature which perishes, to escape death, unless he recovered that ancient grace, and partook once more of God who holds all things together in being and preserves them in life through the Son in the Spirit. Therefore his Only-Begotten Word has become a partaker of flesh and blood (Heb. 2: 14), that is, he has become man, though being Life by nature, and begotten of the Life that is by nature, that is, of God the Father, so that, having united himself with the flesh which perishes according to the law of its own nature...he might restore it to his own life and render it through himself a partaker of God the Father...And he wears our nature, refashioning it to his own life. And he himself is also in us, for we have all become partakers of him, and have him in ourselves through the Spirit. For this reason we have become ‘partakers of the divine nature’ (2 Pet. 1: 4), and are reckoned as sons, and so too have in ourselves the Father himself through the Son.<sup>17</sup>

Within these densely constructed sentences we find a compressed account of the Trinity, of Creation, of the Incarnation of the Word, and of the sanctifying work of the Spirit, all put at the service of the gift of divine life to the human race. It can rightly be termed a narrative of divine life because of the movement or passage of ‘life’ itself within the narrative of salvation: a movement first from the Father to the Son and the Spirit (who each possess this life by nature), and then through the Son and the Spirit—in Creation and in the Incarnation and redemption—to the human race. This narrative not only depicts salvation as the outworking of the life of the Triune God; it also casts the goal and end of salvation in terms of participation in this same divine life. Cyril can describe salvation under many forms, and he employs the full panoply of biblical language to express what the human

<sup>16</sup> *In Luc.* 22: 17–22 (Smith, 569; Reuss, 209).

<sup>17</sup> *In Jo.* 14: 20 (Pusey, ii. 485–6). Cf. *In Luc.* 8: 49–56 (Smith, 201): ‘For to [Christ], as being life by nature, there is nothing dead.’

race has attained in Christ.<sup>18</sup> But perhaps his most characteristic way of depicting salvation—and the way most comprehensive of his whole theology—is through his narrative of divine life.<sup>19</sup> This emphasis on divine life is neatly displayed in Cyril's commentary on Heb. 1: 3, where in a paraphrase of the Creed of Nicaea, he adds the phrase, 'life from life' to the credal statement: 'For he is true God from true God, light from light, *and equally life from life* (ζωὴν ἐὶ ζωὴν ὡς ὡς)' (emphasis added).<sup>20</sup> And though the specific aim of this study is to trace the soteriological aspect of this narrative (that is to say, the passage of divine life from the Incarnate Christ to the human race), I will keep in view its broader theological structure throughout our investigation, and return to it in the final conclusions.

The term 'appropriation' has been chosen, not in this case because it is Cyril's own preferred term to express our share in the divine life,<sup>21</sup> but because it is capable of expressing in one word the action of both parties involved in the transaction of divine life. The verb 'to appropriate' can mean either 'to make over to any as his own', or 'to take for one's own'.<sup>22</sup> In Cyril's portrayal of salvation, the divine life is appropriated *to* us by Christ, and appropriated *by* us in Christ. The title of this study

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. L. McInerney, 'Soteriological Commonplaces in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Gospel of John', in D. F. Winslow (ed.), *Disciplina Nostra* (Philadelphia: Patristic Foundation, 1979), 179–85.

<sup>19</sup> For variations on Cyril's narrative of divine life, see *In Luc.* 7: 11–15 (Smith, 154–5; Reuss, 73–4); *In Ja.* 6: 32–3 (Pusey, i. 458); 6: 53 (Pusey, i. 529–30); *In Heb.* 3: 1–3 (Pusey, iii. 401); *Dial. Trin.* vii. 655c–d (G. M. deDurand, *Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Dialogues sur la Trinité* 3 vols. (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1976–8), iii. 212, 214); R. F. *ad Aug.* 45 (ACO 1. 1. 5, 59); *Quod Unus* 772c (G. M. deDurand, *Deux dialogues christologiques*, sc 97 (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1964) 494).

<sup>20</sup> Pusey, iii. 367.

<sup>21</sup> Cyril employs the terms 'to appropriate' (οὐκ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ) and 'appropriation' (οὐκ ἐκείνου) in a variety of ways. In one instance, he describes those who belong to Christ as 'those who have been appropriated to him through faith (τοὺς οὐκ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ ἐνταῦθα ἀπὸ πίστεως)' (*In Ja.* 7: 24; Pusey, i. 637), but more commonly he uses these terms to express Christ's own appropriation of human nature and the sufferings that pertain to it. See e.g. *In Ja.* 4: 6 (Pusey, i. 465); *In Heb.* 1: 9 (Pusey, iii. 379); *Ep.* 39. 9 (ACO 1. 1. 4, 19); *Ep.* 50. 10 (ACO 1. 1. 3, 95).

<sup>22</sup> *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), i. 94.

intentionally plays off an equivocal use of the term, ‘appropriation’ in order to indicate Christ's active gift of divine life *to* us, and the active reception of this divine life *by* us. This points to one important conclusion of this study: Christ's active gift of divine life, and our active reception of that life, are both integral to Cyril's understanding of salvation. The use of the term ‘appropriation’ here should not be understood, however, in a technical philosophical sense, according to which our appropriation of divine life could imply that the divine life becomes proper to our human nature. As we shall see, for Cyril our share in the divine life is always by grace, and not by nature.

My reluctance to frame the subject of this study in terms of divinization from the outset stems from Cyril's own very careful and measured use of the technical vocabulary of divinization. I have located only twenty texts or so in Cyril's entire corpus that employ the characteristic vocabulary of divinization (*θεοποιέω* / *θεοποίησις*). The majority of instances are from the Pre-Nestorian period, with the densest concentration of texts found in the *Thesaurus*. Cyril's deployment of this terminology may be divided into three categories: (1) a positive use, (2) a negative use, and (3) an anti-Nestorian use. First, Cyril uses the term ‘divinize’ positively (*a*) to describe the Word's divinizing of his own ‘temple’ in the Incarnation;<sup>23</sup> (*b*) to demonstrate that in order to divinize us both the Word and Spirit must be fully divine;<sup>24</sup> and (*c*) to explain how our nature is sanctified, glorified, and divinized through Christ or through the Holy Spirit.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, Cyril uses this terminology negatively to designate the improper divinizing of an object or human being<sup>26</sup> and to describe what the opponents of Jesus were seeking to denounce him for.<sup>27</sup> Finally, Cyril employs the terminology of divinization in his cut-and-thrust polemic with Nestorius (*a*) to defend a proper understanding of the Word's ‘divinization’ (*θεοποίησις*) of his own flesh, while at the same

<sup>23</sup> *Thes.* 196 (PG 75, 333a); *Thes.* 251 (PG 75, 428c).

<sup>24</sup> *Thes.* 25 (PG 75, 45a); *Thes.* 168 (PG 75, 284b); *Thes.* 289 (PG 75, 492b); *Thes.* 313 (PG 75, 532d); *Thes.* 335 (PG 75, 569c); *Thes.* 349 (PG 75, 592d); *Dial. Trin.* vii. 640a (Durand, *Dialogues sur la Trinité*, iii. 166); and *Dial. Trin.* vii. 644c–d (ibid. iii. 180).

<sup>25</sup> *Thes.* 197 (PG 75, 333c); *Dial. Trin.* v. 640a (Durand, *Dialogues sur la Trinité*, ii. 330).

<sup>26</sup> *In Is.* 2: 2–3 (PG 70, 69a); *In Is.* 40: 23–4 (PG 70, 816c); *In Is.* 44: 13–20 (PG 70, 933a); *In Matt.* 5: 33–5 (Reuss, 172). The fragment listed as *In Jac.* 5: 12 (PG 74, 1012d) is an exact duplicate of *In Matt.* 5: 33–5.

<sup>27</sup> *In Matt.* 22: 34–40 (Reuss, 238–9).

time deflecting Nestorius's criticism that he, Cyril, was claiming an 'apotheosis' (*ἀποθέωσις*) of Christ's flesh, that is, that Christ's flesh became divinity,<sup>28</sup> and (b) to counter-charge Nestorius with reducing the Incarnation to the divinizing (*θεοποιέω*) of a mere man.<sup>29</sup>

It is indeed ironic that Cyril, who refrained in large part from employing this vocabulary to describe our share in the divine life, is often hailed as the theologian of divinization *par excellence*. Jules Gross, for example, writes: 'The doctrine of divinization in Cyril of Alexandria appears, in fact, as the sum of all that the previous Fathers wrote on this subject.'<sup>30</sup> P. B. T. Bilaniuk suggests that Cyril 'probably represents the pinnacle in the development of teaching on *theosis*'.<sup>31</sup> Norman Russell, citing Dalmais, concludes that 'Cyril brings the doctrine of deification...to full maturity.'<sup>32</sup> And Peter Phan declares that 'Cyril's magnificent doctrine on sanctification and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the justified souls recapitulates the whole Greek theology of theopoiesis, deification.'<sup>33</sup> Why then if divinization is so central to his understanding of salvation, does Cyril employ so guardedly a vocabulary that was well established in the Alexandrian theological tradition?<sup>34</sup> In the final conclusions to this study, and in the light of its results, I will present a summary of Cyril's narrative of divine life under the rubric of divinization and offer a proposal to explain his limited use of the characteristic vocabulary.

It may be asked whether the proposed topic for this study—the narrative of divine life—is faithful to the lines of Cyril's own thought. Does it not transgress the flow of the biblical narrative and cut across the various polemical purposes of Cyril's commentaries? Especially with regard to the *Commentary on John*, the primary source of this study, is not the selection and ordering of

<sup>28</sup> *Adv. Nest.* ii. 8–11 (*ACO* 1. 1. 6, 44, 46, 48, 49).

<sup>29</sup> *Scholion* 12 (*ACO* 1. 5, 192); *Ep.* 50. 7–8 (*ACO* 1. 1. 3, 92–3); *Quod Unus* 742d (Durand, *Deux dialogues christologiques*, 396).

<sup>30</sup> *La Divinisation du chrétien d'après les Pères grecs* (Paris: Gabalda, 1938), 297.

<sup>31</sup> 'The Mystery of Theosis or Divinisation', in D. Neiman and M. Schatkin (eds.), *The Heritage of the Early Church*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 195 (1973), 351.

<sup>32</sup> 'The Concept of Deification in the Early Greek Fathers', D.Phil. thesis (Oxford, 1988), 436.

<sup>33</sup> *Grace and the Human Condition* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988), 152.

<sup>34</sup> Russell, 'The Concept of Deification', provides a thorough discussion of the characteristic Christian vocabulary of deification (pp. 14–43), and of the use of this vocabulary in the Alexandrian tradition, inclusive of Clement, Origen, Athanasius, Apollinaris, and Didymus (pp. 221–360).

texts that are necessary for the construction of the narrative of divine life an arbitrary procedure, foreign to the trinitarian, anti-Arian character of this commentary? To the contrary, the narrative of divine life is not an imposition on Cyril's texts; it is rather his own structure for unifying the various biblical texts into a coherent account of salvation. In the *Commentary on John*, Cyril repeatedly inserts into his commentary some form of this narrative, as explanatory of the text at hand. The narrative of divine life is, therefore, Cyril's own overarching manner of reading the biblical narrative which transcends the particular polemical purposes of his biblical commentaries. It is his own exegetical and hermeneutical key for interpreting the whole of Scripture.

## Cyril as Biblical Commentator

During his reign as patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril composed an impressively vast and varied corpus of written work. To the surprise of those who know of Cyril only as the fierce controversialist in the fifth-century Christological debates, the larger portion of this written corpus is biblical commentary, and there are indications that his original production of biblical commentary was significantly greater than what we now possess.<sup>35</sup> Yet, due to Cyril's pivotal role in the Christological controversy and to the struggle over the rights to his theological patrimony at the Council of Chalcedon, his biblical commentaries have been largely cast into the shadows.<sup>36</sup>

This inattention to Cyril's biblical commentaries is doubly regrettable. On the one hand, Cyril's contribution to biblical exegesis as such has not received the attention it deserves, though efforts

<sup>35</sup> Cyril's extant written corpus occupies ten volumes of the *Patrologia Graeca* (vols. 68–77), seven of which contain biblical commentary alone. We possess complete or extensive remains from Cyril's commentaries on the Pentateuch (two topical commentaries on key texts), Isaiah, the 12 Minor Prophets, John, and Luke, and in addition extended fragments on Matthew, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Hebrews. We also possess partial or fragmentary remains of commentaries on the books of Kings, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Acts, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude. Whether Cyril composed a full commentary on all of these books is uncertain.

<sup>36</sup> Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 16, suggests that 'if it had not been for the Nestorian controversy, it is probably as a biblical commentator that Cyril would have been remembered'.

in the past half-century have begun to rectify this deficiency.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, the study of Cyril's Christology has itself been impoverished because it has too often lacked a foundation in his biblical exegesis.<sup>38</sup> The biblical commentaries function as a complement to, and even as a foundation for, Cyril's polemical treatises.<sup>39</sup> His arguments in polemical contexts often appear to be based upon interpretations worked out in his biblical commentaries. Consequently, a renewal of the study of Cyril's biblical commentaries is not only of interest to historians of patristic exegesis; it is also of paramount importance for the theologian who wishes to pursue one or other aspect of Cyril's theology.

If we are to undertake a theological study based on Cyril's biblical commentaries, we should first gain a basic understanding of Cyril's approach to biblical exegesis. In standard accounts of patristic exegesis, he is often labelled as eclectic in his method, combining features of Alexandrian allegorical method with Antiochene literal and historical exegesis. Simonetti claims that in Cyril 'the literal interpretation is highly developed, much more so than in any other Alexandrian exegete'.<sup>40</sup> Cyril's eclecticism is, for Simonetti, the consequence of conflicting tensions: Cyril felt the force of the Antiochene critique of allegory, but he was unwilling to completely abandon the allegorical approach he

<sup>37</sup> The most thorough study of Cyril's exegesis is by Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter of the Old Testament*, *Analecta Biblica*, 2 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1952), and 'The Objects of the Literal and Spiritual Senses of the New Testament according to St. Cyril of Alexandria', *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 63 (1957), 354–74. Other studies in Cyril's exegesis include: Luigi Fatica, *I commenti a Giovanni di Teodoro di Mopsuestia e di Cirillo di Alessandria: Confronto fra metodi esegetici e teologici* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1988); David J. Cassell, 'Cyril of Alexandria and the Science of the Grammarians: A Study in the Setting, Purpose and Emphasis in Cyril's *Commentary on Isaiah*', Ph.D. thesis (University of Virginia, 1992); and Bertrand de Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis* (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's, 1993), i. 241–70.

<sup>38</sup> Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 222, faults Adolph Harnack's interpretation of Cyril's Christology precisely on the grounds that Harnack failed to take proper account of Cyril's biblical commentaries which supply the foundation for his polemic against Nestorius. See also John A. McGuckin, 'Moses and the "Mystery of Christ" in Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis', *Coptic Church Review*, 21 (2000), 25.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Lionel Wickham, 'Symbols of the Incarnation in Cyril of Alexandria', in Margot Schmidt and Carl F. Geyer (eds.), *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1982), 45.

<sup>40</sup> Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis*, trans. J. A. Hughes (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1994), 81.



inherited. Simonetti concludes that Cyril's exegesis lacks wholeness and compactness, and is at points desultory. From a purely methodological point of view, with Alexandrian allegory and Antiochene literalism as the only possible points of reference, this estimation may have some warrant. From what we can ascertain, Cyril had access to and made use of a varied and eclectic set of commentators. Kerrigan suggests that he probably possessed copies of biblical commentaries from Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, Didymus, Apollinarius, and Jerome, and possibly had access as well to commentaries from Basil, John Chrysostom, Theodore, and Theodoret, though dependence is difficult to establish.<sup>41</sup>

To describe Cyril as simply an eclectic exegete, however, is unsatisfactory on two counts. First, the description of patristic exegesis in terms of literal and allegorical methods, exemplified by the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools respectively—which Simonetti largely adopts—has come under sharp and persuasive critique, as being insufficient to describe the variety and complexity of exegetical strategies used by the Fathers.<sup>42</sup> Secondly and more importantly, this methodological assessment of Cyril fails to get to the heart of Cyril's exegetical approach, which is most aptly described as Christological or Christocentric exegesis. Following his mentor, Athanasius, Cyril reads the Bible in terms of its overall *skopos* or purpose, which is the divine plan of salvation culminating in Christ, the Incarnate Word. According to Wilken,

The subject of Cyril's exegesis is never simply the text that is before him, it is always the mystery of Christ. He is less interested in understanding what Moses or Zechariah or Paul or Matthew 'meant' than he is in understanding what Christ means...Christ is Cyril's true subject matter. Yet without the Bible there is no talk of Christ. Cyril knew no other way

<sup>41</sup> Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 249–50. The case for the influence of Jerome, who was himself greatly influenced by Origen and Didymus as well as by the Western tradition of exegesis, is strongly argued by F.-M. Abel, 'Parallélisme exégetique entre S. Jérôme et S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Vivre et Penser*, 1 (1941), 94–199, 212–30, and is further supported by the research of Kerrigan, 435–9.

<sup>42</sup> For this critique, see Frances M. Young, 'The Rhetorical Schools and their Influence on Patristic Exegesis', in Rowan Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 182–99; idem, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 161–213; and John J. O'Keefe, '“A Letter that Killeth”: Toward a Reassessment of Antiochene Exegesis, or Diodore, Theodore, and Theodoret on the Psalms', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 8 (2000), 83–104.

to speak of Christ than in the words of the Bible, and no other way to interpret the words of the Bible than through Christ.<sup>43</sup>

In his reading of the Bible, Cyril distinguishes two fundamental senses, the literal or historical sense (*ἱστορία*)<sup>44</sup> and the spiritual sense (*θεωρία πνευματική*). The literal sense pertains to things perceived by the senses (*τὰ αἰσθητὰ*), that is, to the earthly and human reference of the passage. The spiritual sense pertains to things perceived through and in the Spirit (*τὰ πνευματικά*), and points in some sense to the mystery of Christ.<sup>45</sup> While taking account of the contextual and historical meaning of the law and the prophets, Cyril interprets the Old Testament primarily in terms of its spiritual fulfilment in Christ, using Matt. 5: 17 and John 4: 24 as hermeneutical keys. As Frances Young describes it, 'Cyril means us to understand, then, that not a jot or tittle of the law is taken away, but the whole matter concerns worship in spirit and in truth. God's intentions are graciously set out in scripture if we only read the scriptures aright. But that reading is shaped by a universal paradigm of Fall and Redemption.'<sup>46</sup> Consequently, Cyril reads the events of the Old Testament as models or types of salvation in Christ, and as moral exemplars of the way of life we are to lead in Christ.<sup>47</sup>

Likewise, when interpreting the New Testament, Cyril employs the same distinction between the sensible and spiritual realities of the text (*τὰ αἰσθητὰ* / *τὰ πνευματικά*). Here the literal sense is concerned with sight and hearing, with human realities, and with those things in the gospels that pertain to and reveal the humanity of Christ. The spiritual sense comprehends divine teaching (*τὰ θεῆν α δόγματα*) and the mysteries (*τὰ μυστήρια*) of the faith, and especially those aspects of the gospels that pertain

<sup>43</sup> 'St. Cyril of Alexandria: Biblical Expositor', *Coptic Church Review*, 19 (1998), 41.

<sup>44</sup> Young argues that the 'historical sense' here properly refers, not to the preoccupations of modern historical critics, but to the standard literary techniques used in the rhetorical schools of the ancient world (*Biblical Exegesis*, 182). According to O'Keefe, 'A Letter that Killeth', 89, 'Antiochene exegesis was historical, but not modern; it did not anticipate modern historical criticism.'

<sup>45</sup> For Cyril's twofold interpretation of the Bible, see Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, and Steven McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ: A Reconstruction of Cyril of Alexandria's Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 21–48.

<sup>46</sup> 'Theotokos : Mary and the Pattern of Fall and Redemption in the Theology of Cyril of Alexandria', in Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (eds.), *The Theology of Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003), 59.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

to and reveal the divinity of Christ.<sup>48</sup> But whether speaking of how the Old Testament realities foreshadow salvation in Christ, or of how the gospels reveal the full humanity and divinity in Christ, Cyril is always concerned to manifest the unity of the plan of redemption through the Incarnate Word. According to Cyril,

The aim (*skopos*) of the inspired Scriptures is the mystery of Christ signified to us through a myriad of different kinds of things. Someone might liken it to a glittering and magnificent city, having not one image of the king, but many, and publicly displayed in every corner of the city...Its aim, however, is not to provide us an account of the lives of the saints of old. Far from that. Rather it seeks to give us knowledge of the mystery [of Christ] through those things by which the word about him might become clear and true.<sup>49</sup>

In undertaking a study of the appropriation of divine life in Cyril, I have elected to examine Cyril's New Testament biblical commentaries because they offer a wide range of biblical material for comment, and because they span both the pre- and post-Nestorian eras. Cyril is a careful exegete who, like a hovercraft upon the sea, follows the contours of his text quite closely. Of course he brings to bear on his exegesis the rule of faith he has inherited and the polemical concerns of his day, and he is quite prepared to propose an allegorical reading of a text in true Alexandrian fashion. None the less he normally recognizes and responds to the particular character and detail of a biblical text, at least in his initial exposition of it.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, by examining not only Cyril's commentary on John (his longest and most significant New Testament commentary) but also his homilies on Luke and the extensive fragments from his commentaries on Matthew, Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, and Hebrews, we gain Cyril's response to a wide range of biblical texts and theological perspectives.<sup>51</sup> As

<sup>48</sup> Kerrigan, 'The Objects of the Literal and Spiritual Senses', 354–74. See also Lars Koen, 'Partitive Exegesis in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John', *SP* 25 (1991), 115–21.

<sup>49</sup> *Glaph. in Genesis* (PG 69, 308c), trans. Robert L. Wilken, 'Cyril of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Old Testament', in Weinandy and Keating (eds.), *The Theology of Cyril of Alexandria*, 16.

<sup>50</sup> Robert L. Wilken, 'St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Mystery of Christ in the Bible', *Pro Ecclesia*, 4 (1995), 474, suggests that it was Cyril's line-by-line commentary on the gospel of John which 'forced him to rethink aspects of the Alexandrian christology'.

<sup>51</sup> All texts examined in the main body of this study are taken from Cyril's New Testament commentaries. I will also refer to texts from Cyril's wider corpus in order to confirm, expand, or modify conclusions gained from his New Testament biblical commentaries, but this cross-referencing will be confined to the footnotes.

we shall see with respect to the baptism of Jesus, Cyril's theological exposition of a single event can differ from one biblical locus to another.

Cyril's writings are commonly distinguished according to the pre- and post-Nestorian periods on the conviction that the conflict with Nestorius redirected Cyril's interest towards the Christological issue, and altered at least the manner of his formulation, if not the content of his thought. By examining biblical commentary from both periods, we are able to see whether and how Cyril's account of our appropriation of the divine life shifted or developed. The massive *Commentary on John* is normally assigned to the pre-Nestorian period.<sup>52</sup> The *Homilies on Luke* and the *Commentary on Hebrews* show clear marks of the Nestorian controversy, and so should be assigned to the post-Nestorian era.<sup>53</sup> The other fragments are more difficult to date, but based upon internal evidence, I suggest that Cyril's commentaries on Matthew, Romans, and 1 Corinthians be assigned to the pre-Nestorian period, and his commentary on 2 Corinthians to the post-Nestorian period.<sup>54</sup> The Nestorian controversy certainly transformed the

<sup>52</sup> The most widely regarded chronology of Cyril's major works is that of Georges Jouassard, 'L'Activité littéraire de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie jusqu'à 428: Essai de chronologie et de synthèse', *Mélanges E. Pöschke* (Lyons: Facultés Catholiques, 1945), 159–74. He assigns the *Commentary on John* a date between 425 and 429. In a counter-proposal, N. Charlier, 'Le "Thesaurus de Trinitate" de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Questions de critique littéraire', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 45 (1950), 56–65, dates the *Commentary on John* early in Cyril's patriarchate and considers it the first of his exegetical works, prior to his Old Testament commentaries. For Jouassard's response to Charlier, see 'La Date des écrits antiariens de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Revue Bénédictine*, 87 (1977), 172–8.

<sup>53</sup> Reuss, *Lukas-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984), p. xxix, assigns the *Homilies on Luke* to the post-Nestorian period on the basis of several references to Nestorius by name in the homilies. Paul Parvis, 'The Commentary on Hebrews and the *Contra Theodorum* of Cyril of Alexandria', *JTSNS* 26 (1975), 417–18, dates the *Commentary on Hebrews* between 428 and 432 on the basis of an explicit citation of Theodore in the commentary on Heb. 2: 9. The fragments on Hebrews show throughout a sharp critique of a 'two-sons' Christology.

<sup>54</sup> On the basis of the tenor of the commentary and the lack of explicit mention of Nestorius, Reuss, *Matthäus-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), p. xxxix, proposes that Cyril's *Commentary on Matthew* was written after the *Commentary on John*, but before 429. On the same basis, Cyril's commentaries on Romans and 1 Corinthians should probably be regarded as pre-Nestorian works. The fragments from his commentary on 2 Corinthians, however, show a marked anti-Nestorian character, very much akin to the fragments from his commentary on Hebrews. The brief fragments on other New Testament books (Acts of the Apostles, James, 1–2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude) (PG 74, 757a–1024c) are too scanty to date with any probability, though if the fragment on Acts 13: 33 (PG 74, 769b) is genuine, the reference to Mary as *Theotokos* (θεοτόκος) points to a post-Nestorian date.

polemical background to Cyril's exegesis, and (as I shall argue) prompted Cyril to alter his use of the terminology related to divinization. But I do not observe any material change in Cyril's conception of our appropriation of divine life from the pre- to the post-Nestorian period. Indeed, it is Cyril's pre-Nestorian understanding of how we receive divine life that he so often employs to critique what he perceives to be Nestorius's explanation of the union of the Word and the flesh in the Incarnation, namely, the divinization of a mere man.

## The Aims of this Study

This study of the appropriation of divine life in Cyril of Alexandria, which follows the logical structure of Cyril's narrative of divine life, beginning with the appearance of that life in the Incarnate Word and proceeding to its full human appropriation, is governed by the following aims:

1. *To attempt a more comprehensive study of a subject often treated in piecemeal fashion.* By following Cyril's own narrative of divine life, I am attempting to trace the re-creation of human nature from its origin in the Incarnate Word to its full outworking in us. Several studies on Cyril present one or other aspect of this outworking of the divine life in the human race (for example, Cyril's teaching on sanctification, divine filiation, the Eucharist, or grace), but none to my knowledge attempts to trace the whole of this narrative or to present a panoramic view of his narrative of divine life.
2. *To examine the appropriation of divine life in Cyril through a careful reading and analysis of his New Testament exegesis.* Some of Cyril's richest and densest theological writing is found in his biblical commentaries, and several recent studies have given attention to this.<sup>55</sup> In this study, however, I am not simply looking to mine theological ore from Cyril's New Testament commentaries for the purposes of a topical treatment of his theology. Where possible, I have opted to examine Cyril's extended expositions of Scripture,

<sup>55</sup> Lars Koen, *The Saving Passion: Incarnational and Soteriological Thought in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Gospel according to John* (Uppsala: Graphic Systems, 1991) ; James J. Doherty, 'Scripture and Soteriology in the Christological System of St. Cyril of Alexandria', Ph.D. thesis (New York: Fordham University, 1992) ; Lawrence J. Welch, *Christology and Eucharist in the Early Thought of Cyril of Alexandria* (San Francisco: International Scholars Press, 1994).

in order to grasp the way he approaches a biblical text, relates it to other biblical texts, and weaves a theological tapestry from it. Though I am not attempting here a study of Cyril's exegesis *per se*, I will endeavour to respect the structure and method of his exegesis in the service of a properly theological study.

3. *To offer a corrective to certain readings of Cyril.* Through a combination of a careful reading of his exposition of key biblical texts and a panoramic view of his narrative of divine life, I hope to bring a corrective to certain readings of Cyril which, in my view, exaggerate the 'somatic' or 'physicalistic' character of his understanding of divinization, and so misconstrue to some extent the shape and thrust of his soteriology. By establishing the importance of pneumatology in Cyril's narrative of salvation and by showing the requirement for an ethical aspect of divinization grounded in the example of Christ himself, I shall argue that Cyril correlates the somatic and pneumatic means of our union with Christ, and impressively integrates the ontological and ethical aspects of our sanctification and divinization.

4. *To further comparative study by bringing Cyril into comparison with certain of his prominent contemporaries.* By means of brief sketches of Cyril in comparison with Theodore of Mopsuestia, Augustine, and Leo the Great, I hope to accomplish three ends: (a) a greater understanding of Cyril's own account of sanctification and divinization; (b) further clarity on the Christological debates of the fifth century; and (c) a better grasp of the theological similarities and differences between the East and West. Though the comparisons will be necessarily partial and suggestive rather than exhaustive or decisive, I hope that they may cast further light on the Christological conflicts at Ephesus and Chalcedon, and may provide a draft of the relation between the respective Eastern and Western accounts of sanctification and divinization.

# 1 The Divine Plan of Salvation in Cyril

And the Spirit too has descended again as on a second firstfruits of our race, and on Christ first, who received it not for himself, but rather for us. For in him and through him we are enriched in every way.

(*In Lmc. 3: 21–2*, Reuss, 63)

In order to assess what it means for Cyril to say that we have become partakers of the divine nature, or to understand what is meant by ‘the appropriation of divine life’, we must first grasp something of the architecture of his account of salvation. Cyril's claim about what we have attained in Christ can be understood only within the confines of his complex account of the role of Christ, the Incarnate Word, in the narrative of divine life. In this first chapter, I will trace Cyril's narrative of salvation from the baptism of Jesus through his death and resurrection to his ascension and enthronement, in order to show that, in Cyril's view, the re-creation, sanctification, and divinization of human nature is completed first in Christ himself.

We will take as our starting point Cyril's commentary on the baptism of Jesus. Though many consider the baptism to be an event of only secondary importance in Christ's career, we begin here because this event uniquely captures for Cyril the entire economy of salvation.<sup>56</sup> The baptism of Jesus, in Cyril's hands, comes to signify the re-creation of the human race, pointing back, as it were, to the creation of Adam, and pointing forward to the completion of the re-creation of humanity in the resurrection and ascension of Christ. As we shall see, the baptism of Jesus also reveals the Incarnate Word as both agent and recipient of salvation and establishes the central place of the gift of the Spirit in Cyril's narrative of divine life.

<sup>56</sup> Marie-Odile Boulnois, ‘Le Souffle et l'Esprit: exégèses patristiques de l'insufflation originelle de Gen 2,7 en lien avec celle de Jn 20,22’, *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 24 (1989), 33, writes: ‘The exegesis of the baptism of Christ is one of the keystones of Cyrilline theology, at the junction of his anthropology, his Christology, and his trinitarian theology.’

The baptism of Jesus already possessed a long and varied interpretative history in patristic theology. Cyril draws upon and develops this in his own characteristic manner.<sup>57</sup> The particular theological problem surrounding the baptism of Jesus, especially for the post-Nicene Fathers, was an adoptionistic reading of the text. According to the adoptionist account, Jesus's anointing by the Spirit was the event in which he *came to be* the Son of God. This by implication denied his eternal divine sonship.<sup>58</sup> Given such a theological climate, it is all the more remarkable that Cyril emphasizes the central importance of the baptism of Jesus, even as he defends it against adoptionist readings.

## The Baptism of Jesus: The Re-creation of the Human Race

### The Baptism of Jesus in John (*In Jo. 1: 32–3*, Pusey, i. 174–90)

The text of the baptism of Jesus in John's gospel runs as follows: 'And John bore witness, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." "'<sup>59</sup> Cyril begins his exposition by underlining the reliability of John's witness and by paraphrasing the key events to which John gives testimony. His use of the perfect tense of the verb in his paraphrase already hints at the direction his exposition will take. The Spirit did not merely descend (*ἔμεινεν*) upon Jesus, but importantly has remained (*μεμῆνηκεν*) upon him (Pusey, i. 174–5). The descent of the Spirit upon Jesus, as Cyril will expound it, is not simply a single past event; rather, it has inaugurated an

<sup>57</sup> For the baptism of Jesus in patristic thought, see Robert L. Wilken, 'The Interpretation of the Baptism of Jesus in the Later Fathers', *SP* 11 (1967), 268–77; Kilian McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and Cosmic Order of Salvation* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier, 1997); and Sebastian Brock, 'Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition', in idem, *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature and Theology* (Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1992), 15–23.

<sup>58</sup> Gabriele Winkler, 'A Remarkable Shift in the 4th Century Creeds: An Analysis of the Armenian, Syriac and Greek Evidence', *SP* 17 (1982), 1396–401, demonstrates how Jesus's baptism was progressively dropped from the creeds precisely in order to eliminate subordinationist readings of Jesus's relationship to the Father.

<sup>59</sup> Biblical quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.



ongoing state of affairs, one which has great significance for the human race.

At this point Cyril's exposition is interrupted by the voice of an unnamed Arian controversialist who pounces upon the fact of Jesus's baptism in order to ridicule the Nicene confession of the Trinity. The Arian position, as rehearsed by Cyril, proceeds according to the following logic: (1) if the Spirit descended upon the Son, then the Son must have received what he did not already have; (2) if he received what he did not have, then he was not always perfect; (3) if he was not always perfect, then he cannot be consubstantial with the Father. The Arian interlocutor adds biblical authority to his logical demonstration by citing the anointing of the messianic King in Ps. 44: 8 (LXX) (Pusey, i. 175). Cyril's anticipation of the Arian objection at this point, prior to the exposition of the text itself, is not a tangential matter. It is rather crucial to Cyril's project and consistent with the anti-Arian orientation of this commentary. If he is to explain the text in a way consistent with Nicene orthodoxy, and against an adoptionist reading, this Arian objection must be decisively refuted.

Cyril's rebuttal begins, not by recourse to the baptism text, but by establishing on other grounds the divine perfection of the Son. Cyril's argument, one which follows that of Athanasius,<sup>60</sup> and which attacks the conclusions of the Arian objection rather than its premises, may be summarized as follows: (1) if the biblical revelation of Father and Son is true, then Father and Son must be of the same nature; (2) if they are of the same nature, then the Son must share all the perfections of the Father; (3) therefore the Son must also be perfect, lacking in nothing, and the Arian reading of the text is overthrown. If this is so, Cyril concludes, then another reason must be found to account for the Son's receiving the Spirit in his baptism, for he cannot be imperfect or lacking anything in himself as the Son of God (Pusey, i. 176–7).

A second line of rebuttal follows that addresses the pivotal issue of sanctification (ἁγιασμὸς). The Arians had used the baptism at the Jordan as proof that Jesus was sanctified only then and not before, showing him to be a creature and in need of a sanctification that is 'acquired' (ἐπακτὸς). Cyril adduces the Trisagion of the

<sup>60</sup> *C. Ar.* i. 27.

Seraphim in Isa. 6: 3 as biblical evidence that the Son was holy—and therefore possessed the Spirit—before the Incarnation (Pusey, i. 177–8). Then in a logical demonstration, arguing from the same premises as above, Cyril asks how a Father who is holy by nature could produce an offspring who is deficient in holiness. If the Son did not possess the Spirit by nature before the baptism at the Jordan, then either the Fatherhood of God must be denied, or the Son, who possessed all the Father had by nature, received something extra in his baptism, and in his baptism was exalted even above the status of the Father. Either alternative, Cyril tells us, is untenable and indeed blasphemous. The Son therefore must be understood as having the Holy Spirit essentially in himself (Pusey, i. 178–80).

In a telling remark, Cyril declares that if the Son did not possess the Spirit in an essential (*οὐσιώδης*) way, then he could at any time reject sanctification, just as we can. He would then not be found unchangeable (*ἀναλλοίωτος*), the psalmist would be found lying who said, ‘But you are the same’ (Ps. 101: 28, LXX), and the natural relationship of Father and Son would be denied (Pusey, i. 178). Cyril then introduces a key principle drawn from his concept of participation, that what is partaken of (*τὸ μετεχόμενον*) must be different in nature than the one partaking (*τὸ μετέχοντος*).<sup>61</sup> Otherwise, we would be left with the absurd result that to partake of another is to partake of oneself (Pusey, i. 178–9). He concludes that if the Son was already in the form of God (Phil. 2: 5–8), and therefore God by nature, then to claim that he became holy by participation through receiving the Spirit at the Jordan results only in absurdities and blasphemies.

Cyril concludes his argument against his Arian opponent by once again citing Phil. 2: 5–8 as evidence against his interlocutor's claim. If Jesus is first sanctified at the Jordan as the Arians claim, then his emptying as described in Phil. 2: 7 is rendered void; instead of emptying himself in the event of the Incarnation, he has actually gained by receiving as man what he did not have before. But for Cyril this would reverse and contradict the point of 2 Cor. 8: 9, ‘that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became

<sup>61</sup> See 4. for Cyril's use of the concept of participation in the context of its philosophical, biblical, and patristic background.

poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich' (Pusey, i. 181). The Son emptied himself, Cyril tells us, 'on account of our humanity' (*διὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα*), for our sake, not for his own (Pusey, i. 181). Having set aside the Arian objection and having shown the true meaning of the Incarnation, he now turns to an exposition of the baptism text itself.

In a significant exegetical manoeuvre, Cyril begins his explanation of Jesus's baptism by appealing to two aspects of the creation in Genesis 1–2. First, he reminds us that the human race was made 'in the image and likeness of God' (Gen. 1: 27).<sup>62</sup> Secondly, he interprets Gen. 2: 7, 'And he breathed into his face the breath of life', as the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit into Adam. The first man was sealed (*κατεσφραγίζετο*) in the divine image by the Spirit who was imparting life (*ζωὴν ἐνετίθει*) to him, and stamping him with his own features (*χαρακτῆρας*) in a divine manner (Pusey, i. 182). Cyril seemingly has in mind a two-stage process here, or at least two distinguishable aspects of the one creation: (1) the first man is created with the distinctive properties of his nature; (2) the Spirit breathes life into him, impressing his own divine characteristics upon him. Although Cyril does not specify here the relationship between these two actions, a selection from his commentary on John 14: 20 clarifies his understanding of the creation of Adam and the divine inbreathing:

No one, I deem, rightly minded would suppose that the inbreathing (*τὸ ἐμφύσημα*) which proceeded from the divine essence became the creature's soul, but that after the creature was ensouled, or rather had attained to the distinctive property of its perfect nature by means of both—I mean of course, soul and body—then like a seal of his own nature the Creator impressed on it the Holy Spirit, that is, the breath of life, through which it was being moulded (*διεπλάττετο*) to the archetypal beauty, and was being perfected (*ἀπετελείτο*) according to the image of the one who created it, being established for every kind of excellence, by virtue of the Spirit given to dwell in it. (Pusey, ii. 485)

For Cyril, the recovery of the divine image in us is not simply the recasting of our deformed nature; it necessarily involves the

<sup>62</sup> See Walter J. Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man According to Cyril of Alexandria* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1957), 7–11, for Cyril's rejection of a theological distinction between 'image' and 'likeness'.

reacquisition of the divine life through the Spirit which was given in the original creation.<sup>63</sup>

Cyril then identifies a third aspect of the original creation, the giving of ‘the commandment which preserves’ (ἐντολήν τῇ σωζούσαν)<sup>64</sup> to Adam, the ‘rational living creature’ (τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον). The mention of the commandment underlines the moral element of the created order, and so the moral capacity and responsibility of the first man.<sup>65</sup> Finally, Cyril paints a picture of Adam in Paradise, ‘still carefully guarding the gift, and illustrious in the divine image of the one who made him, through the Holy Spirit given to dwell within’ (διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοσθέντος Ἁγίου Πνεύματος) (Pusey, i. 183). The divine image is a gift, properly granted and guaranteed by the indwelling Holy Spirit, a gift that requires an ethical preservation lest it be squandered.<sup>66</sup>

An account of the Fall of the human race then follows: the man is tricked by the deceits of the devil, he despises his Creator, and by trampling on the law marked out for him, he impugns the grace given to him and hears the sentence, ‘Dust you are and to dust you shall return’, as the penalty for his sin (Pusey, i. 183). The divine likeness is, curiously, not forfeited all at once in Cyril's view. Rather, through the inroads of sin it loses its brightness and becomes fainter and darkened over time. Cyril's treatment of the Fall is unusual in this detail. When the human race had multiplied and sin came into dominance, then human nature was stripped of the ancient grace and the Spirit departed altogether (Pusey, i. 183).

<sup>63</sup> See Boulnois, ‘Le Souffle et l'Esprit’, 3–37, for the interpretation of Gen. 2: 7 in the church Fathers. Her findings show that Cyril's interpretation is not unique, but is certainly in the minority. She also concludes that Cyril is more interested in this text than any other ancient Christian writer, and concludes that ‘we are then in the presence of a major theme in the anthropology of Cyril’ (p. 30).

<sup>64</sup> The translation offered here, ‘the commandment which preserves’ (or even ‘the preserving commandment’), is preferable to Pusey's rendering, ‘the saving commandment’ (Pusey, i. 141). The verb, σώζω, can mean both ‘save’ and ‘preserve’, and for Cyril, it is by fulfilling the commandments that we preserve the indwelling Spirit. It is difficult to conceive how the commandment could properly save in Cyril's view. See G. W. H. Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 1361–2.

<sup>65</sup> The moral aspect of the image of God, which is a crucial piece of Cyril's understanding of the appropriation of divine life and growth in the image of God, will be addressed in Ch. 3.

<sup>66</sup> See Robert L. Wilken, ‘The Image of God in Classical Lutheran Theology’, in J. Meyendorff and R. Tobias (eds.), *Salvation in Christ: A Lutheran–Orthodox Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1992), 121–32, for two senses of the divine image in patristic thought, the one consisting in the permanent created characteristics of human nature, the other the gift of divine life and relationship squandered in Adam's sin.

Corruption and death follow directly upon Adam's transgression, but the complete loss of the original gift of the Spirit occurs only by stages. And crucially, the final stripping of grace is marked by the decisive departure of the Holy Spirit.<sup>67</sup> It is noteworthy that Cyril casts the Creation and Fall here in terms of the gift of the Holy Spirit and its subsequent loss. Other traditional elements are included and important, but the decisive feature of Cyril's account is the acquisition and forfeiture of the Holy Spirit.<sup>68</sup>

It comes as no surprise that the reacquisition of the Spirit figures prominently in Cyril's account of the redemption. God in his goodness determines to transform (μεταστοιχειῶν) human nature anew through the Spirit, 'for it was not otherwise possible for the divine features (χαράκῃ της) to shine out in him again, as they did previously' (Pusey, i. 183). These divine features are presumably those that the Holy Spirit stamped upon Adam at Creation. And in order to show how 'the Spirit was again rooted in the human race, and in what manner human nature was renewed to that of old', Cyril retells the story of the Creation and Fall, positioning the baptism of Jesus within the narrative as the decisive event for the reacquisition of the Spirit (Pusey, i. 183–4).

In this second version, Cyril displays more prominently the moral culpability of the first man for his own disobedience, and once more describes the departure of the Spirit as a consequence of the escalation of sin in the human race. He introduces here the typology of the first and second Adam: because the first Adam 'did not preserve' (οὐ διέσωσε) the grace given to him, God contrived to send the second Adam from heaven who is 'immutable and unchangeable' (ἄτρεπτόν τε καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον), being by nature the Son of God (Pusey, i. 184).<sup>69</sup> Cyril defends the natural identity of the

<sup>67</sup> Koen, *The Saving Passion*, 42, draws attention to this unique account of the Fall in Cyril. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* iii. 23. 5, presents a certain parallel to Cyril. He attributes an original sanctification to the working of the Spirit, placing these words in the mouth of Adam: 'I threw off by disobedience the robe of holiness which I had from the Spirit.' But he does not present Gen. 2: 7 as the inbreathing of the Spirit, nor does he build theologically upon an original sanctification as Cyril does. See Ysabel de Andia, *Homo Vivens: Incorruptibilité et divinisation de l'homme selon Irénée de Lyon* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1986), 78–9.

<sup>68</sup> See Bernard Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie: L'Humanité, le salut et la question Monophysite* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1997), 5–24, for typical patterns in Cyril's narratives of the Fall and redemption.

<sup>69</sup> On Cyril's use of Adam–Christ typology, Wilken, 'The Mystery of Christ in the Bible', 470, writes: 'I know of no patristic commentator whose entire exegetical enterprise is so controlled by a single biblical image as is Cyril. The biblical image is that of the second Adam or the heavenly Adam drawn from Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15.'

Son with the Father, not only to guard the doctrine of the Trinity and the divine nature of the Son, but also to uphold the moral stability of the divine Son, the Second Adam, *as man*. In Cyril's view such a moral stability is required for the permanent restoration of the Spirit to the human race.<sup>70</sup>

Now finally we arrive at Cyril's commentary on the actual event of Jesus's baptism. The incarnate Word receives the Spirit at the Jordan, Cyril assures us, not for himself, but for us and 'as one of us' (ὡς εἰς ἐξ ἡμῶν). The very one who is 'the supplier of the Spirit' (ὁ τοῦ Πνεύματος χορηγός) receives it as man, so that 'he might preserve' (διασώσῃ) the Spirit 'for our nature' (τῇ φύσει), and so that the original grace might once again be rooted in us (Pusey, i. 184).<sup>71</sup> For Cyril, the remaining of the Spirit on Jesus is much more than the anointing of an individual, even such an individual as the promised Messiah. The descent of the Spirit on Christ represents the decisive return of the Spirit to the human race, now abiding in one who can reliably preserve it.<sup>72</sup> The Spirit flew away' (ἀπέπη) from the human race in the first Adam because of sin, and now, in the form of a dove, settles back upon the human race in the second Adam. The use of the verb, ἀποπέτομαι ('fly away'), for the departure of the Spirit, playing on the figure of a dove, allusively links the two narratives, showing the descent of the Spirit on Jesus as the reversal of the flight of the Spirit from Adam and his

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 112–15.

<sup>71</sup> There appears to be a fine Alexandrian pedigree for this notion. Origen, *Hom. in Num.* xi. 8, states that Christ who sanctifies by the Spirit is the one who is sanctified in the flesh. Though Origen cites John 17: 19, he does not go so far as to say that Christ sanctifies himself by the Spirit. See Giuseppe Ferraro, *Lo Spirito Santo nel quarto Vangelo: i commenti di Origene, Giovanni Crisostomo, Teodoro di Mopsuestia e Cirillo di Alessandria* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995), 27. Athanasius, *C. Ar.* i. 46. 7, states plainly that the Word sanctifies his own humanity by the Spirit: 'I myself, being the Word of the Father, give the Spirit to myself, having become a man; and by this I sanctify myself having become a man, so that henceforth in me, who am truth, all may be sanctified.'

<sup>72</sup> Gudrun Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken bei Cyrill von Alexandrien* (Bonn: Borengässer, 1996), 117, identifies the remaining of the Spirit on Jesus as the 'heart of the meaning' of the baptism text for Cyril. Marie-Odile Boulnois, *Le Paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1994), 469, sees this as the crucial difference between the first and second Adam in Cyril: Christ 'finally offers to the Spirit a place where it can rest and dwell'. Robert L. Wilken, 'Exegesis and the History of Theology: Reflections on the Adam–Christ Typology in Cyril of Alexandria', *Church History*, 35 (1966), 151, writes that 'in Christ mankind has a new beginning, but this beginning is not a simple return to the first creation, for the second Adam far surpasses the first and opens to men a new way which was not known before.'

descendants.<sup>73</sup> And in a phrase reminiscent of Irenaeus, Cyril says that the Spirit descended on the sinless Christ ‘so that he [the Spirit] might grow accustomed (*προσεθισθῆναι*) to remain (*μένειν*) in us’ (Pusey, i. 184).<sup>74</sup>

In the next section, Cyril develops and clarifies the relation of the baptism of Jesus to the purpose of the Incarnation. The Son who lacked nothing as God became flesh that he might receive as man what we needed for our renewal (2 Cor. 8: 9). By receiving the Spirit for us, he renews our nature to its original state. Cyril draws a parallel between Christ's baptism and his death: just as he who by nature is life died for our sake and rose (and in so doing raised up our whole nature with him), so he who supplies the Spirit receives it as man for our sake, ‘that he may sanctify our whole nature’ (Pusey, i. 185). Citing Eph. 3: 10–11, Cyril concludes with a hymn of admiration for the eternal purpose of God accomplished through ‘the great mystery of the Incarnation’. The baptism of Jesus, then, as explicated by Cyril, reveals the goal and strategy of the eternal plan of God accomplished through the Incarnation.

What might we say in evaluation of Cyril's treatment of the baptism of Jesus in the fourth gospel? Structurally, his exposition is built around a central soteriological frame (the descent of the Spirit and its significance for manifesting the plan of redemption through the Incarnation), flanked on either side by properly trinitarian questions. From Cyril's perspective, these trinitarian questions must be clarified if the text is to be rightly interpreted, and in this sense the baptism of Jesus manifests inter-trinitarian relationships and the united working of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the economy of redemption. But the central frame of the baptism is not concerned with a revelation of the Trinity as it might be in traditional liturgical celebrations for the feast of Epiphany. For Cyril, the centrepiece is the plan of redemption and especially the re-creation of the human race through the reacquisition of the Spirit in and through the Incarnate Word.

<sup>73</sup> In *Scholia*, 1 (*ACO* 1. 5, 219–20), Cyril employs the neat parallelism of the metaphor: the Spirit ‘flew away’ (*ἀνέστη*) from Adam, but ‘alighted’ (*κατέστη*) upon Christ.

<sup>74</sup> Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* iii. 17. 1: ‘Whence [the Spirit] also came down upon the Son of God, made the Son of man, becoming accustomed (*ἐθιζόμενον*) with him to dwell (*σκηνοῦν*) in the human race, and to remain (*ἀναπαύεσθαι*) among men, and to reside in the workmanship of God, working the will of the Father in them, and renewing them from what is old to the newness of Christ.’ Origen, *Comm. Jn.* ii. 84–5, also emphasizes that the Spirit not only descended but remained upon Jesus at his baptism.

It might be objected that Cyril ignores the baptism itself,<sup>75</sup> but in his defence, he is simply following the lead of the fourth evangelist here. Unlike the accounts in the Synoptic gospels, John never mentions the actual baptism at all, but only the testimony of the Baptist to the descent of the Spirit which in the other gospels occurs at the baptism. Cyril makes this descent of the Spirit the focus of his exposition, drawing on the Johannine mention of the Spirit remaining on Jesus as the key notion that unlocks what he understands to be signified in the text, namely, the decisive return of the Spirit to the human race.<sup>76</sup> Cyril is not simply engaging in arbitrary flights of exegetical fancy. Rather, he adopts the trajectory of the text itself and develops it by means of and in the light of other biblical truths.

Cyril plainly reads this text in the light of Paul's Adam–Christ typology (Rom. 5: 12–21; 1 Cor. 15: 20–2, 44–9), enabling him to accomplish two ends at once. First, by viewing Christ as a representative man, Cyril resolves the exegetical *crux* of why Christ submitted to baptism. He did so not for himself—for being the Son of God he required nothing—but for us, as the firstfruits of the new human race. Secondly, the Adam–Christ typology also enables Cyril to unfold the overall scope of the plan of redemption from this one event. By viewing the baptism of Jesus in this light, Cyril transfers the significance of the text from Jesus's own career *per se* to a revelation of the redemption of the human race. Cyril envisages the Adam–Christ typology in such a way that Christ becomes, in his capacity as the Second Adam, not only the *agent* but also the *recipient* of redemption, though it is the latter role that predominates here.<sup>77</sup> On this view, the Incarnation is more than

<sup>75</sup> Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 135–6, objects that 'Cyril does not even give passing attention to the baptism itself or to the problems it raised for earlier writers. ' Cyril indeed gives some attention to the problem of adoptionism here, and as we shall see, the baptism does figure more prominently in Cyril's exposition of Luke's account of the baptism of Jesus.

<sup>76</sup> This characteristic feature of Cyril's interpretation of Jesus's baptism is found also in *In. Is. 11: 1–3* (PG 70, 313a–d) and *In. Jl. 2: 28–9* (Pusey, *In XII Proph.*, i. 338). In the former text, Cyril explicitly correlates Isa. 11: 2, 'The Spirit of God shall rest upon (ἀναπαύσεται) him', with John 1: 32, 'and [the Spirit] remained (



μεινεν) on him', in order to explain Jesus's economic reception of the Spirit for us (cf. the same correlation in *Dial. Trin.* vi. 591b–d). In the commentary on Joel 2, Cyril cites John 1: 32, again with the perfect form of the verb, μεμνημεν, to describe how Christ, the Second Adam, has preserved for us the Spirit that the First Adam impugned.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Jacques Liébaert, *La Doctrine christologique de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne* (Lille: Facultés Catholiques, 1951), 111.



a means whereby God has access to the human race and can accomplish a work of salvation in us. By becoming a man, Christ also carries out the work of redemption and re-creation upon himself, as representing in himself the new humanity. Cyril is following lines of interpretation derived from Paul, but applying them more broadly as Irenaeus and Athanasius had before him.

The characteristic feature of his exposition, however, is the prominence he accords to the Holy Spirit in the narrative of salvation.<sup>78</sup> The creation of the human race is viewed in terms of the acquisition of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the Fall as the flight of the Spirit from indwelling sin. Redemption is described in terms of the reacquisition of the Spirit, signified by the dove descending on Jesus, finding in him a reliable and secure dwelling-place, free from all sin.<sup>79</sup> In turn, Jesus secures this for our sake, sanctifying 'the whole of our nature' in himself. Not all of this is simply new with Cyril, for as we noted above, discrete aspects of his exposition can be found in Irenaeus, Origen, and Athanasius before him. Yet the strikingly prominent place he accords to the gift, loss, and reacquisition of the Spirit surpasses what we find in their accounts.<sup>80</sup>

Certain questions may be raised concerning Cyril's handling of the baptism of Jesus, however. First, it is suggestive that Cyril offers no commentary on v. 33*b*—Jesus as the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit—given that the impartation of the Spirit dominates his exposition more generally. Why the complete lack of attention to this aspect of the text? Noting this, Ferraro suggests that Jesus as the giver of the Holy Spirit is implicated at every turn in the text. I would propose instead that Cyril's attention here is

<sup>78</sup> Cf. José Miguel Otero, 'La unción de Cristo según S. Cirilo Alejandrino', in R. P. Jose Saraiva Martins (ed.), *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana), 204.

<sup>79</sup> McDonnell, 'Jesus's Baptism in the Jordan', *Theological Studies*, 56 (1995), 217, attests that the idea of the flight of the Spirit from Adam and return in Jesus's baptism is also present in the late fifth-century Armenian document, the *Teaching of St Gregory*, though here the role of the Spirit's return is expanded to include the re-creation of the whole cosmos. The later Armenian use may well reflect a non-Chalcedonian tradition reliant upon Cyril himself.

<sup>80</sup> Cyril may also be following Didymus concerning the notion of the substantial indwelling of the Spirit through participation, but there is little evidence in Didymus (e.g. his *De Spiritu Sancto*) for the narrative of the Spirit in the economy of salvation as developed by Cyril. For characteristic features of the pneumatology of Didymus, see Boulnois, 'Le Souffle et l'Esprit', 29–30.

dominated by Jesus as recipient, as receiving the Spirit for us as man. The impartation of the Spirit by Christ is taken up later, especially in his commentary on John 20: 22–3. Secondly, does the emphasis on the representative character of Christ's reception of the Spirit diminish his individual reception for his unique ministry as Messiah? Finally, how are we to evaluate the seemingly abstract language of 'human nature'? Does the concept of nature so dominate Cyril's account of redemption that the individuality of Christ comes to be buried beneath an overlay of (Platonic) abstractions? I will return to these questions below, after treating the remainder of Cyril's narrative of divine life in Christ himself.

## The Baptism of Jesus in Luke (*In Luc. 3: 21–2; 4: 1–2*, Smith, 78–88; Reuss, 62–5)

The baptism of Jesus according to Luke runs as follows: 'Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased."' Cyril begins his commentary by inviting the reader to fix the eyes of the mind upon 'the admirable skill of the divine economy', citing John 17: 3 as a theme verse, that eternal life consists in knowing the Father, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (Smith, 78). By making reference to three passages from John (17: 3; 1: 10; 1: 14), Cyril tips his hand as to how he will approach this text: the context for reading and interpreting the baptism of Jesus is to be the Incarnation of the Word. An objection from the mouth of an Arian interlocutor again interrupts the exposition. The issue in this instance is not with the baptism itself, however, but with the more general question of how the Word became flesh (John 1: 14). Cyril treats the Arian argument with less detail than he did in his commentary on John, yet his conclusion is the same: the Word is unchangeable even in the act of taking on human flesh.

Cyril insists on viewing the baptism of Jesus as a revelation of the plan of redemption. He calls upon the reader to behold the Word as man, 'enduring all things that belong to man's estate, and fulfilling all righteousness, for the plan of salvation's sake' (Smith, 78). Turning his attention to the baptism proper, he asks why it is that Jesus was baptized, and what possible benefits could accrue

to Jesus himself. Here Cyril faces squarely the question of the rationale for the baptism of Jesus, with the adoptionist interpretation lurking in the background. His answer begins with the Trisagion from Isa. 6: 3, as evidence that even before the Incarnation the Son was acclaimed by the angels as holy. If he was already holy, Cyril asks, what could he possibly gain from baptism? Since we plainly receive remission of sins from baptism, and the Son is without sin, Cyril concludes that he could not have received from baptism what we receive (Smith, 78; Reuss, 62–3). Initially, then, Cyril marks the dissimilarity between the two baptisms.

At this point a Nestorian voice intervenes and proposes an alternative solution: it was not God the Word, but rather the man Jesus who was baptized at the Jordan and who received the Spirit. Predictably Cyril rejects this solution straightaway, citing 1 Cor. 8: 6, ‘there is one Lord Jesus Christ’, and insisting that the man was not separate from the Word, but that the Word-become-man was himself baptized and was a ‘partaker of the Holy Spirit’ (*Πνεύματος ἁγίου μετέτοχος*) (Reuss, 63). Cyril then gathers biblical evidence (Rom. 8: 8–9; Gal. 4: 6) to show that, though the Spirit proceeds from the Father, he is also the Spirit of the Son and belongs to him by nature (Reuss, 63). If it were merely a man who receives the Spirit, asks Cyril, how could he be fit to impart the Spirit? Cyril presents two seemingly contrary truths that require integration. On the one hand, only God can impart the Spirit; on the other hand, it must be a man who dispenses the Spirit, according to the testimony of the Baptist in John 1: 30. The only possible resolution, argues Cyril, is to recognize that the one who imparts the Spirit as God is the very same one who receives the Spirit as man. How is this possible? By recourse to Phil. 2: 5, 2 Cor. 8: 9, and Heb. 1: 3, Cyril proceeds to explain the economic assumption of flesh by the divine Logos (Smith, 79–80).

By raising the question once again, why Jesus was baptized and in what sense he received the Spirit, Cyril explains that the Word incarnate himself had no need of baptism or of the Holy Spirit, but that he received them for the sake of the economy, to provide a way of salvation and life (*σωτηρίας καὶ ζωῆς*) for us (Reuss, 63). At this point in his commentary on the baptism in John, Cyril directed our gaze back to the Creation in Genesis; now he points directly to the baptismal practice of the church. The rite and its

effects are enumerated: faith in the Triune God is confessed before many witnesses, the filth of sin is washed away, we are enriched by participation (*μετέξιν*) in the Holy Spirit, we are made 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1: 4), and we receive the grace of adoption (*υιοθεσία*) (Reuss, 63; Smith, 80). The event of the baptism, for Cyril, reveals Jesus as a pattern for us:

It was necessary, therefore, that the Word of the Father, having emptied himself, and not having disdained to assume our likeness, should become for our sakes the pattern (*ὑποτύπων*) and way (*ὁδός*) of every good work. For it follows, that he who in everything is first, must in this also set the example. Therefore in order that we may learn both the power itself of holy baptism, and how much we gain by approaching such a grace, he commences the work himself. (Reuss, 63; Smith, 80–1)

The governing idea here is Jesus as model and pattern, an example for initiation into the church through baptism. Even Jesus's fervent prayer following the baptism teaches us 'that unceasing prayer is a thing most fitting for those who have once been counted worthy of holy baptism' (Reuss, 63; Smith 81). This train of exegesis, which views Jesus's baptism primarily as a model for our own, follows the more typical patristic approach.<sup>81</sup> The note sounded here is different from what we heard in Cyril's exposition of John. There, Jesus is viewed as the representative recipient of the Spirit and of sanctification, securing it in himself for the human race. Here, initially at least, he appears to be simply an exemplary figure whom we are meant to imitate.

As we continue in the commentary, however, we see that Cyril does portray Jesus as the representative man, the Second Adam. He interprets the opening of the heavens (v. 31*b*) in terms of John 1: 51, 'You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man', and describes heaven significantly 'as closed of old', allusively pointing back to Adam's ejection from Paradise (Reuss, 63; Smith, 81). This teasing allusion to Adam is strengthened in the following line: 'And the Spirit too has descended (*καταπεφύτηκε*) again as on a second firstfruits of our race (*ἐν ἀπαρχῇ τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν δευτέρῳ*), and on Christ first, who received it not for himself, but rather for us. For in him and through him we are enriched in every way' (Reuss, 63; Smith, 81). Here in shorthand we have the same line of

<sup>81</sup> McDonnell, 'Jesus's Baptism in the Jordan', 210.

theological exposition we found above. The term ‘again’ presumably looks to the first descent of the Spirit when God breathed life into the first man (Gen. 2: 7), and the mention of the ‘second firstfruits of our race’ quite clearly points back to Adam, the original firstfruits of the human race.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, Cyril interprets the address of the Father to Christ, ‘This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased’, in a representative way: ‘And the voice of God the Father spoke to Christ at the time of the holy baptism, as having through him and in him received man upon earth into sonship’ (Reuss, 64; Smith 81). In his concluding paragraph, Cyril makes the Adam–Christ typology explicit: ‘For he has become our firstfruits, and firstborn, and second Adam. Therefore it is said, “in him all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5: 17). And having put off what is old (*παλαιῶσιν*) in Adam, we have been enriched by what is new (*καινότητα*) in Christ’ (Reuss, 64; Smith, 81). The terms ‘firstfruits’, ‘firstborn’, and ‘second Adam’, joined in synonymous parallelism, express the fact that Christ in himself founded the new humanity to which we are joined. In Cyril's presentation of the baptism of Jesus in Luke, Christ is both a pattern for us to imitate and the representative recipient of salvation on our behalf.

In his commentary on Luke 4: 1–2, Cyril continues the exposition of the baptism of Jesus, but now from the point of view of Christ's victory over the devil who had vanquished us in Adam (Smith, 85). He first bids us to ‘behold human nature as in Christ the firstfruits, anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit and crowned with the highest honours’ (Reuss, 64; Smith, 85). He then links the descent of the Spirit on Jesus with the promise given in Joel 2: 28, ‘It shall come to pass in those days, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.’ This is a striking depiction of Christ as representative man. In Cyril's eyes, when Jesus receives the Spirit, the Spirit can reasonably be said to be poured out on ‘all flesh’, because Jesus represents in himself the whole of the human race.

Cyril's next move is to link the promise of the Spirit in Joel 2: 28 with the retracting of the Spirit announced in Gen. 6: 3, ‘My Spirit shall not dwell in these men, because they are flesh’ (Reuss, 64;

<sup>82</sup> See Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 94–6, 135–8, for Cyril's use of the term ‘firstfruits’ as applied to Adam and Christ respectively.

Smith, 85–6). We are now in a position to grasp something of the manner by which Cyril links specific biblical texts to explain the loss and reacquisition of the Holy Spirit. According to Cyril's account, the Holy Spirit was breathed into the first man (Gen. 2: 7), stamping upon him the image of God and granting to him the grace to preserve that image and the life of God in him. Following the sin of Adam, the Spirit departed but not entirely, leaving the human race in a state of progressive corruption (Gen. 3: 19). With the increase of wickedness (Gen. 6: 5) the Lord declared that his Spirit would no longer dwell in flesh (Gen. 6: 3), and the Spirit left the human race altogether.<sup>83</sup> Cyril completes the narrative by joining Jesus's representative reception of the Spirit in his baptism to our own rebirth by water and the Spirit in baptism, by which we receive sonship and become 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1: 4) through participation (*διὰ μετοχής*) in the Holy Spirit (Reuss, 64; Smith, 86). The narrative of the Holy Spirit from Adam through Jesus's baptism to our own is now complete.

Several observations may be offered respecting Cyril's commentary on the baptism of Jesus in Luke. First, he once again follows the main trajectory of the biblical text itself. The account of the baptism in Luke is better tailored to be a model for Christian baptism, and especially for the action of the Holy Spirit in Christian prayer.<sup>84</sup> Recognizing this, Cyril seizes the opportunity to exhort us to appreciate the great value of Christian baptism and the necessity of constant prayer after baptism. Christ as pattern, then, dominates the first part of Cyril's exposition. But in the second part, Cyril returns to the Adam–Christ parallel in which Christ acts as representative man for the human race. In Cyril's handling of Luke we see Christ as pattern for us and Christ as representative of the human race standing side by side in one exposition.

<sup>83</sup> See Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 117 n. 124, for Cyril's account of the loss of the Holy Spirit in *De Dogm.* 2 (Wickham, *Select Letters*, 186–90). There Cyril links Gen. 6: 3 with the multiplication of sin in Gen. 6: 5 as the explanation for the loss of the original gift of the Spirit given in Gen. 2: 7.

<sup>84</sup> Lars Hartman, *'Into the Name of the Lord Jesus': Baptism in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 25, finds the accent so strongly on Jesus at prayer in Luke 'that the descent of the Spirit is linked with Jesus's prayer rather than with his being baptized'. The accent is certainly on Jesus at prayer, but not to the exclusion of its relation to the baptism itself. Luke's account of the baptism, however, does follow the tendency in Acts to portray baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit as integrally related but not always occurring simultaneously (e.g. Acts. 10: 44 ff.; 19: 1 ff.).

Secondly, the reacquisition of the Holy Spirit is given somewhat less prominence here than in the commentary on John, but is present none the less. The phrase, ‘the Spirit also descended again as on a second firstfruits of our race’, contains in shorthand much of what the exposition in John displayed. Cyril reserves his full treatment of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus until his homily on Luke 4: 1–2, where he links several key biblical texts to form one coherent narrative of the gift, forfeiture, and reacquisition of the Spirit. Once again, as in John, brief mention is made of Christ as the giver of the Spirit, but the principal account of that active role is deferred. Christ as recipient dominates the exposition of the baptism.

Finally, Cyril apparently allows no opening for Jesus to receive the Spirit with a view to his unique career as earthly Messiah. In so far as Christ is recipient, Cyril admits only a representative or exemplary interpretation of the baptism. Yet these categories fail to account adequately for the words of Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth in Luke 4: 18 (‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...’),<sup>85</sup> or for Peter’s proclamation of Jesus’s baptism in Acts 10: 38, both of which would appear to underline the importance of the descent of the Spirit for Jesus in his particular messianic role. There would have been room, I suggest, within Cyril’s own principle of the economy, for him to have recognized a specific and particular reception of the Holy Spirit in the messianic career of the Word Incarnate, without sacrificing his non-negotiable point that the same Word possessed the Spirit naturally as God.<sup>86</sup>

## The Baptism of Jesus as Sign (*In Jo. 17: 18–19*, Pusey, ii. 717–28)

The overarching question from John 17: 18–19 that occupies Cyril is how to understand Jesus’s words, ‘And for their sake I sanctify myself.’ He begins by explaining v. 18—the request made

<sup>85</sup> In his commentary on Luke 4: 16–18 (Reuss, 234–7; Smith, 91–5), Cyril reiterates his constant teaching on Christ’s reception of the Spirit, namely that the Son who gives the Spirit also receives the Spirit, and that he receives the Spirit at the Jordan as man for our sake. But Cyril does not directly address the connection that the biblical text appears to make between the reception of the Spirit by the Messiah and the works that he will accomplish *as* Messiah (from Isa. 61: 1–2).

<sup>86</sup> Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* iii. 9. 3, working within a very similar understanding of the Incarnation and the sanctification of human nature in Christ, does recognize (through the testimony of Luke 4: 18) the impartation of the gifts of the Spirit to Jesus for his specific ministry as the Messiah.

by Jesus to the Father to sanctify the disciples—in terms of the gift of the Spirit. Christ is calling upon the Father, Cyril tells us, to give us ‘the sanctification in the Spirit and through the Spirit’, because of his desire that the Spirit who was in us at the beginning when God created the world be revived in us again (Pusey, ii. 719). The original gift of the Spirit to Adam (Gen. 2: 7), which is plainly in view, is then explicitly recounted in the following paragraph, showing the return of the Spirit as the essential element for the reconstruction of the image of God in man (Rom. 8: 29) (Pusey, ii. 720).

Cyril now embarks on a theologically involved and impressive explanation of Christ's own words, ‘I sanctify myself’. The details of this commentary will be more fully treated in Chapters 2 and 3, but for our purposes here related to the baptism, what is paramount is Cyril's expansion of the notion, mentioned cryptically in the baptism texts, that the incarnate Christ sanctifies himself through the Spirit:

And being holy by nature as God, and granting to the whole of creation to participate in the Holy Spirit for its continuance and maintenance and sanctification, he [the Only-begotten Word] is sanctified on our account in the Holy Spirit, not with another sanctifying him, but rather he himself working (*αὐτοῦργοῦντος*) for himself the sanctification of his own flesh. For he receives his own Spirit, and partakes of it, insofar as he was man, but he gives it to himself, as God. (Pusey, ii. 724)

Cyril insists that even the flesh of the Word required sanctification by the Spirit, which the Word accomplished through the Spirit when he came to dwell in his own temple. At this point in Cyril's exposition, the baptism of Jesus is brought into play. Cyril refers to the baptism as a testimony, ‘that we might also know that the Spirit descended first on Christ, as on the firstfruits of our renewed nature, in that he has appeared as a man capable of receiving sanctification’ (Pusey, ii. 726). The operative phrase here is ‘that we might know’. In this concessive statement, Cyril admits that the flesh of Christ did not become holy and sanctified by the Spirit only at the time of the baptism. Rather, citing Luke 1: 35, he explains to us that Christ was sanctified as man from his conception, ‘for he was holy both still unborn and in the womb’ (Pusey, ii. 727). What is the true significance, then, of the baptism? It appears



to be the revelation to the Baptist of the sanctification of Jesus by the Spirit. According to this account, the baptism of Jesus becomes a revelatory sign that witnesses to the reacquisition of the Spirit and the sanctification of the human race in Christ.

Most commentators rest content with Cyril's expression of the sign value of the baptism *vis-à-vis* the Incarnation: the baptism is reduced to an outward sign of a sanctification that was fully accomplished in the Incarnation itself.<sup>87</sup> I am persuaded, however, that Cyril's own statement here is somewhat muddled, and that he fails to recognize a working distinction within his own theological account of the relationship between the Word and the flesh he has assumed. The problem may be approached by comparison with the various assessments of Irenaeus's account of the baptism of Jesus. In 'Irenaeus and the Baptism of Jesus',<sup>88</sup> Daniel Smith tackles the question of whether the baptism of Jesus in Irenaeus is simply an outward manifestation and sign of what was fully accomplished at the Incarnation, or whether it accomplishes something new in the person or ministry of Jesus (the view that Smith adopts). As with Cyril, Irenaeus's testimony is at points inconsistent and difficult to harmonize.<sup>89</sup> He gives grounds for concluding that the Incarnation accomplishes the complete anointing and sanctification of Christ's humanity, but also compelling testimony that the baptism itself effected aspects of this anointing. In the end, Smith believes that Irenaeus does ascribe to the baptism a real and decisive effect, and opts for the construction that understands the Incarnation, the baptism, and indeed the resurrection, as 'the three key moments of the filial existence of Jesus' to which the progressive reception of the Spirit corresponds.

The issue in Cyril, though, would seem to be settled, since he himself in his commentary on John 17: 18–19 accords only sign value to the descent of the Spirit on Jesus at the Jordan. What I am

<sup>87</sup> Boulnois, *Le Paradoxe trinitaire*, 472–3: 'Cyril refuses to allow one to fix the sanctification of Christ at the moment of the baptism, basing himself on the testimony of Luke 1: 35, and reduces the vision of the Baptist to the status of a sign.' Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 232: 'The flesh of Christ is sanctified, not by the gift of the Spirit at baptism, but by the Word, from the instant when he assumed it.' But McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*, 72, views the baptism of Jesus as itself effective in Cyril's thought: 'Though acknowledging that "at the time of the Incarnation he received the Spirit from heaven", the Incarnation is not decisive for the permanent, secure return of the Spirit. That is the function of the baptism of Jesus.'

<sup>88</sup> *Theological Studies*, 58 (1997), 618–42.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* 628.

proposing, however, is that Cyril conflates here two different aspects of the sanctification of Christ's flesh which he elsewhere appears to distinguish, and that by relegating the sanctification of Jesus at his baptism simply to the order of a sign here he compromises the role he ascribes to Christ as the representative human being. For example, in his commentary on Luke 4: 18, Cyril maintains that Jesus, in contrast to the kings and priests anointed *symbolically* of old, 'was anointed by the actual visitation of the Spirit' (*ἀντὶ τῇ τοῦ πνεύματος ἐπιφοιτήσει ἐχρίσθη*) at the Jordan.<sup>90</sup> As we shall see, Cyril can distinguish how the Incarnate Word is different from us in his humanity (that is, in what he possesses uniquely) and how he is alike to us in his humanity. The former has reference properly to the Incarnation and what is incommunicable to us; the latter has reference especially to the baptism, to a representative reception of the Spirit and sanctification, and so to what is communicable to us. I will attempt to develop this distinction more fully in Chapter 4. When Cyril considers Christ as the representative man, the notion of a progressive sanctification of human nature appears to be in play. Baptism merely as sign fails to capture this progression. But rightly to comprehend the idea of progressive sanctification of our nature in Christ, we must now attend to Cyril's account of the resurrection and enthronement of Christ in the texts that follow.

## Re-creation Completed: Resurrection and Enthronement

If the baptism of Jesus displays in a particularly poignant way the divine plan of salvation in Cyril, other events in the life of Christ are essential for the completion of that plan. It may also reasonably be asked whether certain features I have highlighted, for instance the re-creation of the human race through the reacquisition of the Spirit by the Incarnate Christ, are not eccentric interpretations, elicited by details unique to the baptism text, but in fact not representative of the main lines of the Cyrilline narrative of salvation. As I hope to demonstrate in the following texts, the reacquisition of the Spirit for the renewal of human nature in Christ is a consistent feature of Cyril's

<sup>90</sup> Reuss, 234–5; Smith, 92. Given the incoherence of the term *ἐπιφοιτήσει*, found in Reuss's edition, and given that the verb form *ἐπιφοιτήσαντος* is found in the immediate context to describe the descent of the Spirit, I have adopted the term, *ἐπιφοιτήσει*, as found in Migne, *PG* 72, 537b, as the best reading of this text.

narrative of salvation, even where the event of the baptism recedes from view.

## From Baptism to Resurrection (*In Jo. 7: 39*, Pusey, i. 690–8)

In Cyril's narrative of the divine plan of salvation, John 7: 39 serves as a kind of hinge that connects Jesus's baptism to his resurrection, showing how the former is the preliminary stage requiring the latter for the completion of the renewal of the human race. Cyril begins by interpreting John 7: 37–8 in terms of Christ fulfilling the Feast of Tabernacles, both by being the river of abundance himself (Ps. 35: 8, LXX), and by pouring out the overflowing Spirit in the hearts of believers (Pusey, i. 685–9). The parenthetical explanation that follows in v. 39, 'Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified', raises the question for Cyril of how the Spirit can be said to be 'not yet given' until after the resurrection, when 'so great a choir of Prophets' are in evidence 'uttering in the Spirit the divine mysteries concerning Christ' (Pusey, i. 690). Cyril admits that the biblical record plainly shows that the Spirit was given in some sense before the coming of Christ. How is this text to be understood, then, and why is the Spirit said to be given only after the glorification of Jesus? The answer will be deferred until Cyril explains, by means of the narrative plan of salvation, the essential links between the Creation and Fall, the baptism of Jesus, and the resurrection.

Cyril's initial narration of redemption resembles that found in his baptism accounts. The first man lived a life of incorruption and continued in virtue because of the Spirit of God who indwelt him. This indwelling is grounded on an explicit citation of Gen. 2: 7 (Pusey, i. 691). Cyril then describes the divine recovery project in terms of Eph. 1: 10, 'to recapitulate all things in Christ', and marks out the renewed gift of the Holy Spirit to 'all flesh' by means of Joel 2: 28. But, importantly, God the Father 'was giving' (ἐδίδου) the Spirit to Christ first, at his baptism, who 'was receiving' (ἐδέχετο) it as the firstfruits (ἀπαρχή) of our renewed nature (Pusey, i. 692). The use of the imperfect verbs may be noteworthy, perhaps pointing to an initial reception of the Spirit by Christ.

which would only be completed by our reception of the Spirit after the resurrection. In any case, the first round of the narrative follows the order we have already seen, from the initial gift of the Spirit to Adam in Gen. 2: 7, to the loss of the Spirit due to sin, and finally to the reacquisition of the Spirit by Jesus in his baptism.

In the commentary that follows, Cyril explains in greater detail the purpose of the divine plan, making reference to Ps. 2: 7 and Heb. 2: 16–17 in order to demonstrate how in the Incarnation the Son as man receives his own Spirit for our transformation. He leans heavily upon the Adam–Christ parallel to show how in Christ the Spirit is returned and given a stable place of abode, so that in him the human race (τὸ γένος τὸ ἀνθρώπινον) might rise up to a second beginning. Significantly, Cyril closes this explanatory segment by reference to our reception of the Spirit following the resurrection of Christ, who returned again to life possessing ‘the whole of our nature (ὅλην τὴν φύσιν) in himself, inasmuch as he was man and one of us’ (ἐῖς ἡμῶν) (Pusey, i. 694).<sup>91</sup>

Now the question first posed is taken up. Why is the Spirit said to be given only after the resurrection of Christ? Cyril's answer is twofold. First, since Christ became ‘the firstfruits of our renewed nature’ only at the time of his resurrection, it would be impossible for us, the plant, to be seen springing forth before the root, the resurrected Christ (Pusey, i. 695). In Cyril's view, our human nature which received the Spirit in Christ at his baptism is only fully renewed in the resurrection, thus marking out the boundary line for our reception of the Spirit. The sanctification of Christ's own humanity is progressive, completed only in the resurrection.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, the subtle recasting of the narrative at this point is quite suggestive. The initial gift of the Spirit to Adam in Gen. 2: 7 is now linked, not to the baptism, but to the breathing of the Spirit by Christ upon the disciples in John 20: 22 (Pusey, i. 695). In the narrative of Jesus's baptism, Christ as representative

<sup>91</sup> A striking parallel to this combination of Gen. 2: 7 and Eph. 1: 10 is found in Cyril's commentary on 2 Cor. 5: 3–5 (Pusey, iii. 351). There the phrase, ‘that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life’, is referred equally to Adam's reception of the Spirit in Gen. 2: 7 and our reception of the Spirit now, as a guarantee of the full measure of life and incorruption to be given at the general resurrection. This narrative of divine life through the Spirit pivots around Eph. 1: 10, the Father's plan to recapitulate all things in Christ.

<sup>92</sup> For the connection between the resurrection of Christ the firstfruits, and the completion of the re-creation of our nature, see also *In Ja* 7: 8 (Pusey, i. 590); *10: 17* (Pusey, ii. 239); *18: 7–9* (Pusey, iii. 20–1).

recipient of the Spirit is in the foreground; in this context, with the renewal of our nature complete in the resurrected Christ, Christ as the giver of the Spirit is highlighted.

Secondly, Cyril explains why the gift of the Spirit, dependent on Christ's resurrection, is genuinely new, different in kind from the activity of the Spirit in the Old Testament.<sup>93</sup> To accomplish this end, Cyril points to Matt. 11: 11, where Jesus calls the least in the kingdom of heaven greater than John the Baptist. For the prophets, the Spirit was a light and illumination, but among those in the Kingdom of Heaven, the Spirit 'himself dwells and has his habitation' (Pusey, i. 696). The distinction between the Old and the New is drawn precisely in terms of the abiding gift of the Holy Spirit: 'And what is the kingdom of God? Plainly, the gift of the Holy Spirit, according to that which is written, "The kingdom of heaven is within you"' (Luke 17: 21) (Pusey, i. 696).<sup>94</sup> For Cyril it is important that John the Baptist, who represents the pinnacle of righteousness under the Law, acknowledges his need of baptism by Jesus. John's need is due not to any failing in his conduct and righteousness; John is merely expressing his need for the indwelling Holy Spirit (Pusey, i. 697).<sup>95</sup> For those who are in the kingdom of heaven, 'begotten of God' through baptism (1 John 3: 9), they become 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1: 4) by virtue of possessing the Holy Spirit dwelling in them as in a Temple.<sup>96</sup> And

<sup>93</sup> Ferraro, *Lo Spirito Santo nel quarto Vangelo*, 75–8, shows that in Origen, the distinctive gift of the Spirit after the resurrection (drawn from John 7: 39) is a consistent feature of his exegesis, but the details of his explanation are quite different from Cyril's, and he does not connect it to the divine narrative of salvation as Cyril does.

<sup>94</sup> Cyril often links the phrase, 'the kingdom of heaven/God', to Luke 17: 21 ('The kingdom of God is within you'), which in turn he characteristically applies to baptism and the gift of the Spirit (e.g. *In Matt. 3: 2*, Reuss, 159; *18: 1*, Reuss, 223). A. M. Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit according to Cyril of Alexandria* (Oña, Spain: Facultad de Teología, 1963), 9–30, claims that Cyril inconsistently relates the gift of the indwelling Spirit to the new covenant alone, and he criticizes Mahé, Janssens, and Burghardt for oversimplifying Cyril's position. But in the texts he adduces to support his objection, apart from Cyril agreeing with Luke 1: 15 that John was 'filled with the Holy Spirit' from the womb, I see no assertion by Cyril that John or any Old Testament figure received the indwelling Spirit in the manner proper to those in the kingdom of God.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. *In Matt. 11: 11* (Reuss, 196–7). In a figurative exegesis of the parable of the workers in the vineyard in Matt. 20: 1–16 (Reuss, 228–30), Cyril identifies the denarius as the gift of the Spirit of sonship, given first to those who come to Christ.

<sup>96</sup> It is suggestive that in his discussion of the theological significance of John the Baptist, *In Luc. 7: 24–8* (Reuss, 76–7; Smith, 164), Cyril calls upon John 7: 39, 20: 22, and 16: 7 to aid him in demonstrating the gift of the Spirit in the new covenant. This grouping of New Testament texts, in concert with 2 Pet. 1: 4, provides Cyril with the narrative framework for the impartation of the Spirit and its effects.

this, Cyril concludes, is the meaning of John's statement that 'the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified'. The evangelist is signifying 'the complete and entire dwelling (τῇν ὁλοσχερῇ καὶ ὁλόκληρον κατοίκησιν) of the Holy Spirit in human beings' (Pusey, i. 698).

## Christ the Giver of the Spirit (*In Jo. 20: 22–3*, Pusey, iii. 131–41)

Cyril's exposition of John 20: 22–3 falls roughly into two parts. In the first he is concerned to show the necessity of the Spirit for the apostolic ministry, that following their commission (v. 21), the apostles require the Spirit to accomplish it. Through a battery of biblical texts, Cyril demonstrates on the one hand the requirement of the Spirit for their manifold ministry (Luke 24: 49; 1 Sam. 10: 6; Isa. 40: 31; 1 Cor. 15: 10, 12: 3), and on the other the foreshadowing in the Law of Christ's sanctification of the apostles (Lev. 8: 6, 23). He concludes: 'For indeed he is himself the ram of consecration. But he consecrates through a true sanctification, displaying them partakers of his own nature (2 Pet. 1: 4) through participation in the Spirit, and in a certain way fashioning human nature anew to a power and glory which is above what is human' (Pusey, iii. 133).

In the second half of the exposition, Cyril is concerned with the temporal occasion of the gift of the Spirit. At what point, Cyril asks, was the Spirit actually given? On Easter day as here in John, or on the day of Pentecost as in Acts? What concerns us here especially is Cyril's rationale for the breathing of the Spirit by Christ visibly upon the apostles. 'It was necessary that the Son appear as supplier (χορηγόν) of the Spirit and a fellow-giver (συνδοτῆρα) with the Father' (Pusey, iii. 134). The parallel with Gen. 2: 7 is now drawn in greater detail. God the Father 'through his own Word' (διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου Λόγου) fashioned the first man from dust, endowed him with a soul, and enlightened him by participation in his own Spirit by breathing into him the breath of life (Gen. 2: 7). Following the first man's disobedience, the Father restored him to newness of life 'through the Son, as in the beginning' (Pusey, iii. 135). The following extended selection illustrates with particular clarity the instrumentality of the Son in Creation and re-creation, in the original sanctification and in the renewed sanctification.

And how did the Son restore him? By slaying death through the death of his holy flesh, and raising up the human race to a mounting incorruption. For Christ was raised for our sake. Therefore, in order that we might learn that it is this one who was the creator of our nature in the beginning, and who sealed us by the Holy Spirit, the Saviour again for us bestows the Spirit through a visible inbreathing on the holy disciples, as on the firstfruits of our renewed nature. For Moses writes concerning our creation of old, that he breathed into his face the breath of life (Gen. 2: 7). As therefore from the beginning he was fashioned and came to be, so too is he renewed. And just as then he was formed in the image of his creator, so too now, through participation (*μετοσίᾳ*) in the Spirit, he is refashioned to the likeness of his maker. (Pusey, iii. 135)

As Christ in his baptism is the firstfruits of our sanctification, this select number of apostles on Easter day become the firstfruits of our reception of the Spirit, who is to be poured out fully at Pentecost and received through baptism (Pusey, iii. 134–5).<sup>97</sup> The one who featured as the *recipient* of the Spirit in the baptism at the Jordan is now displayed prominently as the *giver* of the Spirit. The twofold reality of Christ as the Second Adam appears here. As the Spirit was breathed into Adam, so the Spirit returns upon the Second Adam at the Jordan, Christ receiving it as a firstfruits for us. But Christ as the Second Adam is also a ‘life-giving Spirit’ (1 Cor. 15: 49), and so gives the Spirit to the disciples.

## The Exaltation of Human Nature(*In Jo. 16: 7*, Pusey, ii. 617–21)

The subject of Cyril's exposition of John 16: 7 is the puzzling statement by Christ, ‘It is to your advantage that I go away.’ By recourse to Eccles 3: 1 Cyril defends, first of all, the notion that Christ's presence in the flesh and his departure to the Father are equally advantageous for us, each having its fitting time and season. But to explain why Christ's departure could be an advantage, Cyril once again points to the purpose of the Incarnation (Pusey, ii. 617–18). In virtue of the Incarnation (understood here to include all the acts of Christ in his time in the flesh), he who is

<sup>97</sup> For the manner in which Cyril resolves the question concerning the occasion of the gift of the Spirit, see my article, ‘The Baptism of Jesus in Cyril of Alexandria: The Re-Creation of the Human Race’, *Pro Ecclesia*, 8 (1999), 215–16. In brief, Cyril upholds the priority of Easter day as the occasion for the gift of the Spirit to the church, but in order to integrate the two events he appeals to a biblical principle of anticipation whereby the actual gift of the Spirit to the apostles on Easter day anticipates the fullness of that same Spirit given at Pentecost.

Life by nature broke the power of sin and death, and invested us with his own power. In his earthly state, Christ put to death sin in us and provided the pattern for godliness. But in Cyril's view the purpose of God reaches beyond even this.

It was necessary, then, to lead human nature up to the summit of all good, and not only to set it free from death and sin, but to raise it already even to the heavens themselves, and to display man a sharer and fellow worshipper with the angels. And just as by his own resurrection [Christ] opened a new way for us to be able to escape from corruption, so it was necessary to open for us the passage heavenwards too, and to set in the presence of the Father the one who had been expelled from his countenance because of Adam's transgression. (Pusey, ii. 618–19)

Citing Heb. 9: 24, Cyril next points to the intercessory and representative presence of Christ as man before the Father:

He places us in the presence of the Father, having departed into heaven as the firstfruits (*ἀπαρχή*) of humanity. For just as, being himself Life by nature, he is said to have died and risen again for our sake, so too, ever beholding his own Father, and in turn also being seen by his own Father, he is said to be manifested now (that is, when he became man, not for his own sake but for us) as man (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*). And therefore this one thing was seen to be lacking in his dispensation towards us, our ascension into heaven itself, as in Christ, the firstfruits and the first [of all]. (Pusey, ii. 619)

The significance of the ascension for Cyril resides in Christ ascending, interceding, and reigning *as man*, as the firstfruits of our ascension to come.<sup>98</sup> In Christ's fully restored human nature now in the presence of the Father the divine purpose for the whole human race is revealed and perfected in the Firstfruits. Cyril's citation of Eph. 2: 6 at this point, 'And he raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ', confirms that in some sense he sees the whole of redeemed humanity as enthroned with Christ. Here the progressive sanctification and glorification of human nature in Christ himself reaches its goal.

<sup>98</sup> Cyril expresses the significance of the ascension and enthronement of Christ for the glorification of human nature in his commentary on John 14: 2–3 (Pusey, ii. 404): Christ as the firstfruits is the first man in heaven, and though reigning ever as the eternal Word, he now sits at the Father's right hand 'as man' (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*), as 'one of us' (*εἰς ἡμῶν*), so that the glory of sonship might be transmitted to the whole human race (Eph. 2: 6).



In a second round of commentary on John 16: 7, Cyril makes more explicit the connection of Christ's ascension to our renewed life in the Spirit here and now. With Christ's work on earth complete, it was necessary that we become 'partakers (*κοινωνοὺς*) and sharers (*μετόχους*) of the divine nature of the Word' (from 2 Pet. 1: 4), and so be transformed into a different kind of life. 'But it was not otherwise possible to obtain this, except through communion (*κοινωνία*) and participation (*μετουσία*) in the Holy Spirit' (Pusey, ii. 620). By departing to heaven, Christ associates himself with us through the Spirit, dwelling in our hearts through faith (Eph. 3: 17), so that we might advance in virtue and withstand the assaults of the devil.

In summary of Cyril's commentary, the ascension and enthronement of Christ (1) brings the divine plan of salvation to its completion in Christ the firstfruits, (2) reveals the end intended for the whole human race, and (3) inaugurates a renewed human life on earth through the gift of the Spirit.<sup>99</sup>

## The Humanity of Christ: Real or Ideal?

We must now address a perennial question that has beset and beleaguered Cyril's account of salvation. Does Cyril's Christ possess a real, concrete, individual humanity, or is his humanity merely ideal, a kind of representative and abstract humanity? And if the latter, how can such a Christ be said to secure our salvation? Adolph Harnack can serve as the starting point for our discussion, for his critique of Cyril's view of Christ (and that of the Fathers more generally) has had a far-reaching impact on the study of dogmatic development in the Patristic Period. Harnack offers this as his basic statement: 'What rather is really characteristic in Cyril's position is his express rejection of the view that an individual man was present in Christ, although he attributes to Christ all the elements of man's nature.'<sup>100</sup> He then elaborates on this claim, stating that for Cyril, 'Christ can be the second Adam for men only if they belong to him in a material sense as they did to the first Adam, and they do belong to Him materially only if He

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 165–83.

<sup>100</sup> *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (New York: Russell & Russell, 1958), iv. 176.

was not an individual man like Peter and Paul, but the real beginner of a new humanity'. He interprets Cyril's 'perverse formula' (that before the Incarnation there were two natures, but after it only one) as asserting that the humanity of Christ existed before the Incarnation, and was therefore 'in accordance with a Platonic metaphysic'.<sup>101</sup> And he ascribes to Cyril, Leontius, and John of Damascus the view that 'Christ is the personal God-Logos who assumed impersonal human nature, and fused it into the complete unity of his being'.<sup>102</sup> Harnack's estimation of Cyril's position—that Cyril taught a pre-Incarnate humanity in Christ—is plainly wrong-headed, contradicted by Cyril himself in his *Letter to John of Antioch*.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, it is difficult to conceive how the position Harnack ascribes to Cyril, that Christ assumed a real and material humanity, albeit a generic and impersonal one, could in any case be credited to a Platonic metaphysic.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, Harnack's concern over the abstract language used by Cyril to describe Christ's humanity demands some resolution.

That Cyril does commonly employ abstract terms to describe what the Word assumed and redeemed, namely our 'human nature', is beyond dispute. In his comment on John 1: 14b, Cyril writes that, 'we were all in Christ', and 'what is common to humanity (τὸ κοινὸν τῆς ἀνθρώπων φύσεως) mounts up to his person (πρόσωπον)'. In consequence, the Second Adam communicates 'to our common nature' (τῇ κοινότητι τῆς φύσεως) what pertains to joy and glory, just as the First Adam communicated corruption and sorrow.<sup>105</sup> But in the very same text alongside this abstract language, Cyril speaks in terms of the person of Christ (and not simply of the Word), he claims that the Word dwelt in all of us by virtue of dwelling 'in one' (δι' ἑνός),<sup>106</sup> and he describes the Word become flesh, significantly, as 'one of us' (ἓνα τῶν ἐξ ἡμῶν). This last expression, frequently coupled with abstract terms to describe

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.* 177.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* 289.

<sup>103</sup> *Ep.* 39. 4–6 (*ACO* 1. 1. 4, 17).

<sup>104</sup> See Maurice Wiles, *The Christian Fathers* (London: SCM, 1966), 77–8, for a reading of Christ's humanity in Cyril in terms of a Platonic universal. But as Lionel Wickham observes, *Select Letters*, 203 n. 18, 'The Platonic universal was not *concrete* (that was *Hegel's* notion).'

<sup>105</sup> Pusey, i. 141.

<sup>106</sup> Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 107, translates this phrase, 'in a single human being'.

Christ's humanity, indicates the concrete and individual aspect of Christ's humanity.<sup>107</sup> He not only assumed our nature, but is also *one* of us.

To take another example, Cyril bids us, when looking upon Christ returning from the Jordan full of the Holy Spirit, to behold 'human nature' (*τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν*) anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, 'in Christ the firstfruits (*ἐν ἀπαρχῇ τῶ Χριστῷ*)'. The promise of Joel 2: 28, that the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, 'is fulfilled for us in Christ first'. Cyril then describes Christ as 'the first to receive the Spirit', and cites Heb. 2: 14 to demonstrate that he who gives the Spirit also receives the Spirit.<sup>108</sup> In this one brief commentary, Christ is identified on the one hand by means of the abstract term, 'human nature', but on the other hand he is also singled out as the 'firstfruits', as the representative individual who receives the Spirit first, implying that other individuals will succeed him. The frequent use of the term 'firstfruits' in Cyril, drawn from 1 Cor. 15 but employed in many contexts, points to the individual concreteness of Christ's humanity, temporally distinct in its perfection from those who will follow. The notion of firstfruits, in a less abstract and more biblical fashion, conveys an organic and teleological link with the human race, but at the same time communicates distinction and temporal sequence.<sup>109</sup>

We are faced, then, with a presentation of Christ's humanity that runs in two directions. In one direction, the use of abstract terminology conveys the notion of a representative humanity: Christ takes 'human nature' for his bride;<sup>110</sup> we were crucified with him because his flesh, as it were, has the 'whole of our nature' in himself;<sup>111</sup> he arose from the dead, having raised with him the 'whole nature of man'.<sup>112</sup> In the other direction, we find

<sup>107</sup> The expression, *ἐῖς ἕξ ἡμῶν*, applied to Christ, can also be found in the following Cyrilline texts: *In Jo. 1: 32–3* (Pusey, i. 184); *7: 39* (Pusey, i. 694); *14: 2–3* (Pusey, ii. 404); *In Heb. 2: 9* (Pusey, iii. 389). In his comment on Joel 2: 28–30 (Pusey, *In XII Proph.*, i. 338), Cyril states that Christ was baptized economically 'as one of us' (*ὡς ἐῖς ἕξ ἡμῶν*). McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 216, writes: 'For [Cyril] the whole point of the incarnation was that Christ's humanity was individual, and concrete, and real in the fullest possible sense, precisely because it was hypostatized by the Logos himself.'

<sup>108</sup> *In Luc. 4: 1–2* (Reuss, 64; Smith, 86).

<sup>109</sup> In his spiritual interpretation of John 6: 15 (Pusey, i. 425), Cyril identifies Christ's withdrawal to the mountain by himself with his departure into heaven alone as the firstfruits of the resurrection, preparing the way for those who will follow later.

<sup>110</sup> *In Jo. 2: 11* (Pusey, i. 203).

<sup>111</sup> *In Rom. 6: 6* (Pusey, iii. 192).

<sup>112</sup> *In Luc. 13: 31–5* (Smith, 402).

expressions, often in the very same texts, which point to an individual, concrete humanity in Christ: though being God, he became like us as ‘one of us’ (*εἰς ἑξ ἡμῶν*);<sup>113</sup> the Word of God gave life to ‘his very own body’ (*σῶμα τὸ ἰδίον αὐτοῦ*), in which he died for us;<sup>114</sup> and he is the firstfruits of the resurrection, preparing a way for us to follow in due course.<sup>115</sup> How should these seemingly contrary estimations of Christ's humanity be evaluated?

It is essential to recognize first of all that Cyril is making both claims, not one to the exclusion of the other. Christ's humanity is, in Cyril's eyes, at one and the same time a representative, corporate humanity, and an individual, concrete humanity like our own.<sup>116</sup> More precisely, in Cyril's view the Word has taken on our fallen humanity from the Virgin, and has become fully a human being like us;<sup>117</sup> but because it is the *Word* who has assumed this humanity, in his capacity as Second Adam his humanity is representative of the whole race. Christ's humanity as representative of ours is real enough for Cyril, though through the use of the Greek particles, *ὥσπερ*, *οἷον*, and *πῶς*, Cyril can also indicate that he intends these expressions to be understood with some nuance and qualification.<sup>118</sup> In the end, he does not attempt to explain precisely in what sense Christ in his own individual humanity is representative of our humanity, but he plainly wants to maintain that the Word, by the real assumption and transformation of our fallen human nature, brings about in his own concrete humanity a new human nature. By virtue of being the Second Adam (that is, ‘a life-giving Spirit’), Christ is capable of being participated in by

<sup>113</sup> *In Rom.* 6: 6 (Pusey, iii. 192).

<sup>114</sup> *In 1 Cor.* 15: 3 (Pusey, iii. 298).

<sup>115</sup> *In Jo.* 2: 11 (Pusey, i. 204). In his exposition of Rom. 8: 3 (Pusey, iii. 212), Cyril writes: ‘And how could anyone be in doubt that his [Christ's] body is both the same in form (*ὁμοειδές*) and the same in nature (*ὁμοφύες*) to our bodies?’

<sup>116</sup> That Cyril does not think of the Word made flesh as merely an archetype of humanity is shown in his remark on 1 Cor. 11: 3 (Pusey, iii. 282), in explanation of the phrase, ‘the head of every man is Christ’: ‘But we say that he is called the head of every man, on the one hand as archetype (*ὡς ἀρχέτυπον*), as I said, but on the other hand, since he appeared as man in the last times of the age, as belonging to the same race (*ὡς ὁμόφυλα*) with human beings (*ἀνθρώπους*) as well, according to his humanity.’

<sup>117</sup> For Cyril's view that Christ assumed our fallen nature, subject to sin, see Thomas G. Weinandy, ‘Cyril and the Mystery of the Incarnation’, in Weinandy and Keating (eds.), *The Theology of Cyril of Alexandria*, 26.

<sup>118</sup> For the use of *ὥσπερ*: *In Jo.* 17: 20–1 (Pusey, ii. 731); *In 1 Cor.* 15: 12 (Pusey, iii. 301); for *οἷον*: *In Rom.* 6: 6 (Pusey, iii. 192); *In 2 Cor.* 4: 8 (Pusey, iii. 345); for *πῶς*: *In Jo.* 17: 18–19 (Pusey, ii. 720).

individuals, and so his own concrete human nature can rightly be termed a new humanity. The universal sense of this new human nature is, crucially, contained *within* the concrete, individual humanity Christ has assumed and transformed.<sup>119</sup>

Secondly, it is a mistaken venture to interpret Cyril's abstract nature language in terms of a particular philosophical framework—whether that framework be Platonism,<sup>120</sup> Aristotelianism,<sup>121</sup> or even Stoicism<sup>122</sup>—as if a given philosophical ontology underpins and governs his use of the Adam–Christ schema to describe the corporate effects of Fall and redemption.<sup>123</sup> This is not to deny any use of philosophical terminology that may distantly derive from one or other school. Cyril inherited a Christian culture that had already assimilated, to various degrees, certain Hellenistic ways of thinking, reasoning, and arguing, and he employed

<sup>119</sup> See especially *In Jo. 1: 14b* (Pusey, i. 141).

<sup>120</sup> Wickham, *Select Letters*, 203 n. 18, admits that Cyril does not explain how Christ's work affects the whole human race, but he claims that 'to interpret him as prepossessed by the notion of the Platonic universal is as wide of the mark as it is for Gregory Nyss. [*sic* ]'. Graham Gould, 'Cyril of Alexandria and the Formula of Reunion', *The Downside Review*, 106 (1988), 249, asks: 'Does this view [of the Incarnation] inevitably suggest that Christ's humanity was abstract or unreal, a collection of characteristics without genuine individual life? Cyril did not, I think, intend this. He believed that the Word lived a real life as a man...and in this sense his humanity was as personal, as individual, as anyone's.' See Thomas G. Weinandy, *In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 33–4, for a defence of the full and concrete humanity of Christ in Cyril's Christology.

<sup>121</sup> Eduard Weigl, *Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyrill von Alexandrien* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1905), 66–8, rejecting the Platonic reading put forward by Harnack, proposes that 'a moderate Aristotelian realism' is in evidence in Cyril. This reading perhaps better preserves the concreteness and individuality of the humanity in Cyril's portrait of Christ, but I see little indication that Cyril describes Christ's humanity in terms of the Aristotelian categories of substance and accident. But see the case for the use of Aristotelian logical categories in Cyril's Christology made by J. M. Labelle, 'Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie: témoin de la langue et de la pensée philosophiques au V<sup>e</sup> siècle', *RSR* 52 (1978), 135–58; 53 (1979), 23–42, and Ruth Siddals, 'Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria', *JTSNS* 38 (1987), 341–67. For a critique of Labelle see Boulnois, *Le Paradoxe trinitaire*, 244–7; for a critique of Siddals see Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 276–8, and Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 201 n. 53.

<sup>122</sup> Bruno Forte, 'La Dimensione cristologica, pneumatologica ed eucaristica della Chiesa nel "Commentario a Giovanni" di S. Cirillo d'Alessandria', *Rivista di Letteratura e di Storia Ecclesiastica*, 7 (1975), 92–3, concludes that Cyril is not subordinate to any philosophical model, Platonic, Aristotelian, or Stoic, but is rather indebted to the Pauline idea of the two Adams, and the biblical mentality of corporate personality.

<sup>123</sup> Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 25–8, offers a summary of the century-long debate over physical soteriology in Cyril, and concludes that the claim for an abstract humanity in Cyril's Christ, as put forward by Harnack and others, cannot be sustained. Cf. Pius Angstenberger, *Der reiche und der arme Christus: Die Rezeptionsgeschichte von 2 Kor. 8,9 zwischen dem zweiten und dem sechsten Jahrhundert* (Bonn: Borengässer, 1997), 188.

these—consciously and unconsciously—in the service of Christian faith.<sup>124</sup> He was prepared to use individual tools of philosophical reasoning in order to explain the revelation of Christ or to refute what he considered error, but his use of philosophy is occasional and ad hoc, rather than thoroughgoing or systematic. My contention, then, is that Cyril's manner of portraying the soteriological function of Christ's humanity is not indebted to any particular philosophical framework, and that the attempt to interpret him in this light distorts and diminishes his thought.

It is much more promising to see that Cyril is drawing primarily on biblical resources which, assuming a concrete, individual humanity in Christ, can sufficiently account for the notion of a corporate humanity in Christ with universal salvific effects. Cyril frequently appeals to the Adam–Christ texts in Paul (Rom. 5: 12–21; 1 Cor. 15: 20–2; 42–9), which go quite some way to undergird a theology of the corporate effects of Fall and redemption.<sup>125</sup> But he also builds upon texts such as Eph. 2: 5–6, that we all are (in some sense) made alive, raised and seated with Christ in his own resurrection and enthronement, and Eph. 2: 15, 'that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two'.<sup>126</sup> The notion of Christ as both a concrete individual and as representing in himself a new corporate humanity is already present in these Pauline texts.<sup>127</sup> Cyril draws upon these biblical resources and restates them in the more abstract language current in his day.

It is necessary though to move beyond the question of sources and philosophical concepts, and to ask why Cyril might employ such abstract terms, and what function the language of human nature plays in his account of salvation in Christ. First and most

<sup>124</sup> For the interpenetration of Christian revelation and Graeco-Roman culture that formed the background to the theological achievements of the fourth and fifth century Fathers, including Cyril, see Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, especially 11.

<sup>125</sup> Robert L. Wilken, 'St. Cyril of Alexandria: Biblical Expositor', *Coptic Church Review* 19 (1998), 35, claims that, 'The Adam–Christ typology provided Cyril with an image that was at once particular and universal. It was particular in that it spoke of Adam and Christ as unique human persons.... But it was universal in that it presented Adam and Christ as representative figures... whose actions have consequences for all of humanity.'

<sup>126</sup> For Cyril's use of Eph. 2: 5–6, see *In Ja. 14: 2–3* (Pusey, ii. 405); *16: 7* (Pusey, ii. 619); for his use of Eph. 2: 15, see *In Luc. 2: 14* (Reuss, 56; Smith, 54); *In Ja. 13: 35* (Pusey, ii. 390).

<sup>127</sup> There is an extensive literature on the Adam–Christ typology in Paul. See Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966); J. W. Rogerson, 'The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality: A Re-Examination' *JTSNS* 21 (1970); and A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 351–4.

importantly, Cyril's repeated statement that in Christ we see 'the whole of our nature' sanctified, redeemed, and glorified, is an assertion of the universal redemptive efficacy of Christ's life and death and resurrection, grounded in the fact of the Incarnation. The language of nature describes in shorthand the essential connection between the Word assuming our nature and the universal redemption he won as man. Cyril does not mean, by use of this language, to circumvent or eliminate the necessity of Christ's sacrificial death or the requirement of the individual reception of redemption. For Cyril the language of human nature also establishes the dependence of both ecclesiology and eschatology on the person and work of the Incarnate Christ. The fact that we are all in Christ is the ground for the constitution of the church.<sup>128</sup> And because in Christ our nature has been raised and enthroned in heaven, the eschatological endpoint is already reached in the New Adam. Though Cyril may have made use of general philosophical terms and concepts in the explication of Christ's humanity, the primary background and source for his thought is the Scripture itself, and the goal served is a dogmatic one, namely, an account of redemption rooted in the entire career—birth, baptism, death, resurrection, and enthronement—of the Word made flesh.

## Conclusions

Our investigation thus far has sought to describe Cyril's account of the divine plan of salvation—the narrative of divine life—first through the lens of the baptism of Christ, and then through the completion of the narrative in his death, resurrection, and ascension. Several significant points have emerged. First, the locus of salvation is the Incarnate Christ himself in his saving actions. He is not only the source and means of our salvation; he accomplishes that salvation first in his own assumed humanity. Christ is himself the essential reference point for our pursuit of Cyril's understanding of what our divinization will look like. The manner in which Christ is both the representative figure and the pattern for our redemption and participation in the divine life will be worked out in greater detail in Chapters 3 and Chapters 4.

<sup>128</sup> *In Jo. 17: 20–1* (Pusey, ii. 733).

Secondly, Cyril's development of the Adam–Christ typology portrays Christ as both agent and the recipient of salvation. Cyril's understanding of Christ as the Second Adam comprehends both these aspects. As the Second Adam, Christ sums up the new humanity, now sanctified in the Spirit, raised in bodily and spiritual incorruptibility, and seated in the presence of God the Father. But as the Second Adam who is also 'the life-giving Spirit', Christ imparts the Spirit and is the source of the divine life now made available to us. Certain shortcomings in Cyril's handling of this distinction (e.g. the lack of a role for Christ's reception of the Spirit for his own messianic career) have already been noted, and the question as to how and in what sense Christ's own human life serves as a pattern for our participation in the divine life remains to be resolved.

Finally, we have observed the centrality of the gift of the indwelling Spirit in this narrative of divine life. The stages in this narrative include the original gift of the Spirit to Adam, the gradual loss and final flight of the Spirit due to sin, the reimpartment of the Spirit to Jesus at his Baptism, the breathing of the Spirit upon the disciples by Jesus on Easter Day, and the pouring out of the Spirit upon all the disciples made possible by Christ's ascension and enthronement.<sup>129</sup> It is the task of the following chapter to enquire how Cyril understands the appropriation of the divine life from the Incarnate Christ to the human race.

<sup>129</sup> *In Jo.* 7: 39 (Pusey, i. 690–8) most fully displays this narrative of the gift, loss, and reacquisition of the Spirit, but the following texts also exhibit the narrative of the Spirit in part or in full: *In Matt.* 24: 51 (Reuss, 249); *In Luc.* 4: 1–2 (Reuss, 64–5; Smith, 85–7); *In Jo.* 1: 32–3 (Pusey, i. 174–90); 14: 20 (Pusey, ii. 482–8); 17: 18–19 (Pusey, ii. 717–28); 20: 22–3 (Pusey, iii. 131–41); *In 2 Cor.* 5: 3–5 (Pusey, iii. 350–1); *Adv. Nest.* iii. 3 (*ACO* 1. 1. 6, 67–8); *Schol.* 1 (*ACO* 1. 5, 219); *Quod Unus* 752b–d (Durand, *Deux dialogues christologiques*, 428); *De Dogm.* 2 (Wickham, 186–90).



## 2 The Gift of Divine Life

How might our bodies be members of Christ? We have him in ourselves sensibly and spiritually. For on the one hand, he dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, and on the other we are partakers also of his holy flesh, and we are sanctified in a twofold way. And he dwells in us as life and life-giving, in order that death which had visited our members might be destroyed through him.

(*In 1 Cor. 6: 15*, Pusey, iii. 263–4)

This chapter will consider Cyril's understanding of the manner in which the divine life in Christ is appropriated to us, that is to say, the means by which the Incarnate Word passes on his own divine life to us. We will examine in turn: (a) the gift of the Holy Spirit in relation to baptism; (b) the Eucharist as participation in the life-giving flesh of Christ; and (c) the complex issues surrounding the dual means of reception. I will attempt to show that Cyril presents a twofold path for the reception of divine life, often depicted through the paired terms, 'spiritually' (*πνευματικῶς*) and 'corporeally' (*σωματικῶς*), or their equivalents, and normally related to the sacramental events of baptism and the Eucharist respectively. Cyril's use of these terms is complex because he applies them analogically to different realities. I will conclude by proposing that the prevalent view, which interprets Cyril's theology as governed solely or largely by the eucharistic manner of indwelling, requires a modification that would accord a greater role to the spiritual manner of indwelling through the Holy Spirit in baptism, yielding thereby a more balanced and complementary account of a dual manner of indwelling, *πνευματικῶς* and *σωματικῶς*.

### The Gift of the Holy Spirit in Baptism

#### New Birth and the Incarnation (*In Jo. 1: 12–14a*, Pusey, i. 132–42)

Our initial examination of the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism arises from Cyril's commentary on the following verses from John

1: 12–14a: ‘But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.’ Up to this point in the *Commentary on John*, Cyril has been occupied almost exclusively with trinitarian concerns. In response to these verses he turns his attention for the first time to the human reception of the new birth in Christ.

Cyril reads John 1: 12–14a as distinguishing the divine sonship that comes through Christ from that sonship which is merely according to the flesh, and he interprets this text in the light of Rom. 11: 17–24, the grafting of the Gentiles onto the olive tree of Israel. The reference to receiving ‘power to become children of God’ leads Cyril to assert the unique authority of the Son, which is his by nature and which enables him to impress on us the image of the ‘heavenly man’ (an allusion to 1 Cor. 15: 49). In a series of parallel statements, which together express of the full reality of the sonship we receive in Christ, Cyril writes that, ‘having become partakers (*μέτοχοι*) of him through the Spirit, we were sealed (*κατεσφραγίσθημεν*) in his likeness, and mount up to the archetypal shape of the image’, according to which we were created. We recover ‘the ancient beauty of our nature’, having been ‘formed anew to that divine nature’, so that we might be superior to the evils that befell us through the transgression of Adam. In consequence, ‘we ascend to the dignity beyond our nature’ (*τὸ ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἄξιωμα*) and we become sons of God by grace (Pusey, i. 133).<sup>130</sup> Cyril speaks here of our reception of the Spirit and our transformation into the divine likeness in terms strikingly similar to those he used to describe Adam's original reception of the Spirit in Creation.

Cyril then puts forward a potential objection to the view that sonship properly belongs only to followers of Christ. Does not the Scripture itself speak of God begetting sons already in Israel (Isa. 1: 2, LXX)? Citing Heb. 10: 1, Cyril answers that Israel possessed the sonship only as ‘a shadow of the good things to come’, as a type and outline for those to come, ‘who more fittingly and truly call God Father, *because the Spirit of the Only-Begotten dwells in them*’

<sup>130</sup> The significance of being raised ‘beyond our nature’ (*ὑπὲρ φύσιν*), and the distinction between Christ's sonship and ours, will be taken up in 4, where the meaning of divinization in Cyril will be addressed.

(Pusey, i. 135, emphasis added). The gift of the indwelling Spirit is, for Cyril, the demarcation between the Old and the New Covenants, between sonship in shadow and sonship in truth. And the commentary that immediately follows shows that Cyril has baptism in mind here as the occasion of the reception of the Spirit and the gift of sonship. We can see this first of all in the contrast he makes between circumcision in the flesh and circumcision in the Spirit, the latter being an oft-repeated expression in Cyril to name and describe the new life in the Spirit received in baptism. He then carries the typology one step further, observing that Israel too was baptized in the cloud and the sea (from 1 Cor. 10: 2).

But those who by faith in Christ mount up to sonship with God are baptized, not into one of the things made, but into the Holy Trinity itself, through the Word as mediator, conjoining to himself things human through the flesh united to him, and being conjoined by nature to the one who begot him, in that he is by nature God. For so the slave mounted up to sonship, through participation (*διὰ μετοχής*) with the true Son, called and, as it were, raised up to the dignity which is in the Son by nature. Therefore, we who have received the regeneration (*παγενησιν*) by the Spirit through faith, are called and are begotten of God. (Pusey, i. 136)

Our baptism, then, is into the entire Trinity (Matt. 28: 19), and notably the gift of the Spirit in baptism is described as a direct consequence of the Incarnation of the Son, who by his assumption of ‘things human’ unites us to the divine nature. Baptism itself is equated with ‘regeneration by the Spirit through faith’.<sup>131</sup>

It becomes plain in the exposition that follows that Cyril interprets the phrase, ‘who were born of God’ (v. 13*b*), as a direct reference to the new birth in the Spirit in baptism, and links this to our becoming partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4) and to the fulfilment of Ps. 81: 6 (LXX), by which we are called ‘gods’. Moreover, he asserts that this new birth occurs not by ‘grace alone’ (*χαριτι μόνον*)—apparently intending by this phrase a kind of external grace given by divine command—but by ‘God indwelling’ (*ἐνοικοντα*) and taking up his abode (*ἐναυλιζόμενον*) within us’ through the Holy Spirit (Pusey, i. 137). To reinforce this

<sup>131</sup> Faith is essential for Cyril’s understanding of baptism and the reception of the new life in the Spirit, but a discussion of the role of faith will be deferred until 3 where I will address the place of active human reception of the divine life.

conclusion Cyril appeals to four supporting texts (2 Cor. 6: 16; 1 Cor. 3: 16; John 14: 23; 1 John 4: 13) which speak of the indwelling Spirit as the means by which both the Son and the Father dwell within us (Pusey, i. 136–7).

The striking feature of Cyril's commentary on John 1: 12–14a is the prominence he gives to the Holy Spirit in a text that does not name the Spirit explicitly. Cyril interprets the statements on divine sonship, and on being 'begotten of God', as referring to baptism, which in turn leads him to speak of the gift of the Holy Spirit, through whom all the fruits of the re-creation in Christ are brought home to us and through whom we become 'partakers of the divine nature'. Even in the commentary on John 1: 14, 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us', though the emphasis is on our participation in the Son due to his assumption of our flesh, Cyril renarrates the gift of the Spirit to Adam (Gen. 2: 7) and its subsequent loss (Pusey, i. 138–9), and concludes by referring to the Spirit within us (Gal. 4: 6) as the means by which the Son has come to 'dwell in us' (Pusey, i. 141–2). Cyril's commentary on John 1: 12–14a, then, links baptism and the gift of the Spirit as the means by which we receive divine sonship through Christ, and identifies this event with the fulfilment of 2 Pet. 1: 4 in us. We will now examine two further texts in order to grasp the relationship between these elements more clearly.

### **New Birth by Water and the Spirit (*In Jo. 3: 3–6*, Pusey, i. 217–20)**

Cyril begins his commentary on v. 3, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God', by direct reference to a second text, Matt. 7: 21, 'but he who does the will of my Father in heaven', which in turn shapes the direction of the exposition. Cyril writes: 'But it is the will of my Father that man be exhibited a partaker (*μέτοχον*) of the Holy Spirit, and having been born anew to an unaccustomed and strange life, that the citizen from the earth be called a citizen also of heaven' (Pusey, i, 217). Such a statement reveals the theological priority of the gift of the indwelling Spirit in Cyril's theology of sanctification and divinization. In its own context, Matt. 7: 21 would seem to point to works of human response and obedience, but in his use of it here Cyril positions the gift of the Spirit as the first and fundamental element of God's will for the human race, presumably as the basis for all other works of obedience that might follow.

Cyril interprets v. 5 as Jesus making explicit—for the spiritually impoverished Nicodemus—what was hinted at in v. 3. Interpreting the term *ἄνωθεν* as ‘from above’, because this new birth comes from the Spirit who is from above, Cyril depicts the new birth in terms very similar to those used in John 1: 12–14a: we become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4), we are formed anew (*ἀναμορφούμενοι*) to the ancient beauty through and in the Spirit, regenerated (*ἀνατικτόμενοι*) to newness of life, and remoulded (*ἀναπλαττόμενοι*) to divine sonship (Pusey, i. 219). Cyril typically groups together as the characteristics of baptism into new life what later theology has at times more clearly distinguished: justification by faith, sanctification of body and soul, elevation to the status of divine sonship, and participation in the divine nature. While these are distinguishable in Cyril, he does not order these elements sequentially, either temporally or theologically, in the description of our entrance into new life through baptism.

Cyril then explains the phrase, ‘of water and the Spirit’, in terms of the correspondence between a duality in human nature and a twofold agency in baptism. To the spiritual aspect of human nature corresponds the Holy Spirit, and to the bodily aspect the water. Cyril introduces here a key feature of his account of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, namely, the act of sanctification. Baptism effects a twofold sanctification, the Spirit sanctifying and healing the human spirit, the water sanctifying and healing the body. For Cyril the water itself is efficacious, at least in the role of sanctifying the body, but only because ‘through the working of the Spirit the sensible water is transformed (*μεταστοιχείῳται*) to a certain divine and ineffable power’ (Pusey, i. 219). Two key principles of Cyril’s theology are illustrated here. First, sanctification in the sense intended here is always a work of God, and can only be a work of God. In Cyril’s view the act of sanctifying can also be a human work, for example the act of dedicating something to God or of purifying oneself for service to God. But when the term is used in the context of baptism and the reception of divine life, it is reserved for divine action alone, because only God can sanctify in this sense.<sup>132</sup> Only the triune God can truly make something

<sup>132</sup> In his commentary on John 17: 18–19 (Pusey, ii. 720–1), Cyril explains the various possible senses of sanctification, and concludes: ‘For to be able to sanctify through participation in the Spirit belongs alone to the nature ruling all’ (p. 721). See Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 65–83, for a study of sanctification in Cyril.

holy.<sup>133</sup> Secondly, the divine power is made effective in us in part by and through a material medium, the water of baptism. There is a parallel here between the efficacious power of the water of baptism to cleanse and sanctify, and the life-giving power that Cyril sees invested in Christ's flesh (and therefore in the Eucharist), but the parallel would appear to be analogical, not identical. The power granted to the water in baptism appears to be limited to the sphere of the body, and to the initial cleansing work of sanctification. The sanctifying power of the Eucharist, as we shall see below, is much broader.

With v. 6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit', Cyril seems to take a step back from the dual means of sanctification found in verse 5 by juxtaposing the spiritual birth to that which is fleshly. But I would suggest that Cyril has made a subtle shift from v. 5 to v. 6, and is now thinking again in terms of John 1: 12–13, of the contrast between divine regeneration from above, and that which is only of the earth. In v. 5, spirit and body were applied to the dual reality of human nature; in v. 6, the spiritual and the bodily/fleshly refer to two different orders, one of earth—and therefore fallen—and the other of heaven. This reading is confirmed by the reference to the Spirit 'reforming us to God' and 'impressing his own marks' (*χαρὰν ἡρώας*) upon us (Pusey, i. 220), bringing into play that fundamental divide between our true, spiritual nature, and that fleshly, fallen one that is ours in Adam.<sup>134</sup> This equivocal use of terms by Cyril complicates interpretation and requires that careful attention be paid to the meaning of terms in a given context.

## Circumcision in the Spirit (*In Jo. 7: 24*, Pusey, i. 628–44)

Cyril presents us with a lengthy excursus set apart from the main commentary, arising from the mention of the performance of circumcision on the sabbath in John 7: 23–4. He takes this

<sup>133</sup> As Athanasius does in *Ep. Serap.* 1. 9, Cyril grounds his argument for the full divinity of the Holy Spirit precisely upon this point (see e.g. *In Jo. 16: 15*, Pusey, ii. 639). He reasons that if the Spirit is said by the Scripture to sanctify, then he must be God by nature, since only one who is God by nature can truly sanctify.

<sup>134</sup> The fragment from Cyril on 1 Cor. 15: 42–9 (Pusey, iii. 310–15) displays this twofold sense of our bodily/fleshly nature in Adam. Cyril admits the sense in which we have a created, bodily nature through our forefather Adam, but he interprets these verses primarily in the sense of Adam's fallen nature, not his created nature. See the discussion of this text below in 4.

opportunity to describe in some detail the true and spiritual meaning both of the sabbath and of the practice of circumcision. The commentary is of great value, not only because of the detail of exposition, but also because here Cyril approaches the issue of baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit from the perspective of the law of Moses, complementing the approach in the two texts above, in which he presents the reception of divine life largely from the perspective of Adam and the new creation. There is no neat divide between these two approaches in Cyril (they are often combined), but the topic of circumcision highlights the problem of sin and the role of the death of Christ in dealing with sin.

Cyril defines his goal as presenting the true and spiritual interpretation of ‘circumcision in the Spirit’ (*περιτομή ἐν πνεύματι*), a phrase culled from Rom. 2: 29 which he cites in the opening paragraph. His exposition here can reasonably be seen as a commentary on Paul's treatment of circumcision in Rom. 2: 25–9. His method of interpretation consists in sketching the typological parallels and contrasts between circumcision in the Old Testament and spiritual circumcision in the New. The questions he poses are: (1) what is circumcision in the Spirit? (2) what is circumcision in the flesh symbolic of? (3) why is circumcision only performed on the eighth day? (Pusey, i. 630).

Cyril tells us that the core of circumcision is sanctification of the person, which grants to the individual an approach to the all-holy God. Steel is applied to the flesh in order to show the necessity of purifying the flesh, and to show that we can never attain to purity ‘unless we receive the most sharp working of the divine Word in our heart’ (Pusey, i. 631). And circumcision is performed only on the eighth day because this is the day of the resurrection:

But we receive circumcision of the Spirit—it bringing us into intimate relationship (*οἰκειότητα*) with God—on the eighth day, that is, the day of the resurrection of our Saviour, taking this as a sign that circumcision of the Spirit is of the giver of life...For having been made partakers (*μέτοχοι*) of [Christ] through the Spirit, who circumcises without hands every impurity in us, we have died to the world, and we live the most excellent life (*τὴν ἀρίστην ζωὴν*) to God. (Pusey, i. 632)

Cyril makes a telling link between cleansing and giving life. Cleansing is the more typical feature of the purificatory nature of circumcision, but, notably, Cyril attaches to it this second aspect

of giving new life. Here we see the decisive element in Cyril's understanding of spiritual circumcision: it not only cleanses from defilement, but also gives new life. And the agent of this new life is the indwelling Holy Spirit in whom we participate. For Cyril, spiritual circumcision has the dual aspect of cleansing and giving life, accomplished by the 'giver of life' who dwells within us, Christ himself who circumcises our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We can now make an important link with our findings in 1: what Christ accomplished first in his own flesh through the indwelling Holy Spirit in his baptism is now effected in us through 'circumcision in the Spirit'. That Cyril explicitly identifies circumcision of the Spirit with Christ breathing the Spirit on the disciples (John 20: 22), as the fulfilment of what was inaugurated there on Easter day, confirms this connection (Pusey, i. 633).

Cyril next undertakes a midrash on three Old Testament texts: the slave/free typology of Ishmael and Isaac, the circumcision of Moses' son by Zipporah, and the circumcision of the people of Israel by Joshua following the crossing of the Jordan. The first text establishes that the followers of Christ are the true descendants of the promise in Isaac, and the second confirms that circumcision of the Spirit effects real deliverance from corruption and death, Zipporah being a type of the church which ministers the overthrow of death in true circumcision of the Spirit (Pusey, i. 634–5). The third text concerning Joshua yields two significant conclusions. First, the knives of rock used by Joshua to circumcise the people point to Christ himself, and Cyril connects this with Heb. 4: 12, 'For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit.' Secondly, Cyril now makes clear that circumcision of the Spirit is integrally tied to baptism: 'For we shall in no way receive the circumcision of the Spirit in the heart if we have not been led over the mystic Jordan, but have remained on the far side of the holy waters' (Pusey, i. 639).<sup>135</sup> As Joshua circumcised the people only after crossing the Jordan, so the circumcision of the Spirit is not possible

<sup>135</sup> Cyril's treatment of Christ's circumcision in Luke 2: 21–4 (Reuss, 56–7; Smith, 56) confirms the connection to baptism. There Cyril links Christ's resurrection on the eighth day to the gift of the Spirit in baptism, as our spiritual circumcision, foreshadowed by Joshua's circumcision of Israel. See Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 99–105, for the importance of Joshua and the crossing of the Jordan as a type of baptism in what he calls the Alexandrian liturgical tradition, especially prominent in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa.



except on condition of passing through the waters of baptism. It is possible that Cyril understands baptism and circumcision of the Spirit as chronologically consecutive, and refers the latter to the act of post-baptismal anointing, but if so he does not develop this distinction. He normally treats the event of baptism and the gift of the Spirit as one united reality. Continuing his spiritual interpretation, Cyril goes on to state that the Passover cannot be celebrated, nor the lamb partaken of (an undoubted reference to the Eucharist) until the waters are crossed and circumcision by the living Word is effected. The cycle of sacramental initiation, viewed through Israel's crossing of the Jordan, is plainly in view here.

Cyril presents us with his own digest of the effects of spiritual circumcision: (1) it delivers us from the hand of the devil; (2) it renders us free from tyrannizing sin; (3) it frees us from both death and corruption; and (4) it renders us 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1: 4) through participation in Christ (Pusey, i. 639). As a comprehensive summary of all that is included within circumcision of the Spirit, Cyril writes:

Conceiving it not in a Jewish way, we will understand circumcision on the eighth day as the cleansing through the Holy Spirit, in faith and in the resurrection of Christ, the casting away of all sin, the destruction of death and corruption, the giver of sanctification and intimate relationship (*οἰκειότητος*) with Christ, the way and the door to close friendship (*οἰκειώσεως*) with God. (Pusey, i, 641)

Plainly Cyril does not narrowly delimit the event of circumcision in the Spirit; he sees it rather as a comprehensive event essentially related to baptism which includes all the elements of the rite of passage into new life with Christ. Circumcision in the Spirit has both a cleansing and a life-giving aspect, and importantly, agency is always referred either to Christ or to the Holy Spirit, or to Christ by the Holy Spirit.

## Conclusions

The following conclusions may be offered concerning Cyril's treatment of the gift of the Spirit in baptism drawn from the texts examined above:<sup>136</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Other key texts on the gift of the Spirit in Cyril's New Testament commentaries include: *In Matt.* 7: 11 (Reuss, 179); *In Luc.* 12: 49–53 (Reuss, 148–50, Smith, 377–80); *In Ja.* 3: 29 (Pusey, i. 237); 4: 10–15 (Pusey, i, 268–72); 10: 10 (Pusey, ii. 218–21); 14: 19 (Pusey, ii. 473–6); 16: 12–13 (Pusey, ii. 625–7); *In 1 Cor.* 10: 1 (Pusey, iii. 279–80).

1. In each of the three portions of commentary examined—the begetting of children of God (John 1: 12–13), the new birth from above in water and Spirit (John 3: 3–6), and circumcision of the Spirit (from John 7: 24)—Cyril sees the same reality being described, namely, the new birth in the Holy Spirit through baptism. Yet each exegetical context gives rise to a distinct presentation of this one reality. This variety of presentation gives a richness and fullness to Cyril's treatment of the gift of the Spirit in baptism, but it makes more challenging the task of incorporating his varied expressions within a coherent theology of baptism.

2. In each commentary the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit plays a prominent role, in a certain sense *the* prominent role, because the Spirit is the agent who accomplishes in us all the fruits of Christ's redemption. This is why, Cyril tells us, it is the 'will of the Father' that we be made partakers of the Holy Spirit. And the agency of the Spirit is not other than the agency of Christ, because the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. The gift of the indwelling Spirit is the means by which Christ now accomplishes our cleansing and sanctification and imparts to us new life.<sup>137</sup>

3 In each commentary the gift of the Spirit is related to the event of baptism. From one point of view, the emphasis on baptism itself is surprisingly light. Cyril's primary concern appears to be the theological content of our new birth in the Spirit, as grounded in the Scriptures and as displayed in the entire economy of salvation. Yet the sacramental link is present, locating the reception of divine life around the event of baptism and, especially in the third text, placing it within the wider sacramental process of initiation.

4 Finally, each commentary makes reference to the phrase from 2 Pet. 1: 4, 'partakers of the divine nature'. This biblical text, linked especially with the indwelling Holy Spirit, appears on first investigation to be decisive for Cyril as a means to express the crowning and culminating effect of our regeneration through the Spirit in baptism. Determining the significance of 2 Pet. 1: 4 for

<sup>137</sup> For Cyril's view of the role of the Spirit in Sanctification, see Joseph Mahé, 'La Sanctification d'après saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 10 (1909), 469–92. The ongoing debate, especially within Catholic scholarship, concerning the mode of the Spirit's presence in the human soul, that is, whether or not sanctification is properly a work of the Spirit, is capably outlined by Frank J. Caggiano, 'The Eschatological Implications of the Notion of Re-Creation in the Works of Saint Cyril of Alexandria', Ph.D. thesis (Rome: Gregorian University, 1996), 34–6.

Cyril, largely the task of 4, will be a key element in determining how Cyril understands the appropriation of divine life.

## The Eucharist: Participation in the Life-Giving Flesh of Christ

### The Bread of Life Discourse (*In Jo. 6: 10–63*, Pusey, i. 413–554)

Cyril's magisterial treatment of the Eucharist is found in his commentary on John 6 which, running to well over one hundred pages, is beyond the scope of a detailed treatment here. Yet it is imperative to avoid the temptation of seizing upon only those excerpts which contain Cyril's specific statements on the Eucharist. It is only when those statements are set within the larger exegetical context of the chapter, inclusive of the miracle of the loaves and fishes and the bread of life discourse, that his theology of the Eucharist find its proper location. Towards this end, I will examine Cyril's commentary in three sections: (1) the miracle of the loaves and fishes, vv. 10–13; (2) the first instalment of the bread of life discourse, vv. 27–37; and (3) the second instalment of the bread of life discourse, vv. 48–63.

1. vv. 10–13. The mention of the crowd seated upon the grass (v. 10) prompts Cyril to speak of the banquet Christ is preparing for them. Christ 'fattens with heavenly food, stretching out the spiritual (*πνευματικόν*) bread, strengthening the heart of man' (Pusey, i. 415). Cyril adds that 'the mind (*νοῦς*) of the saints is fed through the gifts of the Spirit', playing upon the allusion to grassy pasture in Ps. 23: 1–2. Thus far the description of the feeding is spiritual and intellectual in character. Addressing himself to the meaning of the five loaves and two fishes (v. 11), Cyril pointedly identifies them with the Old and New Testaments respectively. The five loaves signify the five books of Moses and the two fishes the gospels and apostolic writings: 'The saviour, having mixed the New with the Old, by the law and the teaching of the new covenant, nourishes the souls of those who believe in him to life, plainly eternal life' (Pusey, i. 418). Here the loaves and fishes signify for Cyril the written Word of God, spiritual food that nourishes the minds of believers and leads them to eternal life.

This interpretation is confirmed in vv. 12–13. The gathering of the fragments left over by the disciples is understood in terms of Christ presiding at the banquet, nourishing those who come to him on divine and heavenly food. This food is once again equated with the divine teachings from the law, prophets, gospels, and apostolic writings, distributed to the people through the agency of the disciples, a task that Cyril now sees as having passed to ‘the rulers of the holy churches’ (Pusey, i. 421). Given the more explicit eucharistic references later in this chapter, it is all the more striking that Cyril identifies the feeding of the multitude here exclusively with nourishment through the divine Word in Scripture.<sup>138</sup>

2. vv. 27–37. The imperative of Christ, ‘Labour not for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life’, prompts Cyril to speak again of the heavenly food, which he calls ‘the spiritual food’, given by Christ to keep us for everlasting life. He continues: ‘But [Jesus] hints, in some way, at the mystic and more spiritual food (τῆν μυστικὴν τε καὶ πνευματικὴν τροφήν), through which, being sanctified in both body and soul, we live in him’ (Pusey, i. 440). This is best understood as a reference to the Eucharist, distinct in some sense from what Cyril intends by the ‘spiritual food’ in the sentence above. Here we have the first discernible mention of the Eucharist, and, though brief, it is significant, because Cyril states plainly here that the Eucharist, by which we live in Christ, sanctifies both body and soul, and can rightly be termed itself ‘spiritual food’. Cyril concludes, however, by indicating that the discourse on the Eucharist will properly come afterwards and should be kept for its fitting place (a reference to vv. 48–63) (Pusey, i. 440).

In his commentary on v. 33, ‘For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world,’ Cyril writes that the true bread from heaven is not the manna, ‘but the Only-Begotten Word of God himself, who proceeds from the essence of the Father, since indeed he is Life by nature, and gives life to all

<sup>138</sup> Cyril consistently interprets the multiplication of the loaves and fishes in terms of the spiritual food of the Scripture, Old and New Testament, both in Matthew (*In Matt. 14: 13–21* ; Reuss, 209–10) and in Luke (*In Luc. 9: 12–17* ; Reuss, 88–9; Smith, 213–16). Maurice F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 52–3, identifies this line of interpretation as common to the Alexandrians in general, but makes no mention of Cyril’s use of it, noting only that in Cyril we see a marked eucharistic emphasis in the interpretation of John 6.

things' (Pusey, i. 458). The bread of life, for Cyril, is the Word incarnate, Christ himself. This identification is immediately followed by a telling statement: 'So [Christ] too, through the working of the Spirit (*διὰ τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνεργείας*) gives life to the soul, and not only this, but even maintains the body itself for incorruption (*αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα συνέχων εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν*)' (Pusey, i. 458). The proper interpretation of this text is not obvious. Cyril may be distinguishing the working of the Spirit in the soul from that of Christ in the body, or he may be asserting that Christ through the Holy Spirit gives life to our souls *and* holds our bodies for incorruption. In either case, the fundamental identity of the 'true bread from heaven' is the incarnate Christ, and not the Eucharist itself more narrowly. In some sense Christ, the bread of life himself, nourishes by means of the written word of Scripture and imparts life and sanctification through his Holy Spirit and his life-giving flesh. This conclusion is confirmed by three further comments on v. 33: (1) Cyril identifies Christ, the true manna, with the consolation that comes through the Spirit; (2) he equates the manna that Moses and the people found on the ground (Exod. 16: 13–14) with the gospel teachings; and (3) he compares the golden vessel in the tabernacle which contained the manna (Exod. 16: 33) to Jesus dwelling, by perfect faith and love, in the heart of the one who labours in the Word of Christ (Pusey, i. 461–9). The images are manifold, but the unifying element is Christ, the incarnate Word, as himself the bread from heaven.

Commenting on v. 35*a*, 'I am the bread of life', Cyril now makes the direct identification between the heavenly bread and the Eucharist, the 'life and grace through his holy flesh, through which the property (*τὸ ἴδιον*) of the Only-Begotten, that is, life, is introduced (*ἐπεισκηρύνεται*) into us' (Pusey, i. 472). But then in an important text to which we shall later return, Cyril speaks of how we are nourished by the bread of life, 'that is, Christ, nourishing us to eternal life, both through the supply of the Holy Spirit and by participation (*μεθέξει*) in his flesh, which infuses into us participation (*μεοχήν*) in God' (Pusey, i. 473). Here again, the bread of life is Christ himself, who nourishes us in a twofold manner, by the Holy Spirit and by his own flesh.

Cyril interprets v. 35*b*, 'He who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst,' similarly in terms of Christ's promise of 'that blessing (*εὐλογία*) in the participation

(μεταλήψει) of his flesh and blood', a plain reference to the Eucharist. Cyril frequently employs the term, *εὐλογία* ('blessing'), to refer to the Eucharist, but he also uses it to refer to the gift of the indwelling Spirit.<sup>139</sup> Most fundamentally, the term *εὐλογία* points to Christ himself.<sup>140</sup> In Cyril's view, Christ is himself the blessing who is received by us in a twofold manner, through the Spirit in baptism and through the Eucharist.<sup>141</sup> Cyril goes on to apply the words, 'he who believes in me shall never thirst', not to the cup of Christ's blood, which might be expected, but to the water that is 'sanctification by the Spirit' or 'the Divine and Holy Spirit himself', expressions normally associated with the gift of the Spirit in baptism (Pusey, i. 475). In fact, a noteworthy feature of Cyril's commentary in these verses is his repeated mention of the indwelling Spirit. Whether the water of the Spirit is intended by Cyril as complementary to, yet distinct from, participation in Christ's flesh and blood, or as an aspect of that participation itself, will be addressed below.

Before we turn to the last section of the exposition, it will be well to point out the brief but significant citations of 2 Pet. 1: 4 in connection with the Eucharist in vv. 35 and 37. We noted above the typical connection of this text with the gift of the indwelling Spirit; here we have two instances where Cyril appears to relate 2 Pet. 1: 4 directly to the Eucharist. The first citation comes at the close of Cyril's exhortation to the faithful to participate regularly in the Eucharist: 'For in this way indeed we shall also overcome the deceit of the devil, and having become partakers of the divine

<sup>139</sup> See Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, 54, for Cyril's eucharistic use of this term. Weigl, *Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyrill*, 142, identifies two instances where the term is related to the Spirit, *τῇ διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος εὐλογίᾳ*. The later occurrence, *In Jo. 17: 20–1* (Pusey, ii. 730), plainly has reference to the sending of the gift of the Spirit, and Randell translates it, 'the blessing of the Spirit' (*Commentary on John*, ii. 544). But in the earlier instance, *In Jo. 17: 3* (Pusey, ii. 669), Randell translates this same phrase, 'the Eucharist by the Spirit' (p. 489). The surrounding context, however, indicates that Cyril is referring here to the gift of the indwelling Spirit, not to the Eucharist. Having just cited Eph. 3: 6 with respect to the Eucharist, Cyril now points to eternal life through the Spirit, alluding to Eph. 3: 17, a *locus classicus* for him to express the gift of the indwelling Spirit in relation to baptism. Cf. *In Jo. 3: 36* (Pusey, i. 259); *1: 32–3* (Pusey, i. 188); *14: 25–6* (Pusey, ii. 508).

<sup>140</sup> In the feeding of the five thousand (*In Luc. 9: 12–17*, Reuss, 88; Smith, 214), Cyril writes: '[Christ] himself, who fills all things, is the blessing (τῇ εὐλογίᾳ) from above and from the Father.'

<sup>141</sup> For this see *De Ador.* vi (PG 68, 416d), where Cyril applies the single term 'spiritual blessing' (*εὐλογία πνευματικῇ*) both to participation in the mysteries of Christ and the grace of holy baptism.

nature (θείας τε φύσεως γεγονότες κοινωνοί), we shall mount up to life and incorruption' (Pusey, i. 476). The second citation concerns the inclusion of the Gentiles: 'So that they [the Gentiles], partaking of the blessing (εὐλογία) from him, might be constituted already partakers of the divine nature (κοινωνοί μὲν ἡ, δη τῆς θείας ἀποτελοῦντο φύσεως), and so brought back to incorruption and life' (Pusey, i. 479). As I shall argue, it is significant that Cyril links 2 Pet. 1: 4 with the Eucharist and its effects in the same manner in which he links this verse with the indwelling Spirit and its effects.<sup>142</sup>

3. vv. 48–63. The second instalment of the bread of life discourse, where Christ speaks more provocatively of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, is the occasion for Cyril's most extensive exposition on the Eucharist. Cyril's theology of the Eucharist appears to be quite straightforward: by eating the consecrated bread, we in fact partake of the flesh of Christ, and so receive into ourselves the life that is in Christ through the medium of his very flesh, flesh that has become life-giving by virtue of the ineffable union of the Word to this flesh.<sup>143</sup> Cyril himself nowhere offers an explanation for how the elements in the Eucharist are transformed, or in what manner the consecrated bread and wine may be understood as Christ's body and blood. He simply regards the consecrated Eucharist as the body and blood of Christ.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>142</sup> Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 166, recognizes the direct correlation between 2 Pet. 1: 4 and the Eucharist here, apart from any mention of the Holy Spirit. But having already demonstrated the typical correspondence between 2 Pet. 1: 4 and participation in the Spirit, he warns against drawing a conclusion to the contrary, on the basis of an argument *e silentio* in these two instances. He is certainly correct in observing a close and typical correspondence between 2 Pet. 1: 4 and participation in the Spirit, and is also justified in warning us against seeing an exclusion of the Holy Spirit in these selections. But it remains none the less significant that Cyril links 2 Pet. 1: 4 and its typical results directly with the Eucharist. It offers initial evidence that the dual means of union with Christ produce, in the end, identical effects.

<sup>143</sup> For a summary of the scholarly debate over Cyril's teaching on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, see Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, 75–89. He rightly concludes that those who argue for only a spiritual/dynamic presence of Christ in the Eucharist refuse to apply Cyril's own doctrine of the Incarnation to the Eucharist. In fact, Cyril's entire argument for the efficacy of the Eucharist is based upon the reality of Christ's flesh mingling with ours in a natural (φυσικῶς) union.

<sup>144</sup> It may be that for Cyril, because it is specifically the resurrected Christ who is partaken of in the Eucharist, his body is able to be present as life-giving in the Eucharist, due to its glorified properties. See *In Jo. 20: 17* (Pusey, iii. 118–19) for the connection between the risen body of Christ and the Eucharist. But Cyril does not explicitly ground his teaching on the Eucharist upon the resurrected nature of the body of Christ.

In his commentary on v. 51, ‘And the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world’, Cyril writes:

For since the life-giving Word of God was living in the flesh, he transformed it to his own proper good, that is to life, and according to the manner of the inexpressible union, suitably rendered it wholly life-giving, as he is himself by nature. For this reason the body of Christ gives life to those who partake of it. For it expels death, whenever it comes to be in those who are dying, and expels corruption, bearing in itself perfectly the Word who abolishes corruption. (Pusey, i. 520)

Here we see a special quality of Christ's flesh alone, which obtains because of the unique union between the Word and the flesh he assumed. By this union, the flesh obtains the capacity to give life, not from itself as possessing a property that now pertains to it by nature, but only on account of the ongoing union it has with the Word: ‘Therefore, even though the nature of the flesh is in its own right without strength as regards being able to give life, nevertheless it will work this in (*ἐνεργήσῃ τοῦτο*), having the life-giving Word and bearing the whole of his working’ (Pusey, i. 551–2). The larger part of Cyril's commentary on v. 48–63 is occupied with demonstrating this very point, that the flesh of Christ is truly life-giving. He grounds this conclusion in the union of the Word with his flesh, and demonstrates it by reference to the miracles Christ performs through touching, through the agency of his very body.<sup>145</sup>

In this transaction, Cyril underscores the mingling of ‘like to like’, the flesh of Christ under the form of bread becoming mingled with our bodies, and so passing on to them the life it possesses by virtue of its union with the life-giving Word. The life-giving power of the Word is in his own flesh like a ‘spark buried amid much stubble’, giving to that flesh a power that will also serve as the seed of immortality in us, causing us to rise on the last day (Pusey, i. 533). Cyril likens our participation in the Eucharist to ‘wax joined to wax’, as we become intermingled with Christ through the mingling of his flesh with ours (Pusey, i. 535). At points, Cyril speaks of the Eucharist as primarily destined for giving life to our flesh, in apparent distinction to the soul: ‘For it

<sup>145</sup> Durand, *Deux dialogues christologiques*, 279–81 n. 2, contrasts Cyril's view of the Eucharist and that of the Antiochenes who in keeping with their Christology make a much clearer divide between the spiritual and material aspects of the Eucharist.



was indeed necessary, not only for the soul to be re-created to newness of life through the Holy Spirit, but also that this material and earthly body be sanctified through the more material and kindred participation (*μεταλήψεως*), and called to incorruption' (Pusey, i. 531). Does Cyril then envisage a separate pathway for the re-creation of the soul on the one hand, and that of the body on the other, the former through the Holy Spirit, the latter through participation in the Eucharist? Yet in a text just three verses on (v. 56), Cyril can speak of the healing power of the Eucharist in us expelling the law of sin in our flesh and the passions that dwell there (Pusey, i. 536). It would appear from this latter text that the life-giving power of the Eucharist pertains to the restoration of the soul as well.

Having taken note of the basis for the life-giving quality of Christ's flesh in the Eucharist (that is, the union of the Word with his own flesh in the Incarnation), and the means by which this life is brought to us through the mingling of his flesh with ours, we should also take note of the manner of reception. Cyril's treatment of the Eucharist in John 6, in its strongest form, can appear dressed in sharply 'physicalist' clothing. It is presented at times in almost mechanical terms, a transfer made possible by the aligning of natures and properties, such that life is somehow passed on to us. Cyril is indeed intent on exhibiting a pathway of life made possible by the saving economy of the Incarnation, and there is at least one sense in which the Incarnation and the resurrection of Christ will have a universal impact: all shall rise on the last day, regardless of faith, because Christ has in one sense given life to all flesh, by taking our flesh and raising it from corruption (Pusey, i. 520). But Cyril distinguishes this from life in a stricter sense which is reserved for those who have received Christ with faith and who possess 'the life that is in Christ, the life in holiness, and happiness, and unfailing delight' (Pusey, i. 521), and he cites John 3: 36 in support, a text that makes belief the criterion for receiving this true life in Christ. Cyril's primary concern in this latter portion of his commentary on John 6 is to establish the life-giving efficacy of the flesh of Christ in the Eucharist for those who partake. It is reasonable to conclude that he assumes here the same faith that is prerequisite for baptism. Nowhere does he speak of the Eucharist as having an automatic effect on all human nature.

Cyril's commentary on John 6 is multifaceted, meandering, and repetitive at points. It does not make for easy summary and synthesis. Still I would like to suggest that the basic divisions of the liturgy may provide a framework for integrating the various parts of his commentary. Cyril speaks first of the nourishment that comes from the written word of the Old and New Testaments, and only afterwards of the eucharistic feast in which the faithful feed upon the body and blood of Christ. It is suggestive that he makes no mention of the Eucharist in treating of the feeding of the five thousand (vv. 10–14), which he interprets strictly in terms of nourishment on the written word in Scripture. The initial bread of life discourse (vv. 27–37) is then dominated by Christ himself as the prime gift of the Father, who nourishes us by various means, and notably imparts life to us through each of them (and here the Scripture, the gift of the Spirit, and the Eucharist all appear). These verses function as the interpretative centre of the commentary, linking the first and last parts around the figure of Christ who is himself the true manna from heaven. The second bread of life discourse (vv. 48–63) completes the exposition: nourishment through Christ the bread of life culminates in the Eucharist. If this assessment is accurate, Cyril's commentary on John 6 not only offers us a developed treatment of his views on the Eucharist; it also places the Eucharist in a wider, liturgical context, through which Christ, the true life-giving bread from heaven, nourishes the faithful through the divine word in Scripture, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, and through his life-giving flesh.<sup>146</sup>

This investigation leaves us with at least one significant question. What is the nature of the relationship between the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist in Cyril's narrative of divine life? Cyril plainly distinguishes the two, but on what basis? How are they each related to the sanctification of the body and soul respectively? Should the gift of the Spirit here be understood as contained within the Eucharist or as a distinct and complementary means of the indwelling of the Incarnate Word? Cyril has

<sup>146</sup> See Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, 71 n. 1, for the relationship between the *Anaphora of St Mark* and Cyril's writings. In his critical edition of the Coptic liturgy, Geoffrey J. Cuming, *The Liturgy of St. Mark* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1990), p. xiii, identifies a simplified form of the Liturgy of St. Mark which was in place by the time of the Council of Chalcedon (451), and suggests that it already had much the same shape by the third century.

provided us with certain clues towards an answer to these questions, both in his statement on the dual effect of the indwelling Spirit in John 6: 35a, and in the connection he establishes between the Eucharist and 2 Pet. 1: 4. But before attempting a resolution of these questions, we will examine one further important text on the Eucharist, Cyril's commentary on the Last Supper in Luke.<sup>147</sup>

## The Last Supper in Luke (*In Luc. 22: 17–22*; Smith, 568–71; Reuss, 208–10)

Three features of Cyril's commentary on the Last Supper in Luke call for our attention here. The first feature is Cyril's varied application—in one exegetical context—of the terms *σωματικῶς/πνευματικῶς* or their equivalents. In the opening paragraph of the homily on Luke 22: 17–22, extant only in the Syriac, Cyril speaks of the dual participation in the one Christ. Christ dwells in us first spiritually through the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 37:427 cited in support of this conclusion), and in another way he dwells in us sensibly through the 'bloodless offerings we celebrate in the churches' (Smith, 568).<sup>148</sup> This dual manner of participation will be examined more carefully below, but it is noteworthy that Cyril then applies the phrase, *σωματικῶς καὶ πνευματικῶς*, to a dual reception within the Eucharist (Reuss, 208–9; Smith, 568), and then further on appears to return to the idea of a dual participation in Christ, first in a divinely befitting way (*θεοπρεπῶς*) by the Holy Spirit, and then through our reception of him in the Eucharist (Reuss, 209–10; Smith, 571). In this one homily, Cyril is evidently applying the distinction between the spiritual and the somatic analogously to two different realities.

The second feature that demands our notice is Cyril's assertion of the pattern by which the divine Trinity acts: every good gift and grace comes to us 'from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit' (Reuss, 208; Smith, 568). This is the pattern of Christ's own prayer to the Father at the Last Supper, and the model for the churches in the offering of thanksgiving and praise. It is,

<sup>147</sup> For an extensive, if not exhaustive, catalogue of eucharistic texts in Cyril's written corpus, see Adolph Struckmann, *Die Eucharistielehre des heiligen Cyrill von Alexandrien* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1910), 20–79.

<sup>148</sup> Smith, *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke*, 568 n. 1, suggests that the formula in Greek that lies behind the Syriac expression is *νοητῶς τε καὶ αἰσθητῶς*, a formula also attested elsewhere in Cyril: *In Ja. 3: 5* (Pusey, ii. 219) and *In 1 Cor. 6: 15* (Pusey, iii, 263–4).

moreover, the manner in which the Father gives life to all things, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit.<sup>149</sup> Gebremedhin observes the absence of reference to the invocation of the Holy Spirit on the gifts here, and assigns this to Cyril's predilection to project his Logos-dominated understanding of the Incarnation on the words of consecration.<sup>150</sup> Meunier, citing this text from Cyril, concludes that, despite the mention of the Holy Spirit, it is the Word alone who vivifies.<sup>151</sup> But at least in this text, given that Jesus's own prayer at the Last Supper, which is named as the pattern for ours, is described as exemplifying the formula 'from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit', it would seem warranted to infer that Cyril intends this divine pattern of working to apply also to the invocation on the gifts, even if he does not state this precisely.

Thirdly, Cyril positions the Eucharist here as the endpoint within the narration of the economy of salvation, a narrative similar in outline to the one we examined in his commentary on the baptism of Jesus (*In Jo. 1: 32–3*). God created all things for life and immortality, but by the envy of the devil death entered the world (from Wis. 2: 23) by means of the transgression of Adam, who fell to death and decay (Reuss, 209; Smith, 569). Yet in this version of the narrative, there is no mention of the initial gift, loss, or reacquisition of the Spirit. Here it is life that was forfeit, and it is life that God causes to shine forth in the human race again. Cyril does interject again here the divine manner of giving life—from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit—so the Spirit is not simply excluded; but in the actual narration, He is not the centre of attention. The reacquisition of life is now described in terms of the Incarnation (John 1: 14), of the overcoming of death by Christ's death (Heb. 2: 14–17), and of the resurrection of Christ, in whom we all rise (1 Cor. 15: 21–2). Cyril then moves directly to the life-giving quality of Christ's flesh (citing John 6: 47, 51, 53–7), and then to our reception of life through eating his flesh and drinking his blood in the Eucharist (Reuss, 209; Smith, 569–70). This line of narration moves directly from the Incarnation, passion, and resurrection to the Eucharist as the means by

<sup>149</sup> See *In Luc. 11: 19–26* (Smith, 331; Reuss, 126) for Cyril's description of the Son as the 'hand and arm of God the Father', and the Spirit as 'the finger of God', an image grounded in the truth that 'the Son does everything by the consubstantial Spirit'.

<sup>150</sup> *Life-Giving Blessing*, 61.

<sup>151</sup> *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 172–3.

which the divine life in Christ is appropriated to us. This narrative is similar to those narratives which underscore the work of the Holy Spirit, but here participation in the Eucharist is the endpoint of the narrative and the means by which divine life is reinstated in us.

## Conclusions

Our initial investigation into Cyril's understanding of the Eucharist yields certain conclusions and prompts further questions.

1. Cyril views the Eucharist as a means by which Christ himself imparts his divine life to us through the medium of his life-giving flesh, and he underlines the mingling of Christ's life-giving flesh with ours as the means by which his divine life is passed on to us. At certain points, Cyril speaks of the Eucharist as having a transformative effect on our flesh alone, but elsewhere he indicates that it gives life to both body and soul. Is his treatment inconsistent on this point?
2. In his commentary on the Last Supper in Luke 22, Cyril uses the *σωματικῶς/πνευματικῶς* pair to express a duality within the Eucharist itself, but in the same commentary he employs equivalent terms to distinguish the gift of the Spirit from the Eucharist. What does Cyril mean by these terms and what is their import for his theology of divine indwelling?
3. In the commentary on John 6, Cyril links the Eucharist with 2 Pet. 1: 4, our becoming partakers of the divine nature, and in the Last Supper narrative (*In Luc. 22: 17–22*), he positions the Eucharist as the endpoint of the narrative of Fall and re-creation in Christ. Both of these moves are parallel to his treatment of the gift of the indwelling Spirit in texts already examined. What, if anything, distinguishes these two means of divine indwelling within Cyril's conception of the narrative of divine life?

## The Dual Means of Indwelling

We have separately examined the gift of divine life through the Holy Spirit in baptism and the gift of divine life through Christ's life-giving flesh in the Eucharist. Now we must assess, through a selection of key texts, the means by which Cyril links the two and

distinguishes them. Such an investigation is warranted, not only because Cyril himself frequently refers to this dual manner of indwelling,<sup>152</sup> but also because the resolution of their relation may have significant implications for the shape of Cyril's theology of sanctification and divinization.

## A Twofold Participation in the One Christ

1. *In Jo. 6: 35* (Pusey, i. 470–6). Our starting point is a text, discussed briefly above, which does not contain either characteristic pair of terms, but none the less portrays the twofold means of appropriation with helpful clarity. Cyril identifies the ‘bread from heaven’ with Christ himself, the Word made flesh, and then extends this identification to ‘the life and grace of his holy flesh’, a clear reference in this context to the Eucharist (Pusey, i. 472). Yet Cyril's next move is to exhibit Christ as the true bread from heaven through the typological pre-enactment in Joshua and the entrance to the Promised Land. Joshua signifies Jesus, and the crossing of the Jordan and circumcision with knives of stone point to the waters of baptism and circumcision in the Spirit (Josh. 3: 14–5: 12). The cessation of the manna and entrance into the Promised Land are fulfilled by the abrogation of the law of Moses and the gift of Christ, the true bread from heaven. Cyril concludes:

When we were called by Christ to the kingdom of heaven...then the manna in type no longer pertained to us, for we are no longer fed by the letter of Moses, but from now on by the bread from heaven, that is, Christ, nourishing us to eternal life, *both through the supply of the Holy Spirit*

<sup>152</sup> In his discussion of the dual means of reception, Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 169, lists eleven texts in Cyril's corpus that use one or other set of the paired terms, *πνευματικῶς/σωματικῶς*, *νοητικῶς/αἰσθητικῶς*: *De Ador.* iii (PG 68, 297d); *In Matt.* 26: 26–8 (Reuss, 255); *In Luc.* 22: 17–22 (Reuss, 208–9); *In Jo.* 3: 5 (Pusey, i. 219); 15: 1 (Pusey, ii. 543–4); 17: 20–1 (Pusey, ii. 734); 17: 22–3 (Pusey, iii. 2–3); 20: 21 (Pusey, iii. 131); *In Rom.* 8: 3 (Pusey, iii. 213); *In 1 Cor.* 6: 15 (Pusey, iii. 263); and *Adv. Nest.* iv. 5 (ACO 1. 1. 6, 87). To these may be added *In Os.* 9: 1–4 (Pusey, *In XII Proph.*, i. 84); *In Heb.* 13: 8 (Pusey, iii. 417); and *Adv. Nest.* iv. 6 (ACO 1. 1. 6, 88). And in the following texts, though the paired terms are not employed, the same dual modality is clearly intended: *De Ador.* vi (PG 68, 416c–417a); *Glaph. in Gen.* i (PG 69, 29b–c); *Glaph. in Lev.* (PG 69, 576a–577b); *In Is.* 25: 6–7 (PG 70, 561c); 60: 1–2 (PG 70, 1217c–1220b); *In Jl.* 2: 21–4 (Pusey, *In XII Proph.*, i. 331–2); *In Mic.* 2: 5 (Pusey, *In XII Proph.*, i. 360); *In Matt.* 8: 4 (Reuss, 181–2); 26: 26–8 (Reuss, 256); *In Jo.* 6: 35 (Pusey, i. 473); 6: 53 (Pusey, i. 531); 17: 18–19 (Pusey, ii. 725); *In Heb.* 3: 5–6 (Pusey, iii. 404); *Adv. Nest.* v. 1 (ACO 1. 1. 6, 94); *Apol. Adv. Orient.* xi (ACO 1. 1. 7, 60); *R. F. ad Theod.* 30 (ACO 1. 1. 1, 61); 38 (ACO 1. 1. 1, 67); and *De Incarn.* 707c (Durand, *Deux dialogues christologiques*, 278).

*and by participation in his flesh* (διὰ τε ἧς ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος καὶ μεθέξει ἧς ἰδίας σαρκός), which infuses into us participation in God. (Pusey, i. 473, emphasis added)

The one agent of our nourishment is Christ himself, yet he operates through two means, ‘the supply of the Holy Spirit’ and ‘participation in his flesh’. The emphasis is on the content of the twofold nourishment, that is, what we actually partake of, the Holy Spirit and Christ's flesh. Neither means is explicitly connected with a sacramental occasion, but given the typological context—the mention of circumcision by the Spirit following the crossing of the Jordan, and the reference to the Passover feast in a parallel treatment, *In Jo. 7: 24*—it is probable that Cyril has the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist in mind here. The typology from Joshua gives an important clue to the intended sacramental occasions of the twofold means of nourishment through the Holy Spirit and Christ's flesh.

2. *In Rom. 8: 3* (Pusey, iii. 211–13). Cyril's chief concern with this text is to determine the significance of the phrase, ‘what the law could not do’ (τὸ ἄδύνατον τοῦ νόμου). He concludes that both the written law and the law implanted within us in Creation were teachers of the good, but incapable of empowering us to attain that good, due to the weakness brought about by sin. Only by the Incarnation, by Christ taking our flesh and sanctifying it, was this weakness overcome, and all that he achieved in his own flesh is now passed over to us: ‘For we are partakers (μετεσχημαμεν) of him both spiritually and somatically (πνευματικῶς τε καὶ σωματικῶς). For whenever Christ takes up his abode also in us through the Holy Spirit and through the mystical Eucharist (εὐλογία), then indeed the law of sin is completely condemned in us too (Pusey, iii. 213). The twofold manner is again apparent, with the same structure as in John 6: 35: the one Christ is partaken of in two ways, and the one Christ takes up his abode in us through two means. The two sentences express the same reality from different points of view, and also express the logic of Cyril's theology: because Christ comes to dwell in us through two means, we partake of him in two ways, both spiritually (through the Holy Spirit) and somatically (through the Eucharist). Cyril does not indicate in this text an occasion for the spiritual participation in the Holy Spirit. Yet it seems plainly to be distinguished,

not just from participation in Christ's flesh (as the contrary to the Spirit), but from participation which comes through the 'blessing' (εὐλογία), Cyril's normal term for the Eucharist. Furthermore, one consequence only is predicated of the dual participation in Christ: the law of sin is condemned in us. There is no distinction made in this text concerning the effects of the respective means of participation.

3. *In 1 Cor. 6: 15* (Pusey, iii. 263–4). The focal point of Cyril's commentary here is spiritual participation in Christ, building on the verses, 'But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him' (v. 17), and 'Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?' (v. 19). Yet the reference to our bodies becoming members of Christ (v. 15) prompts Cyril to recognize also a 'sensible' participation in Christ.

How might our bodies be members of Christ? We have him in ourselves sensibly and spiritually (αἰσθητικῶς τε καὶ νοητικῶς). For on the one hand, he dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, and on the other we are partakers (μετεσχημαμεν) also of his holy flesh, and we are sanctified in a twofold way (ἡγιάσμεθα τε διττικῶς). And he dwells in us as life and life-giving, in order that death which had visited our members might be destroyed through him. (Pusey, iii. 263–4)

The alternative and less frequent word pair, αἰσθητικῶς/νοητικῶς, appears here.<sup>153</sup> The use of the term, πνευματικῶς, a few lines further on to describe the manner in which we live with Christ, and the concluding passage which logically links the one who is bound to God 'spiritually' (νοητικῶς) with the fact of having been joined to him through the Spirit, confirm our conviction that Cyril uses the two word pairs interchangeably. Here again we see a clear distinction made between two means of participating in the one Christ, and as in John 6: 35, it is the content of what is participated in, namely, the Holy Spirit and his holy flesh, rather than the sacramental occasion, that is named. The respective means of participation yield equal results, a double sanctification. It is not clear in this case whether this statement implies a parallel sanctification, each doing the same work, or whether Cyril has in mind a sanctification of distinct spheres, possibly relating to the mention

<sup>153</sup> On the centrality of the distinction between τὰ αἰσθητά and τὰ νοητά more broadly in Cyril's exegesis and Christology, see Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 25–50, and Frances M. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 249–50.



of our hearts and the implied bodies which receive Christ's holy flesh.

What initial conclusions might we draw from these texts? First, a clear structure emerges for participation in Christ. By two means, through the Holy Spirit and through his flesh, Christ comes to dwell in us, and correspondingly, we receive him and become partakers of him. The duality is premised primarily of Christ's mode of indwelling (his Spirit, his flesh), but is also reflected in our dual manner of reception (our hearts, our flesh). Secondly, Cyril places the emphasis on the content of what we partake of rather than the occasion of the partaking. The sacramental context is typologically presented for both baptism and Eucharist (*In Jo. 6: 35*), but otherwise attention is given to that which we partake of, that is, that which comes to dwell in us with divine power. Finally, with the possible exception of *In 1 Cor. 6: 15*, the results of our dual participation in Christ are one and the same. Though variously stated as nourishment, sanctification, or life-giving power, the consequences do not appear to be distinguished according to the manner of indwelling.<sup>154</sup>

## A Dual Anthropology

1.*In Jo. 3: 5* (Pusey, i. 219). In this strictly baptismal text, Cyril patterns the working of God in us according to a twofold anthropology. The biblical text under consideration is, 'Unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God'. Cyril sees here a correspondence between these two agents of rebirth, water and the Spirit, and the twofold nature of the human being:

For since man is compound (*σύνθετον*) by nature, and not simple, being mingled of two [substances], plainly of a sensible (*αἰσθητὸν*) body and an

<sup>154</sup> In *De Ador.* iii (PG 68, 297d) and *Apol. Adn. Orient.* xi (Pusey, vii, 360, 362), Cyril speaks of the same duality but offers no further clue concerning the relation between the two means of indwelling. The series of related texts in *Adn. Nest.* (iv. 5, *ACO* 1. 1. 6, 85; iv. 5. 87; iv. 6. 88; v. 1. 94), are difficult to construe. The middle two texts employ the typical word pair, *πνευματικῶς* and *σωματικῶς*, while the first and last distinguish between Christ being in us 'by his own flesh (and blood)' and 'by the Holy Spirit'. It is possible that this duality corresponds to a distinction between the gift of the Spirit related to baptism and the Eucharist, but more probably the duality should be understood within the Eucharist itself. Yet the baptismal texts adduced in *Adn. Nest.* iv. 6 (Rom. 13: 14; Gal. 3: 27) coupled with the surrounding context of *Adn. Nest.* v. 1 give some indication that Cyril may have a baptism–Eucharist correlation in mind here.

intellectual (*νοερόα*) soul, he required for rebirth a twofold healing, having in some way kinship (*συγγενῶς πως ἐχοῦσης*) to both of those indicated. For by the Spirit, the spirit of man is sanctified, and again by the sanctified water, his body. (Pusey, i. 219)

The divine remedy, then, is in some sense suited to the dual composition of human beings, a certain kinship or correspondence existing between the body and water on the one hand, and the soul and Spirit on the other. It is important to discriminate here the difference between sphere of activity and effect. The effect in each sphere, namely sanctification, is identical, but the spheres of activity are distinguished. How far does Cyril want to press this correspondence, and how strictly does he understand the spheres to be operating separately? His use of the particle, *πως*, suggests that the correspondence is in some sense qualified, thus mitigating the impression of strict spheres of activity.

2. *In Jo. 6: 53* (Pusey, i. 531). In this text on the Eucharist, we see a similar distinguishing of the spheres of activity, grounded in anthropology. The argument concerns the life-giving power of Christ's flesh, and Cyril employs one of his standard metaphors—that of water taking on the property of the fire that heats it—to illustrate how a thing of one nature can take on the property of another nature. He then applies this to our transformation to life:

We too, then, in the same way, even though we are corruptible because of the nature of the flesh, having forsaken our weakness by mixing with life (*τῇ μίξει τῆς ζωῆς*), are transformed to its own property, that is, to life. For it was indeed necessary, not only for the soul to be re-created to newness of life through the Holy Spirit, but also that this material and earthly body be sanctified through the more material and kindred participation (*συγγενῶς μεταλήψεως*), and called to incorruption. (Pusey, i. 531)<sup>155</sup>

A correspondence is made between the soul and the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and between the earthly body and the life-giving flesh on the other, but here without any nuance expressed. Cyril

<sup>155</sup> See Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. catech.* 37, for a similar alignment between a dual anthropology (body and soul) and a twofold, distinguished union with Christ (cited in Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 171 n. 12). Gross, *La Divinisation du chrétien*, 289, believes Cyril must be directly dependent on Gregory for this idea, though the lack of any mention of the Spirit or of a 'spiritual' (*πνευματικῶς*) union by Gregory makes the dependence less obvious.

perceives at the very least a certain appropriateness between a dual human nature and the dual cleansing and re-creation through a twofold agency. It is, however, unclear whether this twofold action is predicated here of the Eucharist itself, or whether Cyril intends a distinction between the action of the Eucharist on the one hand, and the Holy Spirit on the other. I would suggest that the latter is more probable on the grounds that the Holy Spirit is directly named as agent here. In most of the texts under examination, the explicit naming of the Holy Spirit seems to point to that more fundamental distinction between the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism and Christ's flesh in the Eucharist, rather than to a twofold action of the Eucharist itself.

The dual means by which Christ acts upon us and comes to dwell in us, then, corresponds in some sense to the dual reality of human nature. Though the word pair *σωματικῶς/πνευματικῶς* appears in neither of these texts, Cyril does employ these paired terms in a strictly anthropological sense in his comment on John 20: 21.<sup>156</sup> And the question of the relation between the dual means of participation in Christ has been further muddled by the recognition that this duality operates within baptism and within the Eucharist, as well as apparently being the framework that distinguishes them.

## The Last Supper Accounts

1. *In Luc. 22: 17–22* (Smith, 568–71; Reuss, 208–10). The homily in Luke that precedes this Last Supper account (*In Luc. 22: 7–16*) sheds light on how Cyril will interpret the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The man carrying the jar of water (Luke 22: 10) is interpreted as mystically pointing to the waters of baptism, for ‘we are washed by them from the stains of sin, that we may also become a holy temple of God, and partakers of his divine nature by participation in the Holy Spirit’ (Smith, 565; Reuss, 207).<sup>157</sup> Importantly, Cyril identifies the gift of the Holy Spirit with the occasion of baptism here, and further, he says that this prepares us to be raised to the upper room, clearly a

<sup>156</sup> In this text, *In Jo. 20: 21* (Pusey, iii. 131), Cyril speaks of the evils that can afflict us, both *σωματικῶς* and *πνευματικῶς*, plainly pointing to bodily and spiritual ailments.

<sup>157</sup> In the parallel passage, *In Matt. 26: 18* (Reuss, 254), the unnamed man figuratively represents those preparing for the Passover through hearing the gospel, a preparation that is linked to baptism and the gift of the Spirit.

reference to the institution of the Lord's Supper that follows. Cyril introduces here a far from obvious spiritual interpretation of the Passover preparation in order to point to baptism as the preparation for the Lord's Supper. This is one instance of the way in which he tends to bring baptism and the Eucharist together and view them synoptically. Moreover, Cyril understands Christ's words, 'I will not eat this Passover until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of heaven' (v. 16), to be a reference to baptism itself, or more precisely to that transfer event that includes justification by faith, cleansing in baptism, participation in the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual service of living by the gospel (Smith, 566; Reuss, 208). All this is preparation for the true Passover, who is Christ himself. A clear delineation and order is established along the lines of sacramental initiation, which is then carried into the commentary on the Last Supper.

As noted above, Cyril begins his exposition of Luke 22: 17–22 by speaking of a dual participation in the one Christ. Given the immediate context of the previous homily, the duality of participation here is best interpreted as corresponding to the sacramental occasions of baptism and the Eucharist. Yet in the paragraph that follows, Cyril applies the parallel terms *σωματικῶς* and *πνευματικῶς* directly to the fruits of the Eucharist itself:

For first offering up prayers of thanksgiving (*τῷ εὐχαριστίας*), and likewise together with God the Father, glorifying the Son with the Holy Spirit, we thus approach the holy tables, believing that we are made alive and we are blessed, both somatically and pneumatically (*καὶ σωματικῶς καὶ πνευματικῶς*). For we receive in ourselves the Word of God the Father, the Word who became incarnate for us, who is life and life-giving. (Reuss, 208–9; Smith, 568)

In this case, the word pair, *σωματικῶς* and *πνευματικῶς*, applies to a twofold effect in us, rather than the twofold manner of Christ's presence expressed in the opening paragraph, thus demonstrating that Cyril is capable of applying equivalent terms analogously to two different realities in the very same context. Then at the close of the homily, he apparently reverts to the first usage, distinguishing the reception of the Holy Spirit on the one hand from the Eucharist on the other:

For it was necessary, then, that he be in us in a way befitting to God (*θεοπρεπῶς*) through the Holy Spirit, and, as it were, mixed with our

bodies through his holy flesh and his precious blood, which indeed we also have now for a life-giving Eucharist (*ελογιά*), in the form of bread and wine. (Reuss, 209–10; Smith, 571)

Two conclusions follow. First, as we noted above, Cyril can apply the *σωματικῶς/πνευματικῶς* distinction both to the distinct modes of Christ's dwelling in us (through the Holy Spirit in baptism, and through his own flesh in the Eucharist), and to the twofold effect of the Eucharist itself in us. He employs these terms, then, analogously, not univocally, and care must be taken to determine their reference in each context. Secondly, though Cyril often links the Eucharist with sanctification of the flesh in particular, here he ascribes to it a life-giving effect on both body and soul, in a manner similar to what we observed in his commentary on John 6: 56.

2. *In Matt. 26: 26–8* (Reuss, 255–6). The fragment from Cyril's commentary on the Last Supper in Matthew closely parallels certain sections from his commentary in Luke. Cyril speaks of the pattern Christ gave us by offering thanks to the Father himself, explaining that we use the same words and earnestly implore that the bread and wine be transformed for us into a spiritual blessing (*εὐλογίαν τῇν πνευματικὴν*), 'in order that by participating (*μετασχόντες*) in them we may be sanctified somatically and spiritually (*σωματικῶς καὶ πνευματικῶς*)' (Reuss, 255). Here, the duality is applied to the twofold effect of the Eucharist in us, as we saw in the one instance in Luke above.

Further on in the same fragment we find a text that places the Holy Spirit in relation to the transformation of the elements into Christ's body and blood. Meunier translates this text as follows: 'It was necessary that Christ, by the action of the Holy Spirit, be in us as mixed with our bodies in a manner suitable to God, by his holy flesh and his precious blood.'<sup>158</sup> He suggests that the mention of the Holy Spirit here refers only to his role as sanctifier in the epiclesis called down upon the gifts. Such an interpretation indeed appears plausible. But I would like to suggest a different reading, based on a comparison of this text with a nearly identical one we have already examined in Luke. The texts from Reuss are as follows, with variations between the two in bold:

<sup>158</sup> Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 167: 'Il fallait que le Christ, par l'action de l'Esprit saint, soit en nous comme mêlé à nos corps d'une manière qui convienne à Dieu, par sa sainte chair et son précieux sang'

MATTHEW *ἔδεδυγὰρ αὐτὸν διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐν ἡμῖν θεοπροπῶς*

*συνανακλῆσθαι* [δὴ] <sup>159</sup> *ὥσπερ τοῖς ἡμετέροις σώμασι*

*διὰ τῆς ἁγίας σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ τιμίου αἵματος.*

LUKE *ἔδει τοσούτων αὐτὸν διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐν ἡμῖν γενεσθαι θεοπροπῶς,*

*συνανακλῆσθαι* *δε* *ὥσπερ τοῖς ἡμετέροις σώμασι*

*διὰ τῆς ἁγίας αὐτοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ τοῦ τιμίου αἵματος.*

The strikingly apparent correlation between these two texts is strengthened by the fact that the text which immediately follows these lines in each fragment is identical. Yet the difference between them is even more noteworthy. The verb, *γενέσθαι*, in the first clause of the Lukan fragment, coupled with the conjunction, *δέ*, in the second clause, gives a very different reading from that of the Matthean fragment, and points to a distinction between the presence of the Holy Spirit in us in the first clause, and the mixing of Christ's flesh and blood with our bodies in the second and third clauses. My suggestion is that the fragment from Matthew is in fact a corruption of Cyril's homily on the Last Supper in Luke, and if so, should be adjusted in order to be read in the same manner as the Lukan text. It is, of course, possible that if corruption has occurred, it is the Lukan text that has been corrupted, and the Matthean text that represents the original form. But given that the Syriac text of this homily in Luke is identical in meaning with the Greek fragment we possess, the translation into Syriac presumably having been made from a complete Greek original, it is more probable that the text in Matthew has suffered corruption.<sup>160</sup>

A separate fragment, also from the Last Supper in Matthew, which appears to speak of the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts as a direct result of participation in the Eucharist, demands our notice as well: 'He gave us, therefore, his own body and blood, so that through them also the power of corruption might be destroyed, and that he might dwell in our hearts through the

<sup>159</sup> Migne's text of this portion of *In Matt. 26: 26–8* (PG 72, 452d) is identical to Reuss's, except for the addition of the particle, *δὴ*, here. The similarity to the *δέ* of the Lukan text, placed identically after the infinitive, only strengthens the suspicion that corruption may have occurred.

<sup>160</sup> Reuss himself, *Matthäus-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*, pp. xxxv–xxxvii, notes the inclusion of over forty fragments from Cyril's Lukan homilies into the Matthean Catenae, and judges that this Last Supper fragment in Matthew is in fact from Cyril's homily in Luke, as I have proposed.

Holy Spirit, and that we might become partakers of sanctification and might be called both heavenly men and spiritual (πνευματικοί) (Reuss, 256). If this fragment is genuine and uncorrupted, it is an unusual instance in Cyril, possibly unique, in which he unequivocally states that the Holy Spirit himself dwells in our hearts as a consequence of participation in the Eucharist. This fragment from *In Matt. 26: 26–8* is Meunier's main support for the notion of the Eucharist conveying the Holy Spirit, as if the coming of the Spirit is interior to and dependent on the physical communion through the Eucharist.<sup>161</sup> It is also widely cited as expressing Cyril's characteristic teaching on the Eucharist. But the critical Greek text is not without its problems.<sup>162</sup> These irregularities do not demonstrate corruption, but they do signal potential difficulties with the text and suggest that caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions concerning the shape of Cyril's theology of the Eucharist on the basis of this fragment.

## Key Johannine Texts

Of the remaining texts that concern the dual modality of Christ's presence in us, I will examine two from Cyril's commentary on John, *In Jo. 15: 1* and *17: 18–23*, which are pivotal for understanding his notion of dual manner of indwelling.

1. *In Jo. 15: 1* (Pusey, ii. 534–47). The extensive commentary on this verse opens with a catalogue of varied expressions for our union with Christ through the Holy Spirit, by which we are made partakers of the divine nature. In demonstrative language, Cyril speaks of the Only-Begotten Word imparting to us a 'kinship' (συγγένειαν) to his own nature and that of God the Father, by

<sup>161</sup> *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 167.

<sup>162</sup> The presence of six discrepancies between the text in Reuss and that found in Migne (*PG* 72, 452a–b) in just twelve lines of text suggests that there has been difficulty in transmission in the first instance. But the crucial lines of the text in Reuss (which follow) also show two irregularities: [ὁ Χριστός] ἔδωκεν οὐ μόνον τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα τε καὶ ὧμα, ἥνα δὲ καὶ ὧμα καὶ τὸ τῆς φθορᾶς καταλύεται κρᾶτος, ἐνοικεῖται δὲ ταῖς ἡμετέραις ψυχαῖς διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, καὶ γενώμεθα ἀγιασμοῦ μέτοχοι καὶ οὐράνιοι ἀνθρώποι καὶ πνευματικοὶ χρηματίζομεν (Reuss, 256). First, the three instances of καὶ in the final clause are uncoordinated, leaving it ambiguous whether the middle term, καὶ οὐράνιοι ἀνθρώποι, belongs with γενώμεθα or with χρηματίζομεν. Cyril is normally more careful in his syntax. More significantly, there is an unmarked and uncharacteristic shift of subject within the ἥνα clause which is at least cause for concern (the subject of the first verb, καταλύεται, being τὸ κρᾶτος; the subject of the second verb, ἐνοικεῖται, being the more distant, ὁ Χριστός).

giving us the Spirit, 'by whom God is understood to dwell in us' (Pusey, ii. 535). Yet at a certain point in his exposition, Cyril directly quotes an unnamed Arian opponent who attempts to use this verse to drive a wedge between the nature of the vinedresser (God the Father) and the vine (the Son). The Arian foe further argues that our union with Christ, a union of branches to the vine, is not fleshly (*σαρκικῶς*), but only spiritual (*πνευματικῶς*), a union grounded solely in faith and temper of mind (Pusey, ii. 539). It is in this latter polemical context that Cyril first vigorously opposes the Arian denial of a bodily relation to Christ from the parable of vine and branches, and then applies the parable of the vine and branches to our 'natural participation' (*μέθεξιν φύσικῇν*) in Christ through the Eucharist (adducing Rom. 12: 5, 1 Cor. 10: 17, Eph. 3: 6, 1 Cor. 6: 15, and John 6: 56, 53–4 in support of this conclusion). Cyril twice employs the *σωματικῶς/πνευματικῶς* couplet to explicate the parable of the vine and branches:

Inasmuch as we partake of a communion (*κοινωνίας*) with him, not only spiritual (*πνευματικῇς*), but also somatic (*σωματικῇς*), why does he vainly speak against us, saying that, because we are not attached to him bodily (*σωματικῶς*) from communion (*κοινωνίας*), but rather, he says, by faith and by a disposition of love according to the law, [Christ] did not call his own flesh the vine, but rather his Godhead?...And we say this, not as attempting to abolish the possibility of union with Christ through right faith and genuine love, but rather to demonstrate that both spiritually and somatically (*καί πνευματικῶς καί σωματικῶς*), Christ is the vine and we are the branches. (Pusey, ii. 543–4)

Cyril's commentary on John 15: 1 is often cited in connection with, or even as evidence for, the superiority of eucharistic, somatic indwelling in Cyril's thought.<sup>163</sup> But such a conclusion goes beyond what Cyril himself appears to be asserting here. His claim is simply that the eucharistic, somatic mode of union is 'the interpretation that is more fitting and appropriate *πρεπωδέστερόν τε καί*

<sup>163</sup> Weigl, *Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyrill*, 149; Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, 91; L. Janssens, 'Notre filiation divine d'après Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Ephemerides theologiae lovaniensis*, 15 (1938), 251–2; Gilles Langevin, 'Le Thème de l'incorruptibilité dans le commentaire de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie sur l'Évangile selon saint Jean', *Sciences Ecclésiastiques*, 8 (1956), 311–14; B. Fraigneau-Julien, 'L'Inhabitation de la sainte Trinité dans l'âme selon saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Revue de Sciences Religieuses*, 30 (1956), 142; Marie-Odile Boulnois, 'L'Eucharistie, mystère d'union chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: les modèles d'union trinitaire et christologique', *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 74 (2000), 155, 160.



*οἰκεῖ ὅτερον*) to the passage' (Pusey, ii. 544). Because the metaphor of vine and branches indicates a union of things that are the same in nature, the union of Christ's flesh with ours in the Eucharist is a more fitting interpretation of this text than an interpretation based solely upon the spiritual manner of union. The greater fittingness of the somatic mode pertains to the exegesis of the metaphor of vine and branches, and ought not to be read as a tacit claim for the superiority of the somatic means of union in general. In fact Cyril's aim here is to unite the two means, not to establish a ranking between them. In his summary comment cited above, Cyril joins the two means (somatic and pneumatic) together as expressing most fully how Christ is the vine and we are the branches. Furthermore, the clear distinction that Cyril makes between the two means of union would seem to indicate that the spiritual means of union, at least in this instance, lies outside of the Eucharist, rather than within it.

2. *In Jo. 17: 18–23* (Pusey, ii. 717–37; iii. 1–4). John 17: 19, 'And for their sake I sanctify myself, that they may also be sanctified in truth', raises the question for Cyril, how are we to understand what it means to say that Christ sanctifies himself, and how is that sanctification carried through to us? Taking each question in turn, Cyril contends that Christ 'is sanctified for us in the Holy Spirit, though not as some other sanctifies him, but rather he himself working (*αὐτοῦργο ὕψτος*) by himself the sanctification of his own flesh' (Pusey, ii. 724). He later reiterates the point: 'Since, then, the flesh is not holy of itself, for this reason it was sanctified even in Christ, with the Word who dwelt in it sanctifying his own temple through the Holy Spirit' (Pusey, ii. 726). In the same way, Cyril says, we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, through whom we become 'sons of God' and partakers of the divine nature. The trajectory of Cyril's thought is evident: the Word became flesh and sanctified the whole of our nature through the Holy Spirit, making a wall of partition between our nature and sin, so that participation in the Spirit might be restored to us. The activity of the Holy Spirit is pivotal for sanctification in each sphere, spiritual and bodily.

Cyril then makes what appears to be a reference to dual participation, that through the obedience and righteousness of Christ, 'the blessing (*εὐλογία*) and the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit might extend to the whole of our nature' (Pusey, ii.

725). The frequent distinction between the Eucharist and the gift of the Spirit appears to be in view, and the comment following, in which the baptism of Christ is the occasion for his receipt of the Holy Spirit, makes the link between the gift of the Spirit and baptism evident. It is not certain, however, that the term *εὐλογία* is a reference to the Eucharist in this context. As noted above, this term can be applied to the gift of the Spirit, and plainly is so applied in the comment on John 17: 20–1 which immediately follows. Given that in this context no other mention of the Eucharist is made, it is at least possible that Cyril does not have the Eucharist, or dual modality, in view here.

In his commentary on John 17: 21, ‘That they may all be one, even as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they may also be in us,’ Cyril opens with the same theme of sanctification by the Spirit, but he then turns to consider how it is that we are in Christ and united to one another as he is in the Father. The topic of union is under discussion here, and it is noteworthy that Cyril first points to ‘participation in the Spirit’ (*τῆς μετουσίᾳ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος*) as the irreplaceable means of union with God (Pusey, ii. 731). In order to follow the train of Cyril’s exposition, the steps by which he develops his account of our unity with Christ and with each other may be enumerated in the following way.

(a) Cyril assumes the fact of the ‘natural unity’ (*φυσικῇ ἐνότητι*) that exists between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and on this basis proposes to pursue the issue of how we are one with each other and with God, both somatically and spiritually (*σωματικῶς τε καὶ πνευματικῶς*) (Pusey, ii. 734).

(b) The cause of our union is the Incarnation of the Word, ‘mixing (*ἀναμειγνύς*) himself, so to speak, with our nature’, and ‘being at the same time God and man, in order that, having united in himself, as it were, things much divided by nature which stand apart from oneness of nature with each other, he might reveal man a sharer and partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4)’ (Pusey, ii. 734–5).

(c) The first consequence for us is that we receive the ‘participation and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit’ (*ἡ τοῦ Πνεύματος κοινωνία καὶ διαμονή*), which by implication Christ first received at his baptism. His reception is ‘a beginning and a way’ for our

partaking of the Holy Spirit and of our union with God (Pusey, ii. 735). Here, I suggest, is the first means of participation in Christ, accomplished by the indwelling Holy Spirit and related to the occasion of baptism.

(d) Cyril next moves on to speak about another way in which we are joined together and commingled with God, a way devised by the counsel and wisdom of the Only-Begotten and the Father, namely, the Eucharist, by which we attain to a natural union (*φυσικῆς ἐνώσεως*) with one another and with Christ (Pusey, ii. 735). (Cyril cites 1 Cor. 10: 17, Eph. 4: 14–16, and Eph. 3: 5–6 in support of this natural union.)

(e) The commentary then returns to union specifically through the Holy Spirit, that by receiving one and the same Spirit we are also commingled together and with God (Pusey, ii. 735). Cyril applies the very same terms to the union through the Spirit that he has just used to describe union through Christ's flesh.

(f) The two means of union are then placed in parallel and on equal footing: 'For as the power of his holy flesh makes those in whom it comes to be of one body (*συσσώμους*), in the same way, I deem that the one, undivided Spirit of God, who dwells in all, leads all together into a spiritual unity' (Pusey, ii. 737). Cyril then clarifies once again how we are united to the Father and to one another through participation in the Spirit of God.

(g) In a final summary, our union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is described in terms of four means: (1) identity of mind; (2) conformity in a righteous life; (3) participation in the holy flesh of Christ; and (4) participation in the Holy Spirit (Pusey, ii. 737). The four ways described here are in reverse order of their acquisition in Cyril's theological schema. The gift of the Holy Spirit and then participation in Christ's flesh are properly means to our union with God, with a life of righteousness and identity of mind following, as the course of obedience by which we preserve and augment this union.

This extended exposition of John 17:18–23 offers us Cyril's most theologically complete account of our participation in God through Christ in the Holy Spirit, and the dual means by which this participation is accomplished. Grounding our union with God on the unity of the persons of the Trinity, and then on the union of the divine and human natures in Christ, Cyril explicates the order

and fundamental equality of the two means.<sup>164</sup> The first means is participation in the Holy Spirit, linked with Christ's reception of the Spirit which occurred at his baptism. A specially devised means of union through the holy flesh of Christ in the Eucharist then follows. Each means accomplishes union with God and with one another, and the emphasis of his exposition is the equality and complementarity of the two means.<sup>165</sup>

## Conclusions

Our investigation into how Cyril of Alexandria conceives the means by which the divine life in Christ is appropriated to us can be expressed initially in the following statement. We receive Christ into ourselves, participating in him and his life, and thus in the divine nature, through a twofold means: through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, normally related to baptism, and through partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>166</sup> Yet this initial statement requires further explanation and sorting in order to handle potential inconsistencies in Cyril's account, and to draw out the implications for the shape of Cyril's theology of sanctification and divinization.

## The Indwelling of Christ

Cyril's most typical expression of this twofold participation is some variation on 'through the Holy Spirit and through the flesh and

<sup>164</sup> See also the commentary that follows, *In Jo. 17: 22–3* (Pusey, iii. 3), for a confirmation of the complementary modes of divine indwelling. For the use of trinitarian and Christological models of union to describe our union with God through the Eucharist, see Boulnois, 'L'Eucharistie', 147–72. She draws her conclusions largely from Cyril's commentary on John 17.

<sup>165</sup> Boulnois, 'L'Eucharistie', 147–72, and Welch, *Christology and Eucharist*, 97–101, interpret Cyril's commentary on John 17: 21 as describing primarily a twofold modality within the Eucharist. However, Caggiano, 'The Eschatological Implications of the Notion of Re-Creation', 114–15, agrees with my reading, that the union through the indwelling Spirit here refers to a prior union related to baptism.

<sup>166</sup> For Cyril, the modality of the spoken word approaches the status of a means of divine life, but he stops short of simply according it this rank. He typically describes the power of the spoken word, often in connection with Heb. 4: 12, as an instrument either of Christ or of the Spirit, and as a means by which either Christ or the Spirit acts upon or within the human heart. See also *In Jo. 4: 15* (Pusey, i. 271–2); *7: 24* (Pusey, i. 631); *15: 3* (Pusey, ii. 554); *In Luc. 12: 49–53* (Reuss, 148; Smith, 377–8); and *13: 21* (Reuss, 154; Smith, 395).

blood of Christ'. His emphasis is plainly on the means by which Christ comes to dwell in us. Christ dwells in us, first of all, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, and secondly through his flesh and blood, which by eating we take into ourselves. The theological principle at work here is that only God himself can truly sanctify, vivify, justify, and cause us to be adopted as children of God through participation in his divine nature. The presence of God dwelling in us, and conversely our participation in him, is the *sine qua non* of newness of life in Christ, and a characteristic mark of Cyril's thought.<sup>167</sup> It is only by means of Christ dwelling in us through the Holy Spirit and through his own flesh that we can be conformed to the image of the Son and bear the fruits of the Spirit.<sup>168</sup>

## Relation to Baptism and Eucharist

I have attempted to show that the expression, 'through the indwelling Holy Spirit', is normally related to the sacramental occasion of baptism, and that 'through Christ's flesh and blood' is likewise typically linked to the sacramental occasion of the Eucharist. The latter claim is not controversial, but the former requires further demonstration. Several factors point towards this conclusion. First, the typological foreshadowing of baptism and circumcision of the Spirit, portrayed through the crossing of the Jordan by Joshua and the circumcision of the people of Israel, is one common way by which Cyril establishes this essential relation (e.g. *In Jo.* 6: 35; 7: 24; *In Luc.* 2: 21–4). Secondly, the sacramental order of initiation plainly shapes his spiritual exegesis of many texts, both Old and New Testament (e.g. *In Jo.* 7: 24; *In Luc.* 22: 7–22; *In Jo.* 17: 20–1).<sup>169</sup> Finally, the link between baptism and the

<sup>167</sup> Cf. *In Matt.* 26: 26–8 (Reuss, 256) where Cyril states the impossibility of salvation apart from the presence of Christ within us; and *In Heb.* 3: 5–6 (Pusey, iii. 404) in which Cyril links five biblical texts (2 Cor. 6: 16; Ezek. 37: 27; John 14: 20; 1 Cor. 6: 17, John 17: 20–3) to demonstrate that Christ comes to dwell in us so that we might be displayed as temples of the living God.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Janssens, 'Notre filiation divine', 275. See *In Jo.* 15: 1 (Pusey, ii. 541) for the divine nature as the root and origin in us of the power of producing all spiritual fruitfulness.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. *In Jo.* 20: 17 (Pusey, iii. 118–19), where Cyril interprets Christ's command that Mary not touch him as indicating the necessity of receiving the Holy Spirit in baptism before being allowed to handle the holy body of Christ in the Eucharist; *In Is.* 25: 6–7 (PG 70, 561c–d), where Cyril refers the myrrh and wine respectively to the gift of the Spirit in baptism and the Eucharist; and *In Is.* 55: 1–2 (PG 70, 1218c–1221b), where the gift of living water, understood by Cyril as participation in the Spirit, precedes the partaking of the 'wine and the fat', which he refers to the body and blood of Christ.

πνευματικῶς means of divine indwelling can be detected in the following texts: *In Jo. 6: 35*, *In Luc. 22: 7–16*, and *In Jo. 17: 18–19*, 20–1.<sup>170</sup> This last text provides a key theological clue as to why Cyril normally connects the gift of the Spirit and baptism. Our sanctification is grounded in the sanctification Christ accomplished in his own flesh. But Cyril views Christ's own economic sanctification as primarily accomplished through his own Spirit at his baptism. Because Christ is the model for us, our spiritual sanctification is effected by the gift of the Spirit in baptism.

Luise Abramowski, in an excursus on the concept of participation in Cyril,<sup>171</sup> sees the Spirit and Christ's own flesh as operating independently, side by side within the Eucharist in the two texts she considers: *In Jo. 6: 53* (Pusey, i. 531); *R. F. ad Theod. 38* (ACO 1. 1. 1, 67). She concludes from this that ‘when “participation” has any positive meaning and importance at all for Cyril’, it is with respect to the Eucharist.<sup>172</sup> In both texts she cites, however, I understand Cyril to be distinguishing and co-ordinating the gift of the Spirit in baptism and that of Christ's flesh in the Eucharist. This is especially evident in the second text (*R. F. ad Theod. 38*), in which Cyril first treats at some length our participation in the Spirit through baptism, citing Acts 2: 38, John 20: 22, and Rom. 8: 9–10 in a baptismal setting. Then follows the statement (cited by Abramowski) in which Cyril says that Christ gives us life, not only through the Spirit, but also through his own flesh. And only then does Cyril develop the eucharistic mode of indwelling with citations from John 6.<sup>173</sup> The baptism-Eucharist framework is in fact very much in evidence here, and follows the pattern we noted above.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Cyril explicitly links the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit to baptism in the following texts: *In Matt. 3: 11* (Reuss, 161); *12: 31–2* (Reuss, 203); *20: 1–16* (Reuss, 229–30); *In Luc. 2: 21* (Smith, 56–7; Reuss, 57); *4: 1–2* (Smith, 85–7; Reuss, 64); *In Jo. 3: 29* (Pusey, i. 237); *5: 35* (Pusey, i. 370); *7: 39* (Pusey, i. 697); *9: 6–7* (Pusey, ii. 155–9); *13: 8* (Pusey, ii. 348); *In Rom. 1: 3–4* (Pusey, iii. 175–6).

<sup>171</sup> ‘The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia’, in idem, *Formula and Context: Studies in Early Christian Thought* (Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1992), 17–22.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>173</sup> ACO 1. 1. 1, 66–7.

<sup>174</sup> In the same way, I differ from Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, 87–8 n. 56, 92, who interprets the σωματικῶς/πνευματικῶς duality nearly always within the Eucharist. By misreading a number of key texts in this fashion, he is left to strain for an explanation to account for Cyril's apparent inconsistency.

Based on the strength of this paradigm in Cyril, I propose that those texts which do not make the link with baptism explicit, but none the less speak in terms of the same twofold means ('through the Holy Spirit and through Christ's flesh'), ought normally to be interpreted in the light of the texts that do make the sacramental connection clear, unless it is plain that the duality refers to a twofold effect of the Eucharist itself. There is, on the contrary, no reason to suppose otherwise, given Cyril's frequent and unequivocal statements about the essential connection of the gift of the Holy Spirit and baptism.<sup>175</sup> To argue for this is not to deny either the spiritual effect of the Eucharist, or that at times Cyril may speak of the Holy Spirit given in and through the Eucharist.

Why, then, might Cyril not make the connection between participation in the Holy Spirit and baptism more explicit? One reason has already been noted, that Cyril's primary concern is the fact (and indeed the effect) of Christ's indwelling presence, not so much the sacramental event or occasion of it, and this is equally true for baptism and the Eucharist. Here I would take issue with the degree of disparity that Meunier finds between the sacramental connection of the two modes, in his claim that the *σωματικῶς* modality is always explicitly related to the Eucharist, whereas the *πνευματικῶς* modality frequently is not explicitly connected to baptism.<sup>176</sup> On the contrary, references in Cyril to the life-giving power of Christ's flesh are *not* always directly related to the Eucharist.<sup>177</sup> Cyril can speak of the life-giving power of Christ's flesh outside any eucharistic context, even directing it to the reception of baptism, as for example in his commentary on the healing of the blind man in John 9: 6–7.<sup>178</sup> Here the anointing of the man's eyes with spittle is attributed to the life-giving power of Christ's body, but is identified with the preparatory anointing and enlightening that leads to baptism, prefigured in Jesus's command to wash in

<sup>175</sup> Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 198, moving from texts that are less explicit to those that are more so, arrives at a similar conclusion concerning the link between the gift of the Holy Spirit and baptism: 'Is there, then, a precise link between baptism and the reception of the Spirit? It seems difficult to deny it.' Weigl, *Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyrill*, 169–73, strains to find evidence in Cyril for the further gift of the Spirit outside baptism in confirmation and penance, but the evidence he musters is slight and he himself admits the paucity of references to a post-baptismal anointing of the Spirit.

<sup>176</sup> *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 200.

<sup>177</sup> e.g. *In Jo.* 11: 1–2 (Pusey, ii. 263); *In Luc.* 7: 11–15 (Reuss, 74; Smith, 154–5); *First Letter to Succensus*, 9, 10 (Wickham, 78–80); *Resp. ad Tib.* 9 (Wickham, 162–4).

<sup>178</sup> Pusey, ii. 157–8.

the pool of Siloam. Moreover, when the expression ‘Christ's flesh and blood’ or some variation is employed, this is not so much pointed towards the sacramental occasion of the Eucharist, as it is directed to the content of what is received, in parallel with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A second possible explanation may be the dominance of John 20: 22—of the Incarnate Christ as the giver of the Spirit—in Cyril's exegetical and theological scheme for the economy of salvation. For Cyril, the decisive return of the Holy Spirit to the human race is first related to Jesus's baptism, but the actual transfer of the Spirit to us occurs in John 20: 22, when Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on the disciples, fulfilling the initial breathing of the Holy Spirit into Adam in Gen. 2: 7. The breathing of the Spirit in John 20: 22, however, does not place the gift of the Spirit in a baptismal context, as Acts 2 does by joining the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit to baptism. This is not to suggest that Cyril waffles on the essential link between the event of baptism and the gift of the indwelling Spirit, but only to observe that when his primary concern is our reception of the Spirit, as the defining reality of the New Covenant, Cyril follows the line from Gen. 2: 7 through John 20: 22, and does not always make the baptismal link explicit.<sup>179</sup>

## The Twofold Means of Indwelling

I have argued that the terms, *σωματικῶς/πνευματικῶς* and *ἀσθητῶς/νοητῶς*, are in a majority of instances applied by Cyril to the twofold reception of Christ in baptism and the Eucharist respectively.<sup>180</sup> But they are also employed to identify a dual manner of reception within the Eucharist, and the same idea of a dual corporeal-spiritual sanctification is applied to baptism (*In*

<sup>179</sup> See G. M. de Durand, ‘Pentecôte johannique et pentecôte lucanienne chez certains Pères’, *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, 79 (1978), 124, for his discussion of the priority of John 20: 22 over Acts 2 in Cyril's account of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>180</sup> H. du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité chez S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Vrin, 1944), 52, 190–5, 431, links the terms *πνευματικῶς/σωματικῶς* to baptism and the Eucharist respectively, and understands these sacraments as the two means of divinization in Cyril's theology. His treatment of this duality, however, fails to identify Cyril's equivocal use and application of *πνευματικῶς/σωματικῶς*. Weigl, *Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyrill*, 140–55, also applies the paired terms to baptism and the Eucharist, yet he concludes that the eucharistic means is higher and more complete in the sense that it also contains spiritual communion within itself. Cf. Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 19.



*Ja. 3: 5*). In this latter case, Cyril clearly sees a symmetry between the dual aspect of Christ, human and divine, and the dual constitution of human nature, body and soul, and he can speak as if the operations are neatly distinguished, the flesh of Christ, or the baptismal water, operating on our corporeal nature, and the Spirit of Christ operating on our intellectual or spiritual nature. Indeed, Cyril tends to identify the fruits of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with the spiritual and moral domain, and the fruits of the eucharistic indwelling with more somatic characteristics, such as life and incorruption. Yet if we press this neat parallel structure too far, it does not stand up to Cyril's own account of the dual effect of both the indwelling Holy Spirit and the flesh of Christ. For Cyril, the indwelling Spirit operates not only upon our spiritual nature, accomplishing a moral purification and renewal, but also upon our corporeal nature, preserving us for incorruption and resurrection.<sup>181</sup> Likewise, the Eucharist affects not only our corporeal nature, but transforms the whole of our nature, body and spirit, and accomplishes as well our moral healing.<sup>182</sup> Is Cyril, then, inconsistent in his explanation of the means by which we are, body and soul, made alive and united to Christ? Cyril is at times tempted to press the anthropological duality too far, and to speak in terms of strict lines of correspondence between the somatic manner of indwelling and the effects on our bodies on the one hand, and the pneumatic manner of indwelling and the effects on our spirits on the other. Such expressions are not fully consistent with his aim elsewhere expressed to show that each manner of indwelling brings the full fruit of Christ's life to both body and soul.

Yet this should not lead us to conclude that the *σωματικῶς/πνευματικῶς* distinction in Cyril is without purpose or signify

<sup>181</sup> Cyril's description of the activity of the Holy Spirit in terms of either corruption/incorruption or life/death appears in the following texts: *In Ja. 1: 12* (Pusey, i. 133); *6: 40* (Pusey, i. 499); *7: 24* (Pusey, i. 634–6, 639, 641); *7: 39* (Pusey, i. 694); *14: 20* (Pusey, ii. 487); *17: 18–19* (Pusey, ii. 725); *In Rom. 8: 11* (Pusey, iii. 214–15). The commentary on John 14: 20 provides the theological rationale for this connection; the commentary on Rom 8: 11 establishes the role of the Holy Spirit in our own resurrection. For the connection of the Spirit to the bodily resurrection, see also *In Ja. 10: 10* (Pusey, ii. 220); *In Luc. 7: 11* (Smith, 154–5) and *20: 27–38* (Reuss, 202; Smith, 541).

<sup>182</sup> In addition to the texts cited above (*In Ja. 6: 35, 37, 56* ; *In Luc. 22: 17–22* ) which speak of the spiritual, as well as somatic, effects of the Eucharist, see also *In Luc. 4: 38* (Reuss, 241–2; Smith, 99–101); *In Ja. 13: 27* (Pusey, ii. 369); *19: 23–4* (Pusey, iii. 88); *In Rom. 8: 3* (Pusey, iii. 213).

cance. It is crucial to recognize that Cyril applies these terms analogically to different realities. His primary use of these terms, as we have seen, distinguishes the mode of Christ's indwelling—spiritually by the Holy Spirit, and somatically by his flesh and blood—and the manner of reception by us: we receive the somatic mode of Christ's presence in our bodies in the Eucharist, and receive the Spirit of Christ in our spirits through baptism. In this primary use of the *σωματικῶς/πνευματικῶς* distinction, then, Cyril's use is coherent and consistent with his overall theological approach. The twofold modality is designed to express the point of union and the manner of union between Christ and the believer, and the goal is to show that the whole of human nature, corporeal and spiritual, receives a fitting remedy in the Incarnate Christ. It is only when Cyril speaks in terms of separate spheres of activity for the respective somatic–spiritual means that he comes into some tension with his other statements that entail that each manner of indwelling convey the life-giving power of Christ to the whole of our nature, body and soul.

I have observed throughout this discussion that the effects accomplished in us, with respect to each mode of Christ's indwelling presence, appear to be identical rather than distinct or separate. Each mode is life-giving, each is sanctifying, each can be seen to affect both body and soul, and each is depicted as making us partakers of the divine nature.<sup>183</sup> It is true that certain effects, such as participation in the divine nature, are more commonly assigned to the pneumatic mode, while others, such as incorruption, are normally depicted as consequences of the somatic mode. This is in line with Cyril's tendency to align the spiritual mode with spiritual effects, and the somatic mode with corporeal effects. But a comprehensive reading of Cyril's statements yields the conclusion that the effects of the two modes of Christ's indwelling presence are equivalent.<sup>184</sup> In sum, the agency of life-giving power is one (that is, the agency of the Incarnate Christ), and the results in us are identical, but the manner of indwelling and the manner of reception is twofold.

<sup>183</sup> See Cyril's comment on the healing of the leper, *In Matt. 8: 3* (Reuss, 181), where our sanctification is ascribed equally and distinctively to the Spirit and to communion with Christ's body.

<sup>184</sup> Cf. Weigl, *Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyril*, 154.

## The Shape of Cyril's Theology

Finally, we come to the implications of the twofold means of divine indwelling for the overall shape of Cyril's theology. I will frame my own thesis *vis-à-vis* the views of three other commentators: Henry Chadwick, Ezra Gebremedhin, and Bernard Meunier.

In his article, 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy',<sup>185</sup> Henry Chadwick claims that Cyril's 'fundamental objections to Antiochene doctrine lay rather in the repercussions of such thought upon the doctrines of the eucharist and the atonement', and as Chadwick develops it, Cyril's doctrine of the Eucharist *in* the atonement.<sup>186</sup> Chadwick's treatment includes the following claims: (1) that 'the eucharist is central for the comprehension of Cyril's religion'; (2) that according to Cyril, 'Those who do not receive the Son of God in the sacrament are thus completely excluded from the blessed life. Only so are we intimately united to the Logos'; and (3) that Cyril's concern is 'to make the world safe for this belief concerning the means of grace'.<sup>187</sup> I concur with Chadwick that the doctrine of the Eucharist, as an extension of the Incarnation and a primary means of grace, is a central feature of Cyril's theology, and that Cyril, following the plain words of John 6: 53, insists on the necessity of participation in the Eucharist for eternal life. But it does not seem sufficient to assert that, for Cyril, only by the Eucharist 'are we intimately united to the Logos', or that Cyril's sole concern in the Nestorian controversy was to make the world safe for this particular view of the Eucharist. Chadwick leaves the impression that the Cyrilline doctrine of union with God is centred exclusively on a realist view of the Eucharist that would exclude any role for Christ's soul, and in the end, would be productive of a Christ who is not really in human solidarity with us. While many of the individual conclusions in Chadwick's treatment are welcome, it is this overall estimation of Cyril's theology of the Eucharist as the sole means of union with Christ that demands adjustment.<sup>188</sup>

In his study of Cyril's eucharistic doctrine, *Life-Giving Blessing*, Ezra Gebremedhin concludes his chapter on Christ's presence in the Eucharist with a series of observations about the relation of

<sup>185</sup> *JTSNS* 2 (1951), 145–64.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.* 153.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* 154–5.

<sup>188</sup> For the centrality of the role of the Spirit in Cyril's understanding of our union with God, see T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation* (London: Chapman, 1975), 182–3, and G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 2nd edn. (London: SPCK, 1967), 251.

'Pneuma' terminology to eucharistic contexts in Cyril. He asks what might account for this 'sudden shift to a preoccupation with the Spirit in Cyril's otherwise Logos-dominated understanding of the Incarnation and its benefits'. He suggests that in these contexts, Cyril 'lets his vocabulary fall in step with the standard stock of concepts and words which the Alexandrian Fathers before him had used in expounding the liturgy', but when the spectre of Nestorianism arises, he reverts to his Logos-dominated theology. He further proposes that 'Cyril's references to the Holy Spirit in the context of the liturgy are reflections primarily of an *exegetical* emphasis rather than a *dogmatic* emphasis in his theology', citing Robert Wilken as favourable to this thesis.<sup>189</sup> I am in full agreement with Gebremedhin that Cyril's doctrine of the Eucharist ought to be understood in the light of his theology of the Incarnation, but I would hold that the pneumatic minimalism in certain of Cyril's eucharistic texts is not a product of a generally Logos-dominated theology, papered over by occasional stock phrases inherited from predecessors. It is due, rather, to his tendency to distinguish the two means by which the divine life comes to us, and to assign the role of the Spirit primarily to baptism. Here, I believe, Cyril may be faulted for failing to extend to the Eucharist, fully and consistently, his own doctrine of the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying Christ's flesh. In the effort to distinguish the two means, Cyril does not state as clearly as he might the action of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist to make it life-giving. If Christ's own flesh in the Incarnation is sanctified by the Spirit,<sup>190</sup> it would follow that Christ's flesh in the Eucharist is made life-giving and sanctified by the action of the Holy Spirit. Cyril acknowledges that the Word 'fills the whole of his body with the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit',<sup>191</sup> but he does not normally

<sup>189</sup> Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, 82. The reference to Wilken in this context is an unhappy one for Gebremedhin. Wilken's project is precisely to show how Cyril's exegesis is the foundation for his dogmatic theology. For Wilken's position, see *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 3; 'St Cyril of Alexandria: Biblical Expositor', 41; and 'Exegesis and the History of Theology: Reflections on the Adam-Christ Typology in Cyril of Alexandria', *Church History*, 35 (1966), 151, 155.

<sup>190</sup> *In Jo. 17: 18-19* (Pusey, ii. 726). For Cyril's view of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation of the Word, see Paul Galtier, 'Le Saint-Esprit dans l'incarnation du Verbe d'après Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', in *Problemi scelti di teologia contemporanea*, *Analecta Gregoriana*, 68 (1954), 383-92.

<sup>191</sup> *In Jo. 6: 63* (Pusey, i. 552).

make this explicit in his treatment of the somatic means of participation in Christ.

More seriously, however, the distinction Gebremedhin proposes between Cyril's own Logos-dominated theology and inherited stock references to the Spirit undervalues the role of the Spirit in Cyril's theology. The commentary on Luke 22: 7–22, for instance, is richly creative exegesis, and incorporates allusions to baptism and the gift of the Spirit both around and within the discussion of the Last Supper.<sup>192</sup> More broadly, some of Cyril's most developed and integrated theology is concerned precisely with the link between the Incarnation and the gift of the Spirit to the human race,<sup>193</sup> illustrated in the following comment on John 14: 20, 'I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you':

'For I live', [Christ] says, 'for I am life by nature, and I display the Temple of my own body as living. But when you yourselves, even though you are of a corruptible nature, behold yourselves living in like manner to me, then indeed you will know most clearly that I, being life by nature, united you through myself to God the Father, who is himself also life by nature, rendering you, as it were, sharers and partakers of his incorruption. For I am naturally in the Father—for I am the fruit and true offspring of his being, subsisting in it and shining forth from it, life from life—and you are in me and I in you, inasmuch as I have appeared as a man, and rendered you partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4), by having placed my Spirit in you.' For Christ is in us through the Spirit, returning that which is naturally corrupt to incorruption, and transferring it from the condition of dying to that which is not so.<sup>194</sup>

Furthermore, it is misleading to set an exegetical emphasis over against a dogmatic one, as Gebremedhin does. Cyril's exegesis and dogmatic concerns are too interwoven to bear such a generalized distinction. And indeed, one of Cyril's most repeated

<sup>192</sup> For occasions where Cyril introduces the gift of the indwelling Spirit into his exegesis in surprising ways, see *In Matt. 20: 1–16* (Reuss, 229); *24: 48–51* (Reuss, 248); *25: 14–30* (Reuss, 252–3); *In Jo. 3: 4* (Pusey, i. 217); *10: 10* (Pusey, ii. 220); *15: 1* (Pusey, ii. 534–8); *15: 2* (Pusey, ii. 547–53); and *In 2 Cor. 2: 15* (Pusey, iii, 329).

<sup>193</sup> Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, 34, draws a similar conclusion concerning the integral link between the Incarnation and the gift of the indwelling Spirit: 'In a word, the Incarnation is the final explanation of our participation in the Spirit.'

<sup>194</sup> Pusey, ii. 487. In his exposition of John 14: 25–6, Cyril binds the Incarnation and the indwelling of the Spirit together, confessing that the revelation of the Spirit working in us reveals 'the deep meaning of the Incarnation', with the indwelling of the Spirit in the saints accomplishing 'the presence and power of Christ himself' (Pusey, ii. 507–8). See also *In Jo. 16: 7* (Pusey, ii. 620).

dogmatic principles is that the entirety of the economy of salvation is accomplished from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, even the sanctification of Christ's own flesh in the Incarnation. Cyril may be critiqued for failing to apply this principle consistently to Christ's action in the Eucharist, but to posit a Logos-theology that fails to account for the essential link in Cyril between the Incarnation of the Word and the completion of the Incarnation in us through the indwelling Spirit, is to distort the shape of Cyril's theology.

In his recent work, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, Bernard Meunier presents a thorough study of the dual modality of divine indwelling in Cyril, and concludes with his own estimate of the relation between participation in the Holy Spirit in baptism and participation in Christ's flesh in the Eucharist. As an explanation for the disparity he perceives between baptism and the Eucharist, he writes: "The Eucharist is participation in the life of the Word, by means of the physical participation in the flesh which the Word appropriated. This process puts into play the Incarnation according to the fundamental intuition of Cyril that every action of Christ is an action of the Word."<sup>195</sup> He contrasts this to baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit, which he claims gives the priority to the human factor in Christ as exemplar—notwithstanding Cyril's protestations that the Word sanctifies his own flesh by the Spirit—and so corresponds less to Cyril's natural orientation. Meunier then shows how Theodore of Mopsuestia relates Christ's baptism to ours, but concludes that Cyril 'never does so'.<sup>196</sup> It is true that Cyril often stresses the representative role of Christ, but by no means to the exclusion of Christ as example for us (see Ch. 3 below). As noted in 1, Cyril's account of the baptism of Jesus in Luke plainly presents Christ's baptism as the pattern for our own.

Meunier is surely correct in his statement that, for Cyril, every action of Christ is an action of the Word. But to offer this as the reason for the priority given to the Eucharist over baptism, and to set this in competition with the Word working through his own Spirit is, I suggest, a misapprehension of Cyril's theological perspective. In a manner similar to Chadwick and Gebremedhin, Meunier proposes a dominant Word–Incarnation–Eucharist line

<sup>195</sup> *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 212.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

of theology that fails to do justice to the prominent role that the gift of the Holy Spirit plays in Cyril's theological schema.<sup>197</sup> The difference between Meunier's understanding and my own can best be grasped by contrasting our respective outlines of the subject. He begins with the dual means of participation, moves to the somatic, and ends with the pneumatic. At the opening of his final section, he writes: 'The participation in the Spirit completes the participation in the body of Christ, in a sort of interiority by relation to it.'<sup>198</sup> I have structured my presentation in precisely the reverse order in the conviction that in Cyril's thought, participation in the Spirit is temporally first and is theologically the ground for eucharistic participation.

How, then, might one construe Cyril's theology differently, based upon his account of the twofold means for appropriating divine life? I propose that each manner of indwelling has its own distinctive and particular characteristics, each its own virtue and excellence, and that when viewed together—as Cyril himself plainly intends to view them—they display a remarkably well-balanced, if not fully integrated, account of the gift of divine life through the Incarnate Christ.

The indwelling of Christ through participation in the Eucharist possesses a certain excellence for Cyril because of the 'natural participation' (μῆθεξις φυσικῇ) it establishes.<sup>199</sup> J. Mahé's oft-cited conclusion, that for Cyril baptism procures a spiritual union, but 'the union that the Eucharist gives is *spiritual* and *corporeal* at the same time', captures something of Cyril's intent, but requires careful handling and interpretation.<sup>200</sup> Baptism and the Eucharist

<sup>197</sup> Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 157, likewise claims that Cyril places the primary emphasis on the Eucharist as the means of union with Christ, whereas Theodore places it on baptism and the effective operation of the Spirit. He rightly observes that Cyril's doctrine of the Eucharist is much more developed than Theodore's, but within Cyril's own account I would argue that baptism, linked to the gift of the Spirit, is not less important than the Eucharist in securing our union with God. In contrast to this tendency, T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, 182, allows only for the pneumatic aspect of our union with Christ, failing to take full stock of the proper emphasis in Cyril on somatic union through the Eucharist. See Welch, *Christology and Eucharist*, 109, for a critique of Torrance.

<sup>198</sup> *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 195.

<sup>199</sup> See Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 181–8, for the key terms Cyril uses to express this natural participation or kinship with Christ in the Eucharist.

<sup>200</sup> 'L'Eucharistie d'après saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 8 (1907), 685. Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, 105, cites Mahé favourably, using the latter's distinction as the means to distinguish baptism and the Eucharist. Langevin, 'Le Thème de l'incorruptibilité', 311–12, likewise adopts Mahé's explanation for the privileged role of the Eucharist, but his conclusion that the Eucharist is 'the sacrament of our full union with God' could convey the mistaken impression that the eucharistic indwelling somehow produces superior effects in us.

each have both a somatic and spiritual effect, that is, they each bring the divine life to the whole of human nature, but the unique character of the Eucharist for Cyril is that it bonds Christ with the believer according to a common nature, that is, according to the flesh. In the eating of Christ's flesh and the drinking of his blood, Cyril perceives a particularly apt means of union, made possible by the Incarnation of the Word, and expressive of that 'enfleshment'. The parallel union between the Spirit of Christ and our spiritual nature is only analogous to this, because our spiritual nature is not of the same nature as the divine Spirit, and the union achieved is rather of a created spiritual nature with the divine Spirit. This natural participation (*μέθεξις φουσική*), obtained by the commingling of Christ's life-giving flesh with our bodies, captures in the most profound way for Cyril, the true *kenosis* of the Word and the reality of the Incarnation, and so gives to the eucharistic manner of indwelling a virtue and particularity of its own.<sup>201</sup>

The eucharistic manner of indwelling also possesses a certain sacramental priority on two counts. First, it is the event towards which baptism leads, the fulfilment of the Passover made possible by the crossing of the mystical Jordan and spiritual circumcision. There is a sacramental order and progression that culminates in the Eucharist. Secondly, the Eucharist is a repeatable reception of Christ, and so is a renewable event of union with Christ, for the healing of sin, the taming of our passions, and participation in the One who is Life. Cyril is not unwilling to berate his congregation for failing, out of misplaced reverence, to participate in the life-giving power of the Eucharist.<sup>202</sup>

Yet the indwelling of Christ through participation in the Holy Spirit in baptism also possesses its own distinctive virtue and importance in Cyril's theology of sanctification and divinization. On the sacramental level, if the Eucharist is the summit to which

<sup>201</sup> Janssens, 'Notre filiation divine', 253, appears to come to a similar conclusion, stating that for Cyril the eucharistic mode of participation adds a 'special nuance' to the already existing supernatural relations, because of the intimate character of the corporeal participation.

<sup>202</sup> *In Jo. 6: 35* (Pusey, i. 476).



baptism leads, baptism is distinctive by being the point of transfer, that initial indwelling of God that makes us in truth, for Cyril, new creations, ‘children of God’, and partakers of the divine nature. There is a complementarity, then, in the sacramental order, a certain bipolarity of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, each essential and each possessing its own distinctive qualities.<sup>203</sup>

But the indwelling of the Spirit through baptism is not simply ‘a beginning and way’ of new life that leads to the Eucharist. It possesses for Cyril a theological importance, representing the endpoint and culmination of Christ's redeeming work. The return of the Spirit to the incarnate Word brings to fulfilment the work of Creation, and expresses most precisely God's intention for the human race. As we have seen, it is significant that in Cyril's view the *original* manner of divine indwelling at the Creation was the gift of the Holy Spirit to Adam (*In Jo. 17: 18–19*). No other patristic writer places so much emphasis upon this initial inbreathing of the Spirit in Gen. 2: 7. And indeed the most common soteriological narrative in Cyril moves from the Creation and gift of the Spirit to Adam, through the Fall and the loss of that Spirit, to the reacquisition of the Spirit through the Incarnate Christ. The return of the Spirit to the human race is the fulfilment of God's intention in Creation, now made stable in the Word made flesh, who has given the Spirit a secure anchor in human nature (*In Jo. 1: 32–3*). The Spirit is the mark of the New Covenant, defining the difference between the greatest representative of the old covenant, John the Baptist, and those who are least in the kingdom of God through possession of the Spirit (*In Jo. 7: 39*). It is this that makes us truly children of God (*In Jo. 1: 13*). It is first in the will of God for us, that we be partakers of the Holy Spirit (*In Jo. 3: 4*). The ‘more abundant’ life promised by Christ to the disciples in this life is, for Cyril, ‘the most perfect participation in the Spirit’ (*In Jo. 10: 10*).<sup>204</sup> And significantly, eternal life in heaven is also described by Cyril in terms of the fullness of the Spirit dwelling in us.<sup>205</sup>

<sup>203</sup> See Forte, ‘La dimensione cristologica, pneumatologica ed eucaristica della Chiesa’, 106–7, for a similar assessment of the complementarity in Cyril of the somatic and spiritual means of indwelling.

<sup>204</sup> Pusey, ii. 220. See also *In Matt. 7: 11* (Reuss, 179).

<sup>205</sup> For Cyril's teaching on eternal life as characterized by the full and complete dwelling of the Spirit in us, see *In Zach. 14: 8–9* (Pusey, *In XII Proph.*, ii, 522); *In Mal. 4: 2–3* (Pusey, *In XII Proph.*, ii. 621–3); and *De Dogm.* 5 (Wickham, 200).

As the eucharistic manner of indwelling most aptly and fully expresses the enfleshment of Christ and our union with him according to the flesh, so the indwelling of the Holy Spirit most aptly and fully exhibits God's purpose for the human race and the restoration that brings us to our final goal.<sup>206</sup> The eucharistic manner of indwelling is a second and special means of union, possessing its own particularity and excellence, but the normal and most frequently attested manner of indwelling for Cyril is through the Spirit.<sup>207</sup> At stake here is not merely a verbal difference between categories of indwelling. When the eucharistic manner of indwelling and union is viewed as the chief or exclusive means to our divinization, Cyril tends to be read as teaching a physicalist soteriology governed by a quasi-automatic transfer of divine life through contact with Christ's flesh. But when the return of the Spirit and the pneumatic mode of indwelling is accorded its proper place in Cyril's thought, in complementarity to the somatic means of union, then we are enabled to see the *telos* of Cyril's theological perspective more clearly: the full spiritualization of human nature, accomplished in Christ first through his reception of the Spirit, and encompassing the whole of our nature, spiritual and corporeal.

It would indeed be a mistake to set one manner of divine indwelling against the other in Cyril's theology. My aim here has been to redress an imbalance in the way the respective means of indwelling have at times been evaluated, and to attempt to show how each manner of indwelling has its own distinctive features, and so theological importance. Certain of Cyril's texts, read on their own (e.g. *In Jo. 6: 53–4*), appear to indicate the dominance of the eucharistic manner of indwelling. Others, however (e.g. *In Jo. 17: 18–19*), give the same sense of priority to indwelling through the Holy Spirit.<sup>208</sup> Cyril seems at times to be aware of this potential discrepancy, and attempts to place the two side by side as equal

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Fraigneau-Julien, 'L'Efficacité de l'humanité du Christ selon saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Revue Thomiste*, 55 (1955), 143.

<sup>207</sup> For a comparison of the pneumatic and somatic means of indwelling in Cyril, see my article, 'The Twofold Manner of Divine Indwelling in Cyril of Alexandria: Redressing an Imbalance', *SP* 37 (2001), 543–9.

<sup>208</sup> In *Dial. Trin.* vii. 637b (Durand, *Dialogues sur la Trinité*, iii. 158), Cyril writes: 'Yes, since indeed in no other way are the saints enriched with participation (τῇν μετέχειν) in God than in the obtaining of the Spirit, for we are made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1: 4), according to the Scriptures.' Cf. *In Luc. 9: 18–22* (Smith, 221).

and complementary means by which Christ dwells in us (e.g. *In Jo. 17: 20–1*). He does not, unfortunately, present us with any developed account of how the two are to be integrated, and my analysis has attempted to draw certain conclusions about their distinctiveness and complementarity grounded in a reading of his statements taken together. In the end, the catechetical and sacramental ordering of baptism and Eucharist may have been sufficient for Cyril to bind the two together as distinctive, ordered, and complementary means by which the divine life in the Incarnate Christ is appropriated to us.

### 3 The Reception of Divine Life

For just as the root of the vine ministers and distributes to the branches the enjoyment of its own and inherent natural quality, so the Only-Begotten Word of God, by putting his Spirit within them, imparts to the saints, as it were, a kinship to his own nature and the nature of God the Father, inasmuch as they have been united with him through faith and complete holiness of life; and he nourishes them to godliness, and works in them the knowledge of all virtue and well doing.

(*In Jo. 15: 1*, Pusey, ii. 535–6)

The topic of this chapter is Cyril's understanding of how the divine life in Christ is appropriated by us. The investigation will proceed in three stages. In the first preparatory stage, I will consider the requirement of a human reception of the divine life that Christ appropriates to us through his Spirit and his life-giving flesh and blood, and will ask whether and in what way Cyril integrates divine action with our human response. This first line of investigation consists in a sketch of the theology of grace in Cyril: the interplay of faith, human freedom, and divine grace in the reception of divine life. Given Cyril's rather piecemeal treatment of these matters, I am obliged to cull texts from a variety of longer commentaries and piece them together in order to see the various facets of human response to divine initiative. This lack of extended treatment is perhaps an indication that Cyril felt no need to develop a theology of grace as such. His treatment of these issues is invariably embedded within a broad account of salvation.

In the second stage, I will investigate whether (and in what sense) the Incarnate Word serves as the pattern for our reception of, and progress in, the divine life. Perhaps the most frequent criticism of Cyrilline Christology, and of the Alexandrian school in general, concerns the specifically human element in Christ, and correspondingly, the human reception of salvation and the divine

life. Does Cyril allow full play for the complete humanity he repeatedly insists the Word assumed? Is the *human* life of Christ genuinely a pattern for our own? Lurking behind these questions is the suspicion that Cyril's portrait of Christ tends towards the docetic, that is, towards only the appearance of a true humanity.<sup>209</sup> I will argue to the contrary that it is precisely in Christ as a pattern for our reception of, and progress in, the divine life that we witness most clearly the active expression of Christ's own humanity in Cyril's thought.

In the third and final stage of the enquiry, I will ask what the relation is between the divine life implanted in us and the fruits of that divine life worked out in us and through us in this present age. I hope to show that in Cyril our reception of the divine life is ordered to a distinctive way of life (*πολυτεία*) and to a progressive sanctification through which we are conformed to Christ.

## Faith, Human Freedom, and Divine Grace

### Faith: 'The mother of eternal life'

1. *The centrality of faith.* The distinction Cyril makes between the 'all' who will rise to life in the resurrection of the dead, and the subset who will rise to share in the true life founded on union with Christ, logically demands a human response to divine initiative that distinguishes them.<sup>210</sup> The resurrection of 'all' is based on Cyril's interpretation of 1 Cor. 15: 22, 'For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.' Because the Word of God took human flesh, and raised it to incorruption in his resurrection, so all human beings will be made alive in the resurrection.

<sup>209</sup> See Young, *Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 260, for a description of this commonly held estimation—which she rejects—that Cyril's Christology is thinly disguised Apollinarianism, and that Cyril was 'incapable of doing real justice to the humanity of Christ'. She also points to 'the apparent docetism so often detected in the Cyrilline position' (p. 261), but concludes that for Cyril the full human condition in Christ was very real. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, 156–85, acquits Cyril of the charge of Apollinarianism and docetism by showing the need in Cyril's account of Christ for a human mind and soul in his high priestly role.

<sup>210</sup> For the distinction between these two groups in the resurrection, see *In Jo. 7: 24* (Pusey, i, 636); *10: 10* (Pusey, ii. 219–21); *11: 25–7* (Pusey, ii. 274–5); and *14: 21* (Pusey, ii. 491–2). Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 129–35, employs this distinction to demonstrate that for Cyril, each person is an accessory (*παράτιτος*) in his or her own salvation, by means of 'faith and a change of life'.

But as the two texts that follow illustrate, only those who have responded to Christ with faith and who are united to him in this life through participation in the Spirit will share in the 'true life' of the resurrection.

(a) *In Jo. 3: 36* (Pusey, i, 258–60). Cyril begins his commentary on the verse, 'The one who believes in the Son has eternal life,' by asserting that 'the Only-begotten is Life by nature', and he cites Acts 17: 28, 'in him we live and move and have our being', to substantiate that Christ is indeed 'Life' himself. Significantly he then adds, 'But he dwells in us completely through faith, and lives in us through the Holy Spirit' (ἐίσονικξεται δὲ πάντως ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς πίστεως, καὶ κατοικεῖ διὰ τοῦ Ἁγίου πνεύματος) (Pusey, i. 258). Cyril next cites 1 John 4: 13 to demonstrate that Christ dwells in us by the Holy Spirit, but immediately adduces Eph. 3: 14–17 to show that it is through *faith* that Christ comes to dwell in us. We should not miss the interpretative development here: Cyril understands the phrase 'to have eternal life' in typical fashion to mean 'to have Christ, who is life, dwelling within through the Holy Spirit' but now he underlines the role of faith as crucial for the reception of this life. Conversely, Cyril tells us that those who fail to believe, even though they shall rise 'by the common law of the resurrection', shall not see the true life of the saints in glory (Pusey, i. 259–60).

(b) *In Luc. 7: 24–8* (Smith, 161–4; Reuss, 76–7). This biblical text presents Christ speaking to the multitudes after the messengers of John the Baptist depart. Cyril is concerned mainly with the final verse, 'Among those born of woman there is no one greater than John, but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.' In Cyril's view, Christ is making a distinction here between the law and the gospel, or more specifically, between 'the best of their whole class' (i.e. John the Baptist) and the least one in the kingdom of God. The 'grace that is by faith' is shown to be superior to the law, and he who is least in the kingdom is greater than John, not 'in legal righteousness, but in the kingdom of God, even in faith, and the excellencies which result from faith. For faith crowns those that receive it with glories that surpass the law' (Smith, 162).<sup>211</sup> Cyril follows with a chain of citations (Phil. 3: 7; Rom. 10:

<sup>211</sup> See also *In Matt. 11: 11* (Reuss, 196) for the contrast between John the Baptist and those born of the Spirit through Christ.

3; Gal. 2: 15) that establish the centrality of faith for obtaining the righteousness that is in Christ and the fruits of the kingdom of God.

In a second round of commentary on these verses, Cyril explicitly relates faith first to new birth in the Spirit through baptism (John 1: 12), and then to our becoming partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4), showing faith to be the means by which all features of life in Christ come to us (Smith, 164; Reuss, 76). He draws here on the Pauline notion that faith defines the New Covenant and distinguishes it from the dispensation of the Law. As a conclusion to the commentary, he assures us that Christ, by speaking in this way, in no way diminishes the renown of the holy people of the Old Covenant (of whom John is pre-eminent); rather, his intention is 'to prove that the Gospel mode of life is superior to legal worship, and to crown with surpassing honours the glory of faith, that we may all believe in him' (Smith, 164). Elsewhere Cyril captures the centrality of faith through other parallel expressions. He states that it is 'faith which makes God-given grace to be strong in us'.<sup>212</sup> He declares faith to be 'mother and patron of life' (*μητέρα καὶ προΰξενον τῆς ζωῆς*),<sup>213</sup> and 'mother of eternal life' (*μητέρα τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς*).<sup>214</sup> In an encomium to faith, drawn from the narrative of the woman who anoints Christ's feet with her tears, he writes: 'Faith, then, in Christ is found to be the pledge to us of these great blessings, for it is the way that leads to life, that bids us go to the mansions that are above, that raises us to the inheritance of the saints, that makes us members of the kingdom of Christ.'<sup>215</sup>

*2The objective character of faith.* The final scene in the ninth chapter of John's gospel, in which Jesus seeks out the man born blind whom he has healed, displays a further key facet of faith for Cyril: right faith is pointed towards its true object, and thus has a strongly objective character. Christ seeks out the man born blind, 'and finding him, initiates him into the mysteries' (*εὐρώων δέμυσταγωγέη*) by questioning him and gaining his assent, 'for this is the way of believing' (*οὕτω / τοῦ γὰρ τοῦ πιστεῦειν ὁ τρόπος*).<sup>216</sup> Cyril

<sup>212</sup> *In Jo.* 9: 6–7 (Pusey, ii. 158).

<sup>213</sup> *In Jo.* 11: 25–7 (Pusey, ii. 275).

<sup>214</sup> *In Jo.* 17: 3 (Pusey, ii. 667).

<sup>215</sup> *In Luc.* 7: 36–50 (Smith, 173). Cf. *In Luc.* 8: 40–8 (Smith, 199); 8: 49–56 (Smith, 201–2); *In Heb.* 11: 3 (Pusey, iii, 411).

<sup>216</sup> *In Jo.* 9: 35 (Pusey, ii. 198).

applies this pattern modelled by Christ directly to the scrutiny of catechumens prior to baptism: Christ asks not only whether the man is willing to believe, but also ascertains and ensures the identity of the one in whom he is ready to believe. Cyril concludes: 'For faith is in the Son of God, and not as in a man like us, but as in God incarnate.'<sup>217</sup> The post-healing dialogue between Christ and the man born blind presents Cyril with a model for the nature of faith-in-action which, in order to be genuine, must be both outwardly confessed and pointed towards its true object, the Son of God Incarnate.<sup>218</sup>

*3 Faith and knowledge.* For Cyril, the proper relation between faith and knowledge (*γνῶσις*) is grounded in the context of the objective character of faith. The confession of Peter, that 'we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God' (John 6: 69), prompts Cyril to consider the integral connection between true faith and right knowledge:

For it was necessary both to believe and to understand. Nor, because the more divine things are received by faith, must we therefore depart completely from all inquiry respecting them, but rather to attempt and at least to ascend to a moderate knowledge (*γνῶσιν*), as 'in a mirror and a riddle' (1 Cor. 13: 12), as Paul says. Well do they say again, not that first they know, then believe, but placing faith first, they introduce knowledge in second place. For knowledge (*γνῶσις*) follows after faith, and does not come before it, according to what is written, 'If you will not believe, neither will you understand' (Isa. 7: 9, LXX). For with simple faith having been laid down beforehand in us, as a kind of foundation, knowledge is then built upon it little by little, bearing us up 'to the measure of maturity' which is in Christ, 'to a perfect and spiritual man' (Eph. 4: 13). (*In Jo. 6: 69*, Pusey, i. 576)

Not only must faith be directed towards its true object in its inception, but it also serves as a foundation for the progressive advance in divine knowledge that Cyril identifies here with the 'mature manhood' of Eph. 4: 13.<sup>219</sup> We are, perhaps, at some distance from the *gnosis* of Clement of Alexandria, but the

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Cyril interprets the dialogue between Jesus and Martha, *In Jo. 11: 25–7* (Pusey, ii. 274–6), in precisely the same manner: Christ's directing of Martha to a true faith in himself and the resurrection is directly applied to the pre-baptismal scrutiny of catechumens.

<sup>219</sup> See also *In 2 Cor. 3: 18* (Pusey, iii. 339) where 'the depths of God' which the Spirit searches out (1 Cor. 2: 10) are equated with the knowledge (*γνῶσιν*) stored up in the holy Scriptures.



Alexandrian tradition of faith leading to knowledge through the illumination of the Spirit is very much alive in Cyril.<sup>220</sup>

4*Faith and obedience.* In addition to the objective character of faith and its relation to divine knowledge, Cyril repeatedly underscores the link between faith and obedience. In several selections from his homilies on Luke, Cyril binds faith closely to the keeping of the commandments. On the verse, 'Bring forth therefore the fruits of repentance' (Luke 3: 8), he writes: 'Indeed, the fruit of repentance is principally faith in Christ, and next to this, the evangelical way of life' (*ἡ εὐαγγελικὴ πολιτεία*).<sup>221</sup> The verse, 'Strive to enter by the narrow door' (Luke 13: 24), prompts Cyril to explain why the door is narrow: 'Whosoever then would enter must of necessity first, before everything else, possess an upright and uncorrupted faith, and secondly, an irreproachable life, in which there is no possibility of blame, according to the measure of human righteousness.'<sup>222</sup> And finally, the logion of Jesus, 'Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it' (Luke 18: 17), is summed up by Cyril according to this same ordered relationship between faith and obedience:

The chief perfection, therefore, of the mind is to be established in the faith, and for our understanding to be uncorrupted therein. And the second, which neighbours upon this chief perfection, and is akin to it, and is its constant companion, is the clear knowledge of that way of conduct which pleases God, and is taught us in the Gospel, and is perfect and blameless.<sup>223</sup>

In each of these texts, Cyril appears to have in mind entrance into the kingdom via the catechumenate of the church. A clear, consistent pattern emerges. Faith in the incarnate Christ is first, as the hallmark of the New Covenant, the agent and 'mother' of eternal

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *In Jo. 17: 3* (Pusey, ii. 668–9), where Cyril contrasts the knowledge of the true God with knowledge consisting in 'mere speculations', and locates true knowledge rather in the participation in life that comes through the Eucharist and the Spirit. On Cyril's concept of 'gnosis', Vladimir Lossky, *The Vision of God*, trans. Ashleigh Moorhouse (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's, 1983), 99, writes: 'We see here how the intellectualistic gnosis of Clement and Origen is transformed in Alexandrian theology, losing all contact with Platonic contemplation.' Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 183–7, concludes that though Cyril's view of gnosis follows in the tradition of Clement and Origen, he distinguishes faith and knowledge less rigorously than his predecessors and adopts a less intellectualistic view of gnosis that is more concerned with its moral consequences.

<sup>221</sup> *In Luc. 3: 8* (Reuss, 229; Smith, 71).

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid. 13: 22–30* (Smith, 397; Reuss, 154).

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid. 18: 15–17* (Smith, 484).

life. But a godly manner of life founded on the Gospel, and an advance in the true knowledge of God, must accompany this faith. The relationship of faith and works, and of divine grace and our response, will be taken up in the discussion of Cyril's notion of *synergeia* below.

## Human Free Will: 'In the image of God'

When treating of faith and the human response to the gift of divine life, we must include a discussion of Cyril's conception of human free will and self-determination. In a brief comment on John 6: 45, 'Every one who has heard and learned from my Father has come to me,' Cyril adumbrates his understanding of the connection between faith and free will:

For wherever there is hearing and learning and the benefit of instruction, there is faith, obviously through persuasion and not from necessity... For the word of doctrine requires that free will (*αὐτεξούσιον*) and free choice (*αὐτοπροαίρετον*) be preserved (*περισώζεσθαι*) to the soul of man, so that it might demand the just rewards from good deeds, and falling from what is fitting, and rashly exceeding what seems good to the Lawgiver, it might be led away to judgement, and a most reasonable one, for its chastisement.<sup>224</sup>

In the two selections that follow, Cyril elaborates the exegetical foundations and principal arguments for this position.

1. *In Jo. 9: 2–3* (Pusey, ii. 136–48). The question posed by the disciples to Jesus, whether the cause of the man's blindness was due to his sin or the sin of his parents, prompts Cyril to speak against two errors: (a) the view that souls sinned before embodiment, and (b) the idea that God punishes someone for another's sin. Cyril deals with the first error briefly but forcefully: it is 'silly nonsense', he tells us, to say that souls sinned before their existence in the body (Pusey, ii. 137). Cyril may have Origen in mind, who was credited with having suggested such a theory,<sup>225</sup> but he does not name him here explicitly.<sup>226</sup> In addressing the second error,

<sup>224</sup> *In Jo. 6: 45* (Pusey, i. 507–8). Cf. *In Luc. 14: 15–24* (Reuss, 162; Smith, 420), where despite the aspect of compulsion exercised in the parable of the great banquet, Cyril nevertheless maintains that the act of faith (*τὸ πιστεῦν*) is freely chosen (*προαιρετικόν*).

<sup>225</sup> For this theory in Origen, see *De Princ.* ii, 9; *Comm. Jn.* xiii. 293.

<sup>226</sup> *In Ep.* 81 (*ACO* 3, 201–2), however, Cyril explicitly names Origen and denounces him for teaching the pre-existence of souls. See Constantine Dratsellas, *The Problem of the Pre-Existence of Souls in St. Cyril of Alexandria* (Athens, [n. pub.], 1968).

Cyril narrates the story of Israel in the desert in order to bring to the fore the potentially troubling phrase that concludes Exod. 34: 5–7, ‘visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation’. Cyril reasons that God cannot be held to punish some for the guilt of others. This is contradictory to the first part of the text itself (that God is merciful and gracious, forgiving of sins), and furthermore is simply contrary to justice. After a first faltering attempt to explain the meaning of a punishment to the third and fourth generation (it being God's way of frightening those who presumed on remission of sin), Cyril more persuasively points to the episode of Ahab and his descendants. God often reserves punishment until the third and fourth generation, Cyril informs us, but only in the case when each generation is itself guilty of sin (Pusey, ii. 146–8). The crucial intertextual move Cyril makes is to call Ezek. 18: 1–4 to the witness stand as a sure testimony that each one shall bear his own iniquity and shall not be punished for the sins of others.

Cyril's commentary here has obvious implications for his understanding of the Fall and the primal sin,<sup>227</sup> but for our purposes it establishes, on the basis of key biblical texts, how Cyril views the issues of justice, reward, and punishment. He strongly accents the personal responsibility of the individual for his own sin.

*2In Jo. 13: 18–20* (Pusey, ii. 356–62). For Cyril, the issue in these verses is whether the phrase, ‘that the Scripture might be fulfilled’, is the cause of Judas's betrayal of Christ, or simply the revealed foreknowledge of that betrayal. With some exasperation, he dismisses the question of why Christ chose Judas if he knew Judas would betray him. This question is on a par with why God chose Saul, and why God created Adam and even the angels if he knew they would sin. For Cyril, this kind of reasoning is pointless and only leads to the conclusion that God's foreknowledge would prevent him from ever creating rational beings. The unspoken principle at work in Cyril's reasoning, that by definition the

<sup>227</sup> See *In Rom. 5: 18* (Pusey, iii. 186–7) for Cyril's clearest treatment of original sin. For Cyril, all are made sinners in Adam by having fallen under the law of sin in our nature; but citing Ezek. 18 again, he insists that we are punished (and therefore properly guilty) only for our own personal sins. Yet, he does seem to allow for some sense of corporate guilt in Adam, what he calls ‘the guilt of the disobedience that is by Adam’ (*In Luc. 8: 19–21* ; Smith, 183). See also *De Dogm. 6* (Wickham, 200–4). On Cyril's interpretation of Rom. 5, see Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 55–8, and John Meyendorff, ‘*Ἐφ' ὅσον*’ (Rom. 5,12) chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie et Theodoret’, *SP 4* (1961), 156–61.

rational creature has the exercise of free will and so the possibility of sin, is then brought to the surface: 'Now I deem that those who carefully consider the matter must clearly see, first and foremost, that the Creator of all distributed to rational creatures the reins of their own free choice (*προαίρεσιν*), and allowed them to move by their freely chosen inclinations (*αὐτοκελεῦσιν ῥοπῇ*), towards whatsoever at all each might choose' (Pusey, ii. 358).<sup>228</sup> Cyril ascribes the power to move to the right or the left, to what is good or to what is corrupt, first to the angels, and then to Adam who would have remained in the enjoyment of the original Creation 'if he had not been turned to apostasy and disobedience, thoughtlessly transgressing the commandment prescribed from above' (Pusey, ii. 359). On the same basis Cyril claims that Judas was called by Christ as one genuinely gifted for discipleship. When tempted by Satan, however, Judas turned traitor and so was rejected by God: 'For there was in him the power not to fall away, namely, by choosing the more fitting thing, and by transforming the whole of his own mind to the necessity of truly following Christ' (Pusey, ii. 359).<sup>229</sup>

In a passing but very significant comment on John 14: 20, when describing the fall of Adam, the 'living creature', Cyril writes: 'But since, being free of will (*αὐτοπροαίρετος*), and entrusted with the reins of its own purposes—for this also is a part of the image, for God exercises authority over (*κατεξουσιάζει*) his own purposes—it turned and is fallen.'<sup>230</sup> The power of self-determination is in Cyril's view an element of the image of God given to the human race, for it reflects God's own power over his purposes. Though he does not state the distinction explicitly, Cyril does seem to indicate a difference between the capacity for self-determination (*αὐτεξουσιότης/αὐτοπροαίρεσις*) on the one hand,

<sup>228</sup> Marie-Odile Boulnois, 'Liberté, origine du mal et prescience divine selon Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 46 (2000), 63, identifies the expression, 'the reins of free will', as a stereotypical formula of Cyril's which is his own invention.

<sup>229</sup> See also *In Ja. 6: 70* (Pusey, i, 578) and *17: 12–13* (Pusey, ii. 698–704) for a similar account of Judas and free will.

<sup>230</sup> *In Ja. 14: 20* (Pusey, ii. 485). Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 40–50, traces the link between freedom and the image of God from Irenaeus to Didymus, but he claims that Cyril 'pays far more attention than any of his predecessors to the will precisely in the context of divine resemblance' (p. 45). Boulnois, 'Liberté, origine du mal et prescience divine', 66–76, shows how the philosophical principle that Cyril adopts, namely that human responsibility necessarily implies freedom of the will, is built upon and surpassed by his theological grounding of human free will in the creation of the human race in the image of God.

and true freedom (*ἐλευθερία*) that comes only in Christ on the other. The former is a created human capacity, related to the original Creation; the latter concerns freedom from sin, and arises in the contrast between the Old and New Covenants. For Cyril, it is only in Christ and through his obedience, freely chosen, that we are restored to genuine freedom, and we can be truly free only in him.<sup>231</sup>

## Co-Workers with God

The relation between faith and works on the one hand, and between divine grace and human freedom on the other, do not appear in systematic form in Cyril's New Testament commentaries. His understanding of these relations must be gathered from a careful reading and synthesis of several texts that point to the principles he upholds, and that illustrate those principles through the exposition of the biblical text. I will first address the relation between faith and works, and then turn to the wider question of the interplay between divine grace and human free will.

1. *In Rom. 3: 21 – 4: 2* (Pusey, iii. 178–81). Commenting on the verse, 'But now the righteousness of God has appeared apart from the law,' Cyril shows first of all how even those who were considered blameless under the law (e.g. Paul in Phil. 3: 6) are none the less shown to be transgressors of the law and fall short of the glory and renown of Christ (Pusey, iii. 178). Linking together several biblical texts (Titus. 3: 5; Isa. 43: 25; Rom. 3: 23), Cyril then asserts that justification is by faith, and not by works of the law, and that all boasting in ourselves is excluded, because 'we are justified freely by the mercy and grace in Christ' (Pusey, iii. 179). Cyril confirms the gratuity of our justification in his terse comment on Rom. 11: 6, 'But if it is by grace, it is not longer on the basis of works.' If we are approved because of works, he explains, then the name and reality of grace become without purpose and superfluous.<sup>232</sup>

<sup>231</sup> For this implicit distinction, see *In Jo. 8: 32–6* (Pusey, ii. 59–71) and *In 1 Cor. 15: 42* (Pusey, iii. 314). Boulnois, 'Liberté, origine du mal et prescience divine', 75, likewise identifies a distinction in Cyril between full liberty (*liberté plénière*) and free will (*le libre arbitre*), the latter remaining after the Fall and able to co-operate with the grace of God, the former lost in Adam's sin and regained only in Christ through the gift of the Spirit.

<sup>232</sup> *In Rom. 11: 6* (Pusey, iii. 239).

When Cyril arrives at Rom. 4: 2, 'For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God,' he runs up against the perennial question of how to synthesize this assertion by Paul with that of James, that 'apart from works, faith is dead' (Jas. 2: 17). In answer, Cyril first recounts the history of Abraham, how he was justified by faith (and found forgiveness of sins) by believing God's promise of a son in old age, but then was tested in this faith by the demand to sacrifice Isaac. Cyril then makes reference to two texts on Abraham, one from James, 'Faith was working together (*συνήργει*) with works, and his faith was confirmed from works' (Jas. 2: 22),<sup>233</sup> and one from Hebrews (which Cyril understands to be from Paul), 'By faith, being tested, he offered up Isaac' (Heb. 11: 17). Even if James should say that Abraham was justified by his works (Jas. 2: 21), this is for Cyril simply 'a visible demonstration of the steadfastness of his faith' (Pusey, iii, 181). It would appear, then, that for Cyril, justification is properly by faith, but that because of the essential ordering of true faith to works of obedience, it can rightly be allowed that justification is by works, the works being the required proof of true faith. He admits a distinction and upholds an order between faith and works, but in the end he allows no separation between them in the process of our justification.

2In *Jo. 6: 64–5* (Pusey, i, 554–7). The verses in question here concern the contrast between the unbelief of some and the faith of the twelve who remain with Jesus. Cyril is especially concerned with the pronouncement of Christ, 'No one can come to me, unless it has been given to him by the Father,' and its relation to faith. Calling upon the testimony of Jas. 1: 17, he writes:

For if 'every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights' (Jas. 1: 17), how much more would the recognition of Christ not also be a gift of the Father's right hand? And the apprehension of the truth, how would it not be conceived to be beyond all grace? For by as much as it appears as the giver (*πρὸς ὅξενος*) of the highest goods, so much more would it be fitting for it to depend upon the divine generosity. (Pusey, i, 555)

<sup>233</sup> It is probable that the term, *συνεργεῖν*, in Jas. 2: 22 supplies the chief biblical grounding for the patristic use of the term *synergeia*. See Kallistos Ware, 'The Understanding of Salvation in the Orthodox Tradition', in *For Us and for Our Salvation* (Utrecht: Interuniversitair Instituut voor Missiologie, 1994), 117–20, for an explanation of *synergeia* that closely corresponds to that found in Cyril.

For Cyril, the very ability to recognize and acknowledge Christ, namely, faith, is itself a gift of God. Citing Isa. 55: 6–7, Cyril adds that faith requires true repentance and a turning to the Lord, but that none the less it is by grace through faith in Christ that we are justified, not through the works of the law (Gal. 2: 16) (Pusey, i. 556). Referring to this same verse from John 6: 44 in his commentary on Rom. 8: 28, Cyril confirms his interpretation here: ‘Therefore every yearning bearing us to righteousness would come to us from God the Father.’<sup>234</sup> Cyril sees a fittingness in the fact that faith, which in its turn is the giver of the highest goods, should itself be the fruit of the highest grace of God.<sup>235</sup>

Cyril goes on to speak of the Jews who did respond to the Gospel through faith (i.e. the apostles): ‘But some, living by a more excellent way, and being seekers of the truth, having received the grace of God the Father co-working (*συνεργόν*) with them for salvation, were saved through faith’ (Pusey, i. 556). Cyril introduces here the idea of a co-working of the grace of God, though he does not spell out the implications. This notion of co-working arises elsewhere. Commenting on the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2: 28, Cyril states that ‘each then becomes for himself an accessory cause (*παράκτιος*) of acquiring the God-given good, or of not accepting it at all’.<sup>236</sup> Again, we see here the notion of a necessary co-operation with the grace of God.

*3In Jo. 17: 12–13* (Pusey, ii. 703–4). The mention of the ‘son of perdition’ (v. 12) prompts Cyril to defend yet again the God-given attribute of free choice. But because Judas was in fact plucked away from Christ’s company by the devil, Cyril feels the need to explain what the value of Christ’s protection of his own really amounts to. He recognizes first of all the importance of sobriety of mind, zeal in good works, and establishment in virtue, but then

<sup>234</sup> *In Rom. 8: 28* (Pusey, iii. 220).

<sup>235</sup> See also *In Jo. 6: 43–4* (Pusey, i. 506) for Cyril’s claim that faith and knowledge of God are necessarily the consequence of divine grace. In a fragment on Luke 17: 5 (Reuss, 268; Smith, 462), Cyril writes that faith is partially from us, and is partially given by divine grace. Expanding this, he says that the origination of faith is from us, while the confirmation and strengthening of faith is from divine grace. This explanation is in some tension, if not contradiction, with Cyril’s commentary on John 6: 64–5 above. Given that there is no extant Syriac text of this homily to confirm the authenticity of the Greek fragment (and indeed no parallel text in Cyril’s New Testament commentaries which puts the relation in these terms), caution is warranted against placing too much weight on this fragment for establishing Cyril’s notion of human co-operation with grace.

<sup>236</sup> *In Jo. 14: 19* (Pusey, ii. 473).

states the necessity of divine grace, without which we cannot do anything at all of ourselves, citing Ps. 126: 1 (LXX) in support (Pusey, ii. 703). In Cyril's view, it was Judas's refusal to receive this very divine grace that led to his fall. By his own will he chose to reject the safety Christ provided. Cyril handles Paul's difficult text in Rom. 9: 14–24 in the same manner, interpreting the hardening of Pharaoh's heart and the vessels made for ignoble use by means of the potter-vessel parable in Jer. 18: 2–10. For Cyril, it is not God's design, but human misuse of free will that brings about the 'vessel made for destruction'.<sup>237</sup>

Cyril concludes his commentary on John 17: 12–13 with a significant statement on human co-operation with divine grace: '[Christ's] grace, moreover, was conspicuous in the others [of the apostles], continually preserving (*διασωσασα*) those who made their own free will (*προαίρεσιν*), as it were, a fellow worker (*συνεργάτην*) with it. For in this manner, the way of the salvation of each of us is administered' (Pusey, ii. 704). Human free will is, then, a 'fellow worker' with divine grace in the work of salvation. The setting in this text, however, seems to have shifted subtly. Though Cyril makes no neat divide between the co-operation of grace and human response for the initial reception of grace on the one hand, and for ongoing life and sanctification on the other, the latter seems to be in view throughout his commentary on John 17: 12–13, even when he speaks of the attainment of salvation.<sup>238</sup> He appears to have in mind primarily perseverance in faith.<sup>239</sup> Yet it is noteworthy that he does not distinguish between a co-working (*synergeia*) in the initial reception of divine grace and its ongoing role in Christian life and practice.

Cyril's homily on Luke 22: 31–4—Christ's prediction of Peter's denial, and his prayer that his 'faith may not fail'—provides a fitting conclusion to this brief sketch of Cyril's doctrine of grace. In it, Cyril accents the priority and excellence of divine grace:

<sup>237</sup> *In Rom. 9: 14–24* (Pusey, iii. 226–33).

<sup>238</sup> For the co-working of Christ in the ongoing attainment of virtue, see Cyril's passing comment, *In Jo. 6: 21* (Pusey, i. 432). Cf. G. Giudici, 'La dottrina della grazia nel commento alla Lettera ai Romani di S. Cirillo di Alessandria', Ph.D. thesis (Rome: Gregorian University, 1951), 39.

<sup>239</sup> See *In Jo. 16: 31–2* (Pusey, ii. 473) and *18: 24–7* (Pusey, iii. 45) for the incapacity of faith without the implanted Holy Spirit. Cyril appears to envision a twofold process, the first stage involving a faith that draws us to Christ, but which is incomplete and inadequate on its own, and a second stage in which faith is perfected by the indwelling Spirit.



For he teaches us, that we must think humbly of ourselves, as being nothing, both as regards human nature and the readiness of the mind to fall away into sin, and as strengthened and being what we are only through Him and of Him. If therefore it is from Him that we borrow both our salvation, and our seeming to be something in virtue and piety, what reason have we for proud thoughts? For all we have is from Him, and of ourselves we have nothing. ...Let us then glory not in ourselves, but rather in his gifts. (*In Lmc.* 22: 31–4, Smith, 575–6)

Cyril was plainly not unaware of the apparent contradiction between James and Paul regarding faith and works, nor of the tension between divine grace and human response in the reception and preservation of the divine life. He does not pursue the logical tensions between divine grace and human response as Augustine does, and we cannot reckon his treatment as simply equivalent to that of the 'Doctor of Grace'.<sup>240</sup> Yet in a straightforward and impressive manner, Cyril orchestrates the key biblical texts in the arrangement of a coherent synthesis.

In summary, Cyril teaches that a rightly directed faith is the primary means of reception of all that Christ brings, but that this faith is necessarily ordered to and demonstrated by works of obedience (or it is no faith at all). The place of human free will as co-worker in the receiving or rejecting of divine grace is firmly upheld at every point in the divine–human interaction. Yet the gift of God precedes all and is rightly seen as the source of all things, even of faith.<sup>241</sup> It now remains to investigate whether and in what sense the Incarnate Word himself serves as the pattern for our human response to the gift of divine life in Cyril's narrative of salvation.

<sup>240</sup> A comparison between Cyril and Augustine on their respective doctrines of grace, and the potential implications for the shape of Greek and Latin theology, would be a significant undertaking in its own right. In brief, both authors seek to uphold three truths: (*a*) the priority of divine grace in human salvation; (*b*) the free exercise of the human will, and its concomitant responsibility; and (*c*) the vindication of the justice of God. Cyril accents human freedom and responsibility in defence of God's justice, while Augustine underlines the utter priority of divine grace in defence of God's unmerited mercy.

<sup>241</sup> Lionel Wickham, 'Pelagianism in the East', in Rowan Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 205, claims that Cyril 'asserts (as usual) the absolute freedom of the will and the necessity of God's help to fulfil the good'. He considers this a long way removed from the positions of Jerome and Augustine, but that none the less this shows Cyril to have been well acquainted with Pelagianism which he clearly rejected.

## The Christological Centre: Christ as Pattern for Us

The goal of the next stage of our investigation is to enquire how Cyril positions Christ *vis-à-vis* our response to divine grace, that is, how he proposes Christ as a human model for our reception of the divine life. In Chapter 1, we saw how the Incarnate Word receives the Spirit and sanctifies his own flesh for us as the representative Second Adam; in Chapter 2, we observed how Christ as the giver of divine life, and as Life himself, is mediated to us in a twofold manner through the indwelling Spirit and his own life-giving flesh. Here I want to probe the specifically human aspect of Christ, and to ask first, whether in Cyril's view our free human response is Christologically centred and anchored, and second, whether Christ *as man* is properly a pattern for our reception of, and progress in, the divine life.

### A Twofold Kinship with Christ

1. *In Jo. 16: 7* (Pusey, ii. 617–21). Cyril directs his commentary on this verse to ‘the purpose of the Incarnation’ and the question of the possible advantage accruing to us from Christ's departure. He begins by presenting Christ as ‘Life’, as the one who frees us from death and corruption. But he quickly turns to the moral aspect of the redemption, and redescribes the goal of the Incarnation within this moral framework, in terms of the following purposes: (a) that Christ might put to death our earthly members, i.e. the passions of the flesh (Col. 3: 5); (b) that Christ might destroy the law of sin in our members (Rom. 7: 23); (c) that by this Christ might sanctify our nature—a reference to a moral cleansing; (d) that Christ might be found as a pattern (τύπος) and guide (καθηγητήης) on the road to godliness; and (e) that a revelation of truth and an unerring way of life (πολιτείας) might be discovered (Pusey, ii. 618). We should take special note here of the combination of the ontological and moral aspects of the redemption in one broad sweeping account of salvation, the former providing the basis for the latter.<sup>242</sup> The Word, who is Life by nature, invests himself with our human nature and gains victory over death and

<sup>242</sup> Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 75–83, describes these as the ontological and dynamic aspects of Cyril's theology of sanctification. Cf. Weigl, *Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyrill*, 120–4.

corruption, the physical effects of our plight. But the accent of Cyril's commentary here is on the moral aspect of our healing, the Word once again as the sinless one being himself the foundation. Importantly, Cyril combines and orders the two aspects of our moral transformation: 'that he might sanctify our nature, and that he might be found our pattern and guide for a godly way of life' (Pusey, ii. 618). Christ, then, both accomplishes our sanctification, first in his own flesh, and models and teaches a godly way of life, through the pattern of his own human life.

Cyril next addresses the purpose of Christ's departure. In a first explanation, he stresses that Christ has now ascended to the Father as man (ὡς ἄνθρωπος), reigning there as forerunner, the firstfruits of the human race (Eph. 2: 6 cited in support). But then he identifies a further reason: Christ's work on earth having been accomplished, it was now necessary that we become partakers (κοινωνοὺς) and participants (μετόχους) in the divine nature (from 2 Pet. 1: 4), a result which was possible only through participation in the Holy Spirit. Cyril continues:

How was it not necessary that he be together (συνεῖναι) with his worshippers through the Spirit, and dwell (ἐνοικεῖν) in our hearts through faith (Eph. 3: 17), in order that, having him in ourselves, we might cry with boldness, Abba, Father, and might readily advance in all virtue, and besides this might be found powerful and invincible against the cunning of the devil, and the assaults of men, seeing that we have the all-powerful Spirit? (Pusey, ii. 620)

The essential lines of Cyril's thought are boldly etched in this text: the identity between Christ and his Spirit (though they remain distinct in subsistence), the manner of indwelling through the Spirit in the hearts of the faithful, and the consequent life of virtue and moral strength founded on that indwelling Spirit.<sup>243</sup>

2In Jo. 8: 37 (Pusey, ii. 71–4). Cyril directs the reference to Abraham's seed (σπέρμα) towards a discussion of our kinship (συγγένειαν) with God, and calls upon Acts 17: 29 to attest that we are 'offspring of God' (γένος τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>244</sup> The foundation for

<sup>243</sup> See In Luc. 4: 1–2 (Reuss, 65; Smith, 87), where Cyril presents Christ's baptism and subsequent battle against Satan in the wilderness as the pattern for how our struggle for holiness also depends upon the prior reception of the Holy Spirit in baptism.

<sup>244</sup> See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1266, for the various possible senses of the term συγγένεια and its cognates. I have chosen the term 'kinship' for its English equivalent in this context, rather than the more generic terms, 'relationship' or 'affinity', because the notion of offspring and sonship is included in Cyril's usage, though understood analogously with respect to the true and eternal Son. On the terms συγγένεια and συγγενές in Cyril, see Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 181–8.

our kinship with God is the Incarnation itself, ‘for admittedly have we become kin (*συγγενεῖς*) with him because of the flesh that pertains to the mystery of Christ’ (Pusey, ii. 72). But Cyril proceeds to speak about another way in which we attain kinship with God:

For by setting our minds on his thoughts, and seriously resolving to live piously as it is fitting, we are called sons of God who is over all, and shaping our own mind to his will, so far as it is possible, we are thus, in likeness (*ὁμοιότητα*) with him and most exact similitude (*ἐμφάρειαν*), truly kin (*συγγενεῖς*). (Pusey, ii. 72)

In defence of this assertion, Cyril calls the Scripture to witness (Jer. 29: 32; Matt. 3: 9; Gen. 22: 17; Rom. 9: 6–7), ‘that God does take the likeness and exact similitude of works or of ways to have the force of kinship (*συγγενείας*)’ (Pusey, ii. 72). Cyril employs one term, *συγγένεια*, to describe both the ontological grounding of our kinship with God in the Incarnation, and the moral kinship with God which results from genuine likeness in thought and action. And notably Christ is himself the source of both types of kinship, in his Incarnation and in the pattern he sets for us to imitate as man (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*).<sup>245</sup>

3In *Jo. 10: 14–15* (Pusey, ii. 230–5). Cyril approaches this text circumspectly, offering his opinion in a difficult matter concerning what Christ means by, ‘I know my own.’ He posits that these words imply more than just acquaintance (*εἰδήσεις*), but rather indicate true knowledge (*γνώσεις*), that is, intimate relationship (*ὁκεῖότης*), ‘either by kinship (*κατὰ γένος*) and nature (*φύσιν*), or as in participation (*ἐν μεθέξει*) of grace and honour’ (Pusey, ii. 231). In this instance, a relationship ‘by kinship and nature’ is contrasted with one ‘by participation’. Cyril’s further exposition of this text by means of Matt. 7: 22–3, Heb. 4: 13, and Exod. 33: 12 is difficult to follow at points, but he plainly identifies the object of Christ’s knowledge with virtue and good works in his true flock. In a closing paraphrase, Cyril says that Christ’s sheep will be brought

<sup>245</sup> With respect to this dual manner of kinship, du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité chez S. Cyrille d’Alexandrie*, 182, identifies participation (*μετέξις*) and imitation (*μίμησις*) as ‘the two words often employed by Cyril which summarize well the relations that we have with the one who is the Son of God par excellence’. Cf. Janssens, ‘Notre filiation divine’, 244 n. 58, 254.

into intimate relationship (*οἰκειωθήσεται*) with Christ, and he with them, *in the same way* that the Father and Son are kin (*οἰκέλω*) to each other (Pusey, ii. 232). This unnuanced identification is modified in the following sentence by the qualification that ‘we are called his kindred’ (*γένος αὐτοῦ χρηματίζομεν*). And yet for Cyril, because of the Incarnation our kinship is more than just nominal: ‘And truly we both are and are called the kindred (*γένος*) of the Son, and through him of the Father, because the Only-Begotten, being God from God, was made man, having assumed the same nature as ours.’ For Cyril, it is not ‘by willing alone that Christ receives us into intimate relationship (*οἰκειότητα*)’; by virtue of the Incarnation, we are truly joined to him (Pusey, ii. 232).

But now Cyril is faced with a grave objection. If the Incarnation itself is the basis for our kinship with God, then are not all truly his kin? On what basis are some excluded from being among his flock? Cyril explains that the manner of the relationship (*ὁ ἡς οἰκειότητος τρόπος*) is common to all, for Christ has shown favour to all without exception, but that this counts for nothing without faith. It is only those who believe who have the means of true kinship (*συγγενείας ἀληθινῶς*) (Pusey, ii. 233). In a final comment, Cyril cleverly applies the text, ‘I know mine and my own know me’, to his description of the reciprocal nature of our kinship with Christ: Christ first knew us by taking our flesh—the initiative is with God and he has taken hold of us; we in turn know him by our response of faith.

In a later discussion on the shepherd–sheep relationship (*In Jo. 10: 26–8*), Cyril calls the first and foundational manner of intimate relationship through the Incarnation a ‘mystical relationship’ (*σχέσιν μυστικῇν*) that applies to the whole human race. But those who do not guard the image conformed to Christ's holiness are deprived of kinship (*συγγένεια*) because of dissimilarity of character. Christ's true sheep are those ‘who are obedient and follow, from a certain God-given grace, in the footsteps of Christ’.<sup>246</sup>

Cyril's commentary on John 10: 14–15 and 10: 26–8 expands what we observed above (*In Jo. 16: 7, 8: 37*) by clarifying the relationship between the Incarnation and our actual kinship with God. The Incarnation is the irreplaceable ground for the possibility

<sup>246</sup> Pusey, ii. 252.

of our full kinship with God, and the necessary means by which we can become ‘partakers of the divine nature’ (2 Pet. 1: 4). But faith and obedient imitation of Christ are required on our part for this kinship to be made actual. The Christological basis of our kinship with God, and the Christological pattern for our moral life of faith and obedience are inseparably linked, and together provide the Christological centre for our reception of, and progress in, the divine life. In his study of divinization in the Greek Fathers, Norman Russell distinguishes the realist Alexandrian model of deification found in Athanasius from the ethical model more prominent in the Cappadocians and especially in the Antiochenes. He considers Cyril’s special achievement to be the integration of the realist model with the idea of moral progress in the image of God.<sup>247</sup> If my assessment of dual kinship is correct, Cyril does in fact combine these two models. The ontological realism of the Incarnation and our participation in him through baptism and the Eucharist provide the ground for our ethical imitation of Christ.

## The Word as Pattern for Us ‘As Man’

1. *In Jo. 16: 33* (Pusey, ii. 655–7). In this section the manner in which Cyril presents Christ specifically as our pattern for the moral life is addressed. Cyril construes the simpler sense of John 16: 33, ‘But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,’ as the victory of Christ over every sin and worldly circumstance, a victory that he then passes on to us. But he applies the more exact sense to the mystery of the Incarnation. Just as we have overcome sin and death through the resurrection of Christ (who extends his own conquest to us), so we should be of good cheer because we shall overcome the world in the same way:

For Christ overcame it for us as man (ὡς ἄνθρωπος), being also in this a beginning and gate and way for human nature. For we who were fallen and vanquished of old have conquered and have overcome on account of the one who overcame as one of us and for our sake. For if he conquered as God (ὡς Θεός), it profits us nothing; but if as man (ὡς ἄνθρωπος), we have overcome in him. (Pusey, ii. 657)

<sup>247</sup> ‘The Concept of Deification’, pp. xiv–xv, 436. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 145, observes that, because Cyril held together the divine and human in Christ in a greater unity than the Antiochenes, ‘he is less in danger of isolating the concept of example from the deeper ideas of redemption and of the divine transformation of human nature’.

The human reality of Christ, that he suffered, rose, and conquered *as man*, as the Second Adam, is essential for Cyril, for otherwise all that he did profits us nothing. Here Cyril accentuates the full human existence of Christ with particular clarity.<sup>248</sup>

*2In Jo. 17: 4–5; 14–15* (Pusey, ii. 671–4; 709–10). Cyril proposes to interpret John 17: 4–5 with reference to what is both human and divine in Christ's speech. By this double reference we are taught, not only that Christ is the Only-Begotten God, but also that he became man for us (Pusey, ii. 671). The crucial interpretative move Cyril makes here is to link Christ speaking as man (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*) with Christ's function as pattern for our leading of a divine way of life. 'If then, he [Christ] should say these things as man (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*), you will receive it in this way: Christ is for us a pattern (*τύπος*) and beginning (*ἀρχή*) and image (*εἰκών*) of the divine way of life (*τῆς ἐνθεοῦ πολιτείας*), and he displayed clearly how and in what manner it is fitting for us to live' (Pusey, ii. 672). Cyril proceeds to interpret vv. 4–5 along these very lines: Christ's accomplishment of his assigned work becomes a model for us in fulfilling our given task, in order that we too may receive commensurate glory for faithfulness to the divine call, albeit a glory properly limited to our human state (Pusey, ii. 672–4). On the one hand, Christ's assumption of a full humanity is the prerequisite for his accomplishment of our salvation as man. On the other, Christ as man provides a pattern of the divine or godly way of life (*πολιτεία*), teaching us how we are to live. The term, *πολιτεία*, captures for Cyril the corporate manner of life of the Christian people, a way of life and conduct made possible only by the inauguration of a new covenant and the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.<sup>249</sup>

<sup>248</sup> See *In Jo. 19: 4* (Pusey, iii. 63) for a parallel assertion of the active human obedience of Christ: 'The one who is Lord of the law as God (*ὡς θεός*), came among us a keeper of the law as man (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*)', thereby extending justification to us all. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 138, concludes that Cyril's exegetical use of the phrase, 'as man' (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*), implies a full and real humanity.

<sup>249</sup> Cf. *In Rom. 6: 5* (Pusey, iii. 191). The term, *πολιτεία*, can be translated as simply 'conduct' (cf. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1113–14), but given its classical overtones in Cyril, I normally translate it by the more comprehensive phrase, 'way of life'. See Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 75–6, for the importance of the term, *πολιτεία*, in Cyril. But see K. Adshead, 'De Civitate Dei: le vocabulaire politique de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *RSR* 78 (1990), 236, who maintains that in his use of the term *πολιτεία* Cyril designates *merely* a way of life emptied of its deep and original political connotations.

Cyril's commentary on John 17: 14–15 follows the same pattern. Cyril directs Christ's prediction that the world will hate the disciples, 'because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world', to the imitation of Christ, to 'follow in his steps' (1 Pet. 2: 21). Cyril explicitly links Christ's humanity with our imitation of him: 'And further, [Christ] reckons himself with his disciples because of his humanity, through imitation (*κατὰ μίμησιν*) of whom—whenever he happens to be conceived as man (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*)—we will mount up to every kind of virtue' (Pusey, ii. 709).<sup>250</sup> Cyril next adduces Gal. 6: 14 and 1 Cor. 11: 1, bidding us to imitate Paul as Paul imitated Christ. Cyril, however, is quick to state the human limits of this imitation: Paul imitated Christ, not in his divine capacity as Creator of the world, but rather by 'moulding in his own character and conduct an admirable pattern (*τύπον*) of the way of life (*πολιτείας*) manifested by Christ for us' (Pusey, ii. 710).<sup>251</sup>

*3In Jo. 12: 27–8* (Pusey, ii. 315–20). It will be useful to test this principle—that Christ's humanity is a pattern for our own—against Cyril's exposition of certain key events in the life of Christ, in order to ascertain how thoroughgoing Cyril's use of this principle is. The extended fragment from his commentary on John 12: 27–8, 'Now my soul is troubled,' reveals the main lines of how Cyril typically handles passages that speak of the human anguish and weakness of Christ.<sup>252</sup> In the first instance, the question put by Christ ('Father, save me from this hour?'), and his own answer to the question ('Father, glorify thy name') indicate respectively for Cyril the weakness of the flesh Christ assumed, and the strength of his divine power to carry through the Father's purpose. Cyril then elaborates on the human affections in Christ:

<sup>250</sup> Cf. *In Jo. 14: 5–6* (Pusey, ii. 410): 'No one would ever be holy and carry through a life (*πολιτείας*) of virtue, unless Christ guide his steps in everything.'

<sup>251</sup> Cf. *In Jo. 18: 10* (Pusey, iii. 23), where Cyril speaks of Christ bearing up his suffering and not using 'his own and innate power as God' against his enemies, but rather schooling us in perfect forbearance, thereby providing again a human example applicable to us.

<sup>252</sup> For the authenticity of key fragments from Books vii and viii of Cyril's *Commentary on John*, see Liébaert, *La Doctrine christologique*, 129–37, and Joseph M. Hallman, 'The Seed of Fire: Divine Suffering in the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Constantinople', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 5 (1997), 375–8. Liébaert is doubtful of the authenticity of one fragment from *In Jo. 12: 28* which describes the soul as the active principle of suffering in Christ; Hallman leaves the question open, but admits its consistency with other Cyrilline writings of the period. The texts we advert to here are considered genuine by both authors.



For we will suppose that even in Christ himself, the Saviour, the qualities of his humanity (*τὰ ἀνθρώπινα*) are aroused by two necessary characteristics. For it was certainly necessary that by means of these he be shown to be a man, born of woman, not in appearance or mere fancy, but rather by nature and in truth, possessing all human qualities, sin only excepted. And fear and timidity, though they are passions (*πάθη*) natural to us, have escaped being ranked among sins. (Pusey, ii. 316)

Christ's mastery of his own human passions by his divine power, however, is not simply a necessary implication of his own true enfleshment; it is also laden with consequences for us. By governing his own natural passions, Christ transforms our nature in himself, in order that we might also gain 'things above our nature' (*τὰ ὑπὲρ φύσιν*) (Pusey, ii. 317).<sup>253</sup> None the less, Cyril adds this caveat, that Christ is not agitated to the extent that we are, but having experienced the fear and timidity in the face of his coming suffering, he directly brings these into submission to the Father's will.

Cyril provides a similar explanation for the weeping and groaning of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus in his commentary on John 11: 33–4. He begins by asserting the full human reality of Christ: 'But since Christ was not only God by nature, but also man, he suffers (*πάσχει*) with all the others that which is human (*τὸ ἀνθρώπινον*)' (Pusey, ii. 279). Yet these stirrings of grief are not indulged in by Christ, but are brought into line by the 'groanings of the Spirit'. Cyril interprets Christ's groanings here by means of Rom. 8: 23. The groanings are not signs of weak human nature, but are rather produced by the Spirit within and so are in contrast to Christ's tears. Christ reproves his own flesh by the Spirit and strengthens the weaknesses of our flesh by the energies of the Holy Spirit, transforming those weaknesses into what is pleasing to God (Pusey, ii. 280). In his commentary on the verses that follow, John 11: 36–7, Cyril describes the action of Christ in checking his own grief as a pattern for us, 'teaching us not to give way overmuch in

<sup>253</sup> Concerning the specific function of Christ's soul in his suffering, H. M. Diepen, *Aux origines de l'anthropologie de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1957), 52–3, identifies two texts (R. F. *ad Theod.* 21; R. F. *ad Aug.* 44) where Cyril explicitly ascribes the passions (*πάθη*) to Christ's soul. Cyril also assigns the passions to the soul of Christ in *De Incarn.* 692b–c (Durand, *Deux dialogues christologiques*, 232). Welch, *Christology and Eucharist*, 40–60, expands Diepen's argument on the soteriological role of the suffering of Christ's soul in Cyril.

grief for the dead' (Pusey, ii. 282). In both of these comments, the Word is said to assume a genuine humanity, and suffer accordingly, with the emphasis on Christ as the representative man, who in his own flesh secures sanctity for the whole race. Yet the feature of Christ as moral example for us, stated explicitly at points, is present throughout.

Frances Young judges that Cyril does not 'give full weight to what Hebrews says about the human conflicts, temptations, and sufferings of Christ', in part because he was compelled by his view of salvation to ascribe the overcoming of the weakness and sin of humanity 'entirely to the power of God'.<sup>254</sup> As we have seen, Cyril does indeed ascribe the overcoming of temptation and weakness to Christ's divine power or to the Holy Spirit,<sup>255</sup> and it is true that Cyril's exposition of Christ's sufferings both in Hebrews and more generally is at points incomplete and inadequate. Yet two things may be said in Cyril's defence. First, it is the one Christ (in Cyril's view) who both is tempted and overcomes. His strong view of the union of the human and divine means that Christ personally experiences genuine temptation and suffering and overcomes them from within. Secondly and more significantly, 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.

Cyril offers a somewhat different account of Christ's suffering in his commentary on the importunate friend in Luke 11: 5–10. Here Cyril appeals to Christ's prayer in Gethsemane as a model to encourage us also to pray persistently. Citing the words of Jesus from Matt. 26: 39, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,' Cyril asks if 'Life' was afraid of death; if 'Life' was hemmed in by enemies too strong for him. Rejecting this conclusion, he offers an interpretation of the true significance of Christ's words: 'It was that we might learn that supplication is becoming and full of benefits, and that we must be constant in it whenever temptation befall' (Smith, 323). In this instance, Cyril exposit Christ's agony simply in pedagogical terms. His treatment of Christ's humanity here is at the least incomplete, yet care must be taken to locate the

<sup>254</sup> 'Christological Ideas in the Greek Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews', *JTSNS* 20 (1969), 154.

<sup>255</sup> See especially *In Ja. 6: 38–9* (Pusey, i. 487).

precise and more narrow contrast Cyril is making. He wants to uphold that the Word of God, 'Life itself, was not in desperate straits, but freely offered himself to suffer on the Cross (a position Cyril also upholds in his commentary on John 11: 33–4 and 12: 27–8, where Christ's human experience is more completely expressed). Cyril insists, time and again, on the full human reality of the Word incarnate, like us 'in every respect' (Heb. 2: 17),<sup>256</sup> but at points in his exegesis, when he moves directly to a pedagogical application, Cyril can give the impression that Christ's experience of suffering and temptation was feigned, an exercise carried out merely for the purpose of our imitation. Plainly this is not what Cyril holds and he would want to deny any such implication.<sup>257</sup>

What conclusions can we draw from these texts about Christ as a pattern for our human appropriation of the divine life? Cyril strenuously maintains that Christ accomplished the redemption as man, and not as the divine Word acting divinely in merely human garb. Further, Christ as man (ὡς ἄνθρωπος) is the pattern for our humanity, for how we receive the Spirit and live a life pleasing to God.<sup>258</sup> Indeed it is only Christ as man that we can imitate, for his properly divine attributes remain ever beyond human reach. Moreover, we have seen that Cyril does ascribe to Christ natural human weaknesses, even if he limits their scope rather narrowly and at points describes the human suffering and temptation of Christ in simply pedagogical terms.

Yet it is perhaps just this principle—that Christ as man (ὡς ἄνθρωπος) is a pattern for us in everything—that preserves a

<sup>256</sup> Cf. *In Heb. 2: 14–17* (Pusey, iii. 393–4), where Cyril insists, against the Nestorian position, that the Word became like us in every respect: 'For this reason, the Only-Begotten Word of God himself, being Life by nature, partook of the same things [flesh and blood], not differently from us, but in the same way.'

<sup>257</sup> Sellers, *Two Ancient Christologies*, 102–6, concludes that Cyril acknowledges the humanity of Christ, but does not allow for its full, individual expression. Welch, *Christology and Eucharist*, 56–7, though defending a full humanity in Cyril's presentation of Christ, also acknowledges that Cyril ascribes suffering, ignorance, and growth to Christ's human soul inconsistently. See Hallman, 'The Seed of Fire', 373–84, for a survey and analysis of Cyril's texts on Christ's human suffering. For a critique of Hallman, see Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, 203 n. 59.

<sup>258</sup> Cyril's *Homilies on Luke* give special prominence to Christ as moral exemplar for us: *In Luc. 2: 21–4* (Reuss, 56; Smith, 55–6); *3: 21–2* (Reuss, 63; Smith, 81); *4: 1–2* (Reuss, 65; Smith, 87); *9: 23–6* (Reuss, 91–2; Smith, 222–3); *9: 51–6* (Reuss, 101–2; Smith, 243–5); *22: 24–30* (Smith, 572–3; Reuss, 211). For the practical, ethical emphasis in Cyril's Lukan homilies, see Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 255. For Christ as pattern for us, see also *In Ja. 13: 12–15* (Pusey, ii. 352–4); *17: 1* (Pusey, ii. 658); *19: 17–18* (Pusey, iii. 80–1).

fully expressed humanity in Cyril's presentation of Christ, though Cyril applies this principle imperfectly. Indeed Cyril's most complete account of the humanity of Christ appears, not in his polemical Christological writings, but in the numerous occasions in his biblical commentaries in which Christ is put forward as our moral exemplar, his humanity being the pattern for our own. 'Christ accomplished all things for our edification, and for the benefit of those who believe in him; and by establishing his own conduct as a kind of image of the spiritual way of life (*πνευματικῆς πολιτείας ἐκόντα*), he desired to render us true worshippers.'<sup>259</sup>

## Growth in the Divine Life

According to Cyril's narrative of divine life, in a first and primary sense we become partakers of the divine nature through the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism and through the sanctification and new life the Spirit brings. This participation in divine life is renewed in a special manner through regular participation in Christ's life-giving flesh and blood in the Eucharist. But in another important and extended sense, the outworking of this divine life, and so the outworking of our sanctification and divinization, is a process of growth towards full conformity to Christ, dependent on the indwelling of divine life, but requiring as well our full response and co-operation.

I will now attempt to draw together the threads from our investigation above by showing how in Cyril our free response of faith working through love, grounded in and modelled by Christ himself, is directed towards the fruitfulness of a life perfected in the image of God. The primary text we will consider is Cyril's extended commentary on John 15: 1–17. This commentary includes, in one form or another, all the elements we have examined thus far in this chapter, but directs them towards the goal of fruitfulness and the completion of our conformity to Christ through a life of obedience, virtue, and fruitful service. And because these elements are present in one continuous exposition, we are enabled to see how Cyril himself links together and integrates the various facets of the outworking of divine life in us.

<sup>259</sup> *In Luc. 6: 12* (Reuss, 254; Smith, 123). Cf. Doherty, 'Scripture and Soteriology', 152–3.

## Christ the True Vine (*In Jo. 15: 1–17*, Pusey, ii. 534–85)

1. vv. 1–2. In his opening comments, Cyril concisely presents the theological outline of his interpretation. Our new birth in Christ through the Spirit is ordered to spiritual fruitfulness, and we are obliged to preserve this new life and to hold fast the commandment of God so that we do not grieve the Holy Spirit who has taken up his abode within us.

For we were begotten of Him [Christ] and in Him in the Spirit, for bringing forth the fruits of life (*πρὸς καρποφορίαν ζωῆς*), not the old and former life, but the life in newness of faith and love towards him. And we are preserved in our hold on this life, attached to Him as it were naturally, and holding fast to the holy commandment handed over to us, and by making haste to preserve (*σώζειν*) the blessing of our nobility, that is, by refusing to grieve in any way whatever the Holy Spirit that has taken up his abode in us (*τὸ ἐνοικισθὲν ἡμῖν*), by whom God is understood to dwell (*κατοικεῖν*) in us. (Pusey, ii. 535)

Cyril then references three texts from the First Letter of John to show this reciprocal, if unequal, relationship by which Christ is in us and we are in him: (a) 1 John 3: 24b demonstrates that our union with Christ is the result of the Spirit dwelling within us; (b) 1 John 2: 5, 6 shows that our abiding in him must be manifested in our ‘walking as he walked’; (c) 1 John 3: 24a clarifies that this walking entails keeping his commandments.

The outline of Cyril's model for our union with Christ emerges here. Christ, for his part, unites us to himself through the gift of the Spirit, by which he gives us life and nourishes us. We, for our part, cling to him through faith and love. Christ takes hold of us in a manner distinct from how we cling to him, yet both sides of this mutual inhering are necessary. And the result in us is a life of godliness and the knowledge of all virtue:

For just as the root of the vine ministers and distributes to the branches the enjoyment of its own and inherent natural quality, so the Only-Begotten Word of God, by putting his Spirit within them, imparts to the saints, as it were, a kinship (*συγγένειαν*) to his own nature and the nature of God the Father, inasmuch as they have been united with him through faith and complete holiness of life; and he nourishes them to godliness, and works in them the knowledge of all virtue and well doing. (Pusey, ii. 535–6)

Returning to the features of the metaphor—the Father as vinedresser, the Son as vine, and the Spirit as the sap of the vine—

Cyril establishes the single, unified work of the Trinity in us: 'You will conceive then quite rightly that the Father nourishes us in godliness through the Son in the Spirit' (Pusey, ii. 536). Within this trinitarian pattern, 'Christ is situated in the order of the vine, and we are dependent on him as branches, enriched as it were by his grace, and drinking in through the Spirit spiritual power to bear fruit' (Pusey, ii. 538). Such is the shape of Cyril's theological interpretation of the vine and branches metaphor. At this point in his commentary, Cyril engages the Arian denial of the Incarnation of the Word and strongly insists on the corporeal manner by which we are also united to Christ, as branches to the vine, in the Eucharist (see 2).

The contrast implicit in v. 2, 'Every branch in me that bears no fruit he takes away, and every branch that bears fruit he cleanses, that it may bear more fruit,' leads Cyril to consider the means by which we remain, or fail to remain, attached to Christ the vine. He underlines, first of all, our freely chosen and habitual union with Christ through faith and love:

Our bond (*κόλλησις*) with Christ is habitual (*ἐκτική*), having the freely-chosen (*προαιρετικήν*) power of conjunction (*συναφείας*), and perfecting us by love and faith. And faith dwells in our souls, making the manifestation of divine knowledge complete, while the way of love demands the keeping of the commandment marked off for us by Him. (Pusey, ii. 547)

A bare faith, for Cyril, unaccompanied by acts of virtue, yields fruitless and lifeless branches, fit only to be cut away (he cites Jas. 2: 20, Luke 8: 7, and Ezek. 15: 2–4 in illustration). In such a state, 'we are wholly cut off, and we shall be given to the fire, having lost besides the life-giving sap as well, that is to say, the Spirit, which we once had from the vine' (Pusey, ii. 549). The situation described here is strikingly parallel to that originally faced by Adam: he too failed to preserve the indwelling Spirit because of transgressing the commandment.

As for the branches that are cleansed in order to yield more fruit, Cyril speaks first in general terms about a co-working with God, and then specifies the Spirit as the cleansing agent within:

For God works together (*συνεργάζεται*) with those who have chosen to live most excellently in all ways and as would be good, and with those who are committed to do good works as far as possible, and who always

live a God-beloved way of life (πολιτείας θεοφιλούς), using, as it were, the working (ἐνεργείᾳ) of the Spirit as a pruning hook. (Pusey, ii. 549–50)

Just as Cyril introduces the Spirit in this text as the life-giving sap of the vine, he now presents him as the pruning hook, as the one who circumcises the heart (Rom. 2: 28–9 and Col. 2: 11 are cited in confirmation). But in this instance, the reference is to an ongoing circumcision of those already connected to the vine, that they may bear more fruit.<sup>260</sup> Cyril next draws upon a collection of biblical texts that buttress the description of the purifying, chastening action of God among his people (Isa. 4: 4; Heb. 12: 7; Jer. 10: 24; Isa. 26: 16; Ps. 93: 12–13, LXX) (Pusey, ii. 550–1). He concludes by linking this cleansing action of the Spirit to the trinitarian pattern of working: ‘The Father then, through the Son, works our purification as in the manner of the circumcision understood to be through the Spirit’ (Pusey, ii. 553).

2 vv. 3–7. Cyril interprets v. 3, ‘Already you are made clean because of the word I have spoken to you,’ in terms of the purifying activity of Christ's spoken word (from Heb. 4: 12), but even here it is the Word acting by the Spirit (Pusey, ii. 554, 556). He points again to the dual action of the Spirit—purifying and life-giving—through which the grace of godliness and perseverance is granted to us (Pusey, ii. 556–7). Then in verse 4 Cyril interprets the exhortation to abide in terms of faith and love, as the two means by which we cling to Christ, the vine. Faith by itself without love is insufficient: ‘But for this I maintain that it is necessary also to follow him truly through perfect and unfailing love. For by this means the power of our bond (κολληήσεως) understood in the Spirit, that is, our conjunction (συναφείας), would best be maintained and preserved (σώζοιτο)’ (Pusey, ii. 558). Cyril's use of the verb, ‘to preserve’ (σώζω), in a context entailing obedience to the divine command recalls again his description of Adam's original condition; he too was called to preserve the grace given to him by maintenance of the commandment. A consistent paradigm in

<sup>260</sup> For ongoing spiritual circumcision, see *In Luc.* 2: 21–4. There Cyril distinguishes three senses of circumcision: (1) it distinguishes Abraham and his posterity after the flesh; (2) it signifies baptism and adoption as sons; (3) ‘it is the symbol of the faithful *when established in grace*, who cut away and mortify the tumultuous risings of carnal pleasures and passions by the sharp surgery of faith, and by ascetic labours’ (Smith, 57, emphasis added). It is this last sense that Cyril employs here. See also *In Mal.* 3: 2–3 (Pusey, *In XII Prophetas*, ii. 599) for the ongoing work of the Spirit in those already purified.

Cyril's thought emerges concerning the relation of obedience to the gift of God. His exhortation here (John 15: 4) to remain (*μένειν*) in the vine through obedience, and so preserve the gift of the Spirit, parallels his statement concerning Adam's obligation to preserve through obedience the original grace of the Spirit (Gen. 2: 7).<sup>261</sup>

In his closing remarks on v. 4, Cyril unites the reciprocal aspects of our union with Christ, but now he orders them towards growth. On the one hand, Christ is the irreplaceable source of our growth through 'the provision and grace of the Spirit, as by life-giving water' (from John 7: 37–9); on the other hand, we remain attached to the vine through faith and the obedience of love: 'For what else could the fountain of divine and spiritual life and the stream of delight (Ps. 35: 9–10, LXX) be understood to be except the Son, who fattens and waters our souls, like branches attached to him by faith and love, with the life-giving and joyous grace of the Spirit?' (Pusey, ii. 559).

To illustrate vv. 5–7, Cyril contrasts the eleven apostles with Judas. The apostles exemplify those who are zealous to be joined to Christ and who maintain a close union with him, and so display the 'fruit of their virtue, showing themselves a pattern of a devout way of life' (*φιλοθέου πολιτείας*) (Pusey, ii. 561). Judas stands as the model for those who, by giving way to temptation, are cut off from Christ the vine, wither away, and lose possession of the Spirit. Human free choice is not directly named, but the contrast between Judas and the other apostles, especially given Cyril's repeated insistence that Judas could have chosen otherwise, implies that free choice is both possible and necessary for remaining attached to Christ.

3 vv. 8–10. Cyril directs our attention in these verses to Christ himself as both the source of our life and the pattern for our fruitbearing in a life pleasing to God. He makes the parallel explicit: Christ glorified the Father by accomplishing the work of salvation he was given to do (John 17: 4), in order that we might bring forth fruit and become his disciples (Pusey, ii. 566). There is

<sup>261</sup> See *In Rom. 11: 22* (Pusey, iii. 242), where (following the language of Paul) Cyril exhorts his hearers to remain (*μένειν*) in faith and godliness, and so hold fast (*ἀπομένειν*) to the holy root, lest by disobedience their connection to the root be forfeited. See also *In 1 Cor. 6: 19* (Pusey, iii. 266–7) for Cyril's emphasis on the moral preservation of the gift of the indwelling Spirit and the requirement of obedience.



little distinction here between Christ as the ground of our fruitbearing (by becoming a man, restoring our nature, and supplying us with the Spirit), and Christ as the pattern for our fruitbearing. In the one act by which he glorified the Father through his obedience, Christ accomplishes in himself and models for us ‘the fruit of the way of life pleasing to God’ (τὸν ἥως θεοφιλῆς πολυτελείας καρπὸν) (Pusey, ii. 566).

Christ's command to love in vv. 8–10, and especially the phrase, ‘even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love’, raises for Cyril the issue of how Christ can be understood to have kept his Father's commands. This leads him in turn to speak about the Incarnation from Phil. 2: 7–9, and the voluntary subjection of the Word to become man and suffer the humiliation of death on the Cross. Cyril does not distinguish here between the voluntary obedience of the pre-incarnate Word and that of the Word Incarnate, and so does not posit the willing obedience of the humanity of Christ in itself. But following the logic of Phil. 2, the voluntary submission to the Father's will is posited of the Word both in his pre-incarnate state and in his human condition by going to the Cross. For Cyril, this double act of voluntary submission to the will of the Father is properly a pattern for us,<sup>262</sup> as demonstrated by the following words which he places in the mouth of Christ: ‘For I became obedient and a doer of the wishes of the Father, and I abide (μένω) for this reason most certainly beloved. But when you yourselves too become keepers of my commandments, in the same way you will abide (μενεῖτε) wholly in my love’ (Pusey, ii. 570–1).

4 vv. 11–17. The plain sense of the joy that will be fulfilled in us (v. 11), Cyril tells us, is the thought of the glory that will be ours in heaven following our exertions here on earth. But a more keen investigation shows that Christ's true joy is the sweetness of knowing that his sufferings won salvation for all. In the same way, with Christ as our model, we too can rejoice in our sufferings for the sake of the gospel. Cyril's treatment of vv. 12–13 unsurprisingly follows the same path: Christ's own love in laying down his life is

<sup>262</sup> For Christ as a pattern for us specifically in his suffering and death, see *In Jo. 19: 17–18* (Pusey, iii. 80–1) and *In Luc. 9: 23–6* (Reuss, 91–2; Smith, 222–3). Cyril clearly points to Christ's obedience as man in *In Heb. 2: 17* (Pusey, iii. 396), where after asserting that the Word is merciful and faithful by nature, Cyril adds that ‘he was also faithful according to the will of God the Father’ in his suffering on the cross.

the pattern for our love. And for Cyril, love—in which is contained ‘the sum of the virtues’ (τῶν ἀρετῶν ... τὸ κεφάλαιον)—is the fulfilment of the whole command of Christ (Pusey, ii. 577).

The mention of friends in vv. 14–15 prompts Cyril to describe how friendship with Christ, foreshadowed in Abraham and justification by faith, is superior to the servitude of the law, and confers upon us a dignity and a ‘glory of freedom’ (τῇ τῆς ἐλευθερίας δόξαν) that only Christ has by nature. Here is the true freedom available only in Christ. Cyril then returns to the notion of Christ as our model in vv. 16–17, placing the accent on imitation of Christ in his mission to bring the Gospel to the whole world: ‘Having offered himself, therefore, as an image (εἰκόνα) and pattern (τύπον) of what must be done, and having presented in their midst that which is already accomplished by him on their behalf, he persuades them to imitate (μιμεῖσθαι) their teacher, and to show themselves illustrious in the same good deeds’ (Pusey, ii. 583).

Given the winding and repetitive character of Cyril's commentary on John 15: 1–17, in which he follows the contours of the biblical text with remarkable faithfulness, it will be useful to gather the primary conclusions under distinct headings.

(a) *A model for our union with Christ.* The vine–branches imagery provides Cyril with a multivalent metaphor for expressing the reciprocal, though unequal, union between Christ and us. The primary agent in the union is Christ, who as the vine joins us to himself and comes to dwell effectively in us, nourishing us through the life-giving sap of the Holy Spirit, and through his own flesh in the Eucharist. This union establishes our life-giving communion with God and provides the ground for the maintenance and growth of that communion. In response, we cling to Christ through faith and love, with the emphasis here on the necessity of fruit-bearing love for maintaining our connection to Christ. Cyril's handling of the vine–branches metaphor impressively comprehends the major features of his teaching on the appropriation of divine life.

(b) *Preservation of our life in Christ.* The requirement to preserve the gift of the Spirit through obedience to Christ's commands is displayed here prominently. The juxtaposition of those who abide in the vine and those who wither and are cut off points for Cyril

both to the reality of our free choice, illustrated by the contrast between the faithful apostles and Judas, and to the centrality of obedience, modelled by Christ himself. Further, the metaphor of a living vine allows Cyril to move beyond the notion of a fixed, static preservation of a gift, and to show that preservation properly implies growth.<sup>263</sup> The ongoing need for purification from sinful flesh, arising from v. 2, underscores this aspect of growth. The new creation is characterized by a new fruitfulness of human nature in Christ.

(c) *Christ as pattern.* Christ himself accomplishes the restoration of our nature through his double condescension in his Incarnation and death (Phil. 2: 5–8), and becomes as well the model for our voluntary obedience and for a way of life pleasing to God. Cyril takes full advantage of the indications within the text of John 15 to draw out the Christological centre for our reception of, and progress in, the divine life. Notably, Christ models for us a distinctive way of life (*πολιτεία*) pleasing to God. By placing the term *πολιτεία* in apposition to the metaphor of vine and branches, Cyril guarantees that our participation in the divine life is not an individual affair. It is directed to a distinctive, communal Christian way of life.

(d) *Trinity and Spirit.* Cyril transforms a metaphor of vinedresser, vine, and branches (Father, Son, and disciples) into a trinitarian account of the united working of God to nourish us with the divine life. The notable addition to the *dramatis personae* of the text is the person of the Holy Spirit, who as the life-giving sap of the vine, and the ongoing agent of our purification, dominates the commentary—notwithstanding the sharp stress on union through the Eucharist (*In Jo. 15: 1*)—as the primary means of our ongoing and effective union with Christ.

## Perfection of the Image of God: Conformity to Christ

To complete our investigation of the reception of divine life in Cyril, we must give further attention to the way in which Cyril envisages the end and goal of the divine life dwelling within us. In the same way that Cyril can speak of the circumcision of the Spirit

<sup>263</sup> Cyril also employs the imagery of growth in his commentary, *In Jo. 6: 68* (Pusey, i. 567–8): though withered by sin, we receive through faith the spring of life within us, and ‘shoot forth the manifold fruit of virtue’.

as occurring at baptism, and yet as continuing in an ongoing way, so he can describe the work of the Spirit at baptism as imprinting the divine image upon us, and yet also speak of the image as something perfected in us over time.<sup>264</sup> For Cyril, through our free, ethical response to the gift of divine life, the imprint of the image of God in us grows and is perfected, in so far as perfection can be attained short of the resurrection.

1. *In Luc. 14: 12–14* (Smith, 413). In the opening words of this homily on Christ's exhortation to invite the poor to our feasts, Cyril speaks of the variegated work of God in us, and the completion of the divine image by manifold virtue:

For just as those who are skilled in delineating forms in pictures cannot by one colour attain to perfect beauty in their painting, but rather use various and many kinds of hues, so also the God of all, who is the Giver and Teacher of spiritual beauty, adorns our souls with that manifold virtue which consists in all saint-like excellence of living, in order to complete in us his likeness. For in his rational creatures the best and most excellent beauty is the likeness of God, which is wrought in us by the exact vision of God, and by virtue perfected by active exertion. (Smith, 413)

There are several suggestive features of this text. First, the manifold virtue Cyril speaks of is first of all a gift of God, who like a painter adorns us with many shades of beauty. But secondly, this virtue consists in excellence of living and is perfected by active exertion. If it is a gift, it is also the fruit of our own response to divine grace that involves our active participation. Thirdly, this manifold virtue is said to 'complete the likeness of God in us', implying that the marks of the image, reimpresed by the Spirit at baptism, require a completion that includes our own co-operative effort. Consistent with his account of *synergeia* thus far, Cyril holds that the completion of the divine likeness in us is a gift of God, and at the same time that it requires the full employment and co-operation of human faculties.

<sup>264</sup> Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, 74–5, credits Cyril here with a genuine advance with respect to his predecessors (e.g. Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa), by combining an ontological view of the image of God in us with the notion of progress in the image of God. Wickham, *Select Letters*, 165 n. 46, observes that 'the process [of being formed into Christ] is continuous. Baptism...begins it, but the image is constantly being marred by sin and so its regeneration through the Spirit is continuous'.

Cyril's brief comment on Luke 11: 11–13 brings further clarity to the relation between the gift of divine virtue and the completion of the likeness of God in us. The biblical text concerns the generosity of God, who gives good things to his children. Cyril closes the homily with this rousing exhortation:

Ask strength, that you may be able manfully to resist every fleshly lust. Ask of God an uncovetous disposition, long-suffering, gentleness, and the mother and nurse of all good, I mean patience. Ask calmness of temper, continence, a pure heart; and further, ask also the wisdom that comes from him. These things he will give readily, these save the soul,<sup>265</sup> these work in it that better beauty, and imprint in it God's image.<sup>266</sup>

For Cyril, the variety of virtues are properly gifts of God, even if they require our full co-operation to be effective. The need for our active exertion is captured in the following selection from Cyril's commentary on Luke 16: 10–13: 'It is our duty, therefore, to be faithful to God, pure in heart, merciful and kind, just and holy; for these things imprint in us the outlines of the divine likeness, and perfect us as heirs of eternal life.'<sup>267</sup> The imprint of the divine image that occurs through ongoing growth in virtue is—like the gift of salvation itself—due to the working of God, yet it requires our active reception, preservation, and exertion in order to come to completion.

*2In Rom. 8: 29* (Pusey, iii. 220–1). Commenting on the verse, 'For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son,' Cyril asks rhetorically what the phrase 'the image of his Son' might mean. He answers by calling as witness one of his favourite texts, 1 Cor. 15: 49, to which he gives a manifestly ethical interpretation:

For those who have disregarded the desires of the flesh, these imitate (*μεμύμνηται*) the image of Christ, that is, the conduct (*πολιτεία*) and life in sanctification. For we say that just as the image of the man of dust, that is, Adam, is life in disobedience and sins, so too the image of the man of

<sup>265</sup> There is no extant Greek fragment for this text, but given Cyril's typical vocabulary, the original Greek verb in this expression is probably either *σώζεν* or *διασώζεν*, either of which can mean 'save' or 'preserve' in Cyril. It is most improbable that Cyril would claim that the addition of these virtues would save the soul, while it is very probable that he would see them as preserving the gift of the Spirit and divine image stamped in the soul. A more accurate translation, then, would be, 'these preserve the soul'.

<sup>266</sup> *In Luc. 11: 11–13* (Smith, 326).

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid. 16: 10–13* (Smith, 444).

heaven, that is, Christ, is sanctification and justification and obedience. (Pusey, iii. 220–1)

In Cyril's vision, to be conformed (*σύμμορφος*) to the image of Christ is to imitate the way of life of the heavenly man.<sup>268</sup>

*3In Jo. 17: 18–19* (Pusey, ii. 719–21). This final text reveals the connection between the creation in Adam and our conformity to Christ through the Holy Spirit by which we are restored to the divine image. Cyril recounts the moulding of Adam to the image of God through the gift of the indwelling Spirit, and then employs Rom. 8: 29 to link the original creation with our re-creation in Christ through the Spirit.

[Christ] asks, therefore, that human nature be renewed and refashioned, as it were, to its original image, through participation (*μετουσίᾳς*) in the Spirit, so that by having put on that first grace, and having been raised up to conformity with him, we may be found better and already more powerful than the sin which reigns in this world, and may attend only to the love of God, entirely devoted by the desire for every good thing whatever; and having our minds stronger than the love of the flesh, may keep the beauty of the image implanted in ourselves unspoiled. (Pusey, ii. 720)

The notion of the completion of the image of God is not explicit here. But by linking our re-creation in Christ through the Spirit to the original creation, Cyril displays how the divine life within us is ordered to a virtuous way of life characterized by love, through which we keep the beauty of God's image untarnished. This text neatly adumbrates the basic lines of Cyril's thought concerning the goal of the reception of the divine life and the means to its attainment.

## Conclusions

For the purpose of framing our conclusions, a brief reminder of the aim of this chapter is in order. The goal was not merely to

<sup>268</sup> Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, 177, notes that the term *σύμμορφος* is often used to affirm the moral dimension of our union with Christ. This appears to be true when Rom. 8: 29 is in view. See e.g. *In Jo. 10: 26–8* (Pusey, ii. 252); *14: 11* (Pusey, ii. 453). Cyril does, however, apply the other biblical instance of the term (from Phil. 3: 21) to our bodily resurrection reserved for the age to come. See *In Jo. 15: 9–10* (Pusey, ii. 571). By making this distinction between two senses in which we are conformed to Christ, Cyril again shows himself to be a discriminating exegete.

show that Cyril places value upon the moral life, or that living rightly in obedience to Christ is important to Cyril. These conclusions are obvious and require little demonstration. Rather, my aim has been to investigate whether and in what way Cyril integrates our human response with divine action in us, and whether and in what sense this human response is grounded in Christ himself.

## The Human Reception of Divine Life

The principal and foundational conclusion is this: a full and comprehensive account of the appropriation of divine life in Cyril must incorporate the human reception of, and progress in, this divine life. Human response and the moral life are not merely tacked on to a theological account that begins and ends with divine action through the Word. Though divine initiative possesses both temporal and theological priority, human response is essential to Cyril's narrative account of salvation.

Human reception of divine life is first of all grounded in an aspect of Cyril's doctrine of creation, namely that human beings are given the faculty of free will and self-determination as a constitutive element of the image of God. But human reception of divine life is also rooted in Cyril's understanding of God's nature and justice. Cyril bases this view on his reading of the Scriptures, especially the opening chapters of Genesis, and on a synthesis of key texts such as Exod. 34: 6–7 and Ezek. 18: 1–24. The dominant note of our human response, however, is sounded in the contrast Cyril untiringly sets forth between the Old and the New Covenant. Following a Pauline line of thought, the chief mark of our response is faith, the 'mother of eternal life' and source of all good things for us. The order is maintained—faith is first, and the obedient works of love follow—but he denies any possible separation of them. If human free will is grounded in Cyril's doctrine of Creation, the attainment of true freedom is consequent on faith and new life in Christ. The tension between free will and true freedom in Cyril is perhaps best exemplified in his understanding of the incarnate Christ, who voluntarily offered himself and obeyed the Father as man, and yet was incapable of sin even as man.<sup>269</sup> His human obedience was

<sup>269</sup> *In Jn.* 7: 39 (Pusey, i. 693–4); *In 2 Cor.* 5: 20–1 (Pusey, iii. 355). See Ch. 6 for the contrast with Theodore of Mopsuestia, who allows that Christ could have sinned, but in fact did not.

voluntary, that is, truly free, but because it is the Word who is man, the possibility of sin is disallowed.

In Cyril's narrative account of salvation, divine initiative is primary. Salvation and life are properly from God alone, and even the virtues that obtain in us are seen primarily as gifts of God, not as objects of our attainment. Yet in Cyril's view we are actively engaged at every stage, from the first signs of faith to mature conformity to Christ. There is no marking off of justification from sanctification as distinguishable stages in our attainment of divine life. Nor does Cyril appear to indicate a distinction between our part in justification and our part in sanctification, initial or ongoing. Faith and love are the co-ordinate responses to *each* encounter with God, and both secure our possession of the divine life and cause us to cling to Christ, the source of that life. In the end, the gracious activity of God precedes and grounds our response of faith and love. Even faith itself is described as the pre-eminent gift of grace. Cyril is simply following here the logic of the text he so often cites, 'What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?' (1 Cor. 4: 7).<sup>270</sup>

## The Christological Centre

A second conclusion follows from the first: Cyril's account of the human reception of divine life is exceptionally well Christologically grounded and centred. Christ is the agent of divine life and salvation, being Life himself, and accomplishes the restoration of human nature in himself. But he is also the pattern for our human reception of the divine life as man, *ὡς ἄνθρωπος*, first for our reception of the Spirit (as we saw in Ch. 1), and also for our response of love and obedience to the Father, and for a way of life conformed to himself.

The examination of Christ as pattern for us in Cyril's thought has opened up a very fruitful avenue into Cyril's understanding of Christ. By positing Christ as our moral pattern, Cyril presents the Incarnate Word as being actively receptive and responsive as man. This brings an important corrective to a common assessment of Cyril's Christology, which claims that Cyril allows no active role for Christ's humanity. As presented as a pattern for us in all things,

<sup>270</sup> See e.g. *In Luc.* 22: 31–4 (Smith, 576).



Christ as man is, for example, actively obedient to the Father and fruitful in his earthly ministry. Cyril is insistent that Christ is a pattern for us only in those things that pertain to our humanity. To the extent that Christ is presented as a pattern for our reception of, and progress in, the divine life, Christ's humanity is active and expressed. I understand this conclusion as building upon the seminal suggestion by Frances Young, that Alexandrian Christology upheld the humanity of Christ 'by treating the humanity of the Saviour as being entirely receptive of the Logos'. She observes that the passive role of human nature is both closer to traditional affirmations of the Incarnation, and more consistent with the Pauline notion of human sin. On this view, Christ as truly receptive of grace 'was more truly human than any of us'.<sup>271</sup> While in full agreement with these proposals, I would add that in Cyril's presentation of Christ as a pattern for us, Christ as man is also *active* in response to the Father and so provides a model for our active response.

Nevertheless, though Cyril upholds the principle that Christ as man suffered and experienced all that pertains to humanity apart from sin, yet he diminishes at points—perhaps under the pressure of an anti-Arian polemic—the full reality of our humanity in Christ by treating Christ's suffering and temptation solely in pedagogical terms. To this extent, he weakens the Christological foundation that in principle, and usually in practice, he upholds.

## Progress in the Divine Life

The third and final conclusion concerns the dynamic outworking of the divine life in us: the gift of divine life, in co-operation with our own free response, yields a divine way of life (*πολιτεία*) and ushers in a progressive sanctification aimed at the perfection of the divine image in us. Cyril conceives of our growth into the image of God as rooted in the life-giving sap of the Spirit that flows from our union with Christ through faith and love. This union is productive of a panoply of fruits: good works, manifold virtue, a life of godliness, and a share in the mission of Christ to the world. Cyril does not offer a technically drafted account of the spiritual

<sup>271</sup> 'A Reconsideration of Alexandrian Christology', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 22 (1971), 113–14.

life, or a theory of spiritual growth.<sup>272</sup> But building upon biblical metaphors and examples in the life of Christ, he displays a high degree of confidence in the spiritual fruitfulness available to us in this life.

Cyril's notion of a progressive outworking of the divine life within us, in which we are fully participative, offsets the impression of a strictly physicalist theory of divinization, whether based on the Incarnation itself, or on our physical contact with Christ through the Eucharist. The bodily aspect of our divinization is indeed essential for Cyril, but it is not sufficient in itself. His narrative of divine life, taken to its completion, reveals an outworking of the divine life that demands our free assent of faith and full co-operation in order to reach the goal of our moral conformity to Christ.<sup>273</sup>

<sup>272</sup> Perhaps Cyril's most programmatic account of growth in the divine life appears in his *Letter to the Monks of Egypt* (ACO 1. 1. 1, 10–11), where he comments on the stepwise path to holiness drawn from 2 Pet. 1: 5–8: 'And on my part I say that those who have chosen to tread that illustrious path of the spiritual life in Christ, that path we ought to love so much, must first of all be adorned with a simple and pristine faith, and then add to it virtue, and when this is done, try to gather the riches of the knowledge of the mystery of Christ, and strive vigorously for perfect understanding. For this, I think, is what it means to "arrive at the perfect man, and reach the measure of the state of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 13)' (trans. John A. McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 246). See also *In Matt. 7: 7* (Reuss, 179) for Cyril's brief comment on a threefold path to virtue.

<sup>273</sup> Cf. Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 21.

## 4 Partakers of the Divine Nature

Therefore his Only-Begotten Word has become a partaker of flesh and blood, that is, he has become man, though being Life by nature, and begotten of the Life that is by nature, that is, of God the Father, so that, having united himself with the flesh which perishes according to the law of its own nature...he might restore it to his own Life and render it through himself a partaker of God the Father...And he wears our nature, refashioning it to his own Life. And he himself is also in us, for we have all become partakers of him, and have him in ourselves through the Spirit. For this reason we have become ‘partakers of the divine nature’ (2 Pet. 1: 4), and are reckoned as sons, and so too we have in ourselves the Father himself through the Son.

(*In Jo. 14:20*, Pusey, ii. 485–6)

Cyril either cites or alludes to the phrase from 2 Pet. 1: 4, ‘that you may become partakers of the divine nature’ (*ἵνα...γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως*),<sup>274</sup> more frequently than any other Christian writer before him.<sup>275</sup> But despite its frequency, Cyril offers

<sup>274</sup> I have located forty-one references to 2 Pet. 1: 4 in Cyril's New Testament commentaries alone: *In Matt. 11: 28* (Reuss, 201); *20: 1–16* (2×) (Reuss, 230); *In Luc. 2: 25–35* (Smith, 61); *3: 16* (Reuss, 61; Smith, 75); *3: 21–2* (Reuss, 63; Smith, 80); *4: 1–2* (Reuss, 64; Smith, 86); *4: 18* (Reuss, 236; Smith, 93); *5: 24* (Reuss, 248; Smith, 112); *7: 24–8* (Reuss, 76–7; Smith, 164); *22: 7–16* (Reuss, 207; Smith, 565); *In Jo. 1: 13* (Pusey, i. 136); *3: 5* (Pusey, i. 219); *6: 35* (Pusey, i. 476); *6: 37* (Pusey, i. 479); *7: 24* (Pusey, i. 639); *10: 14–15* (Pusey, ii. 232); *14: 4* (Pusey, ii. 406); *14: 16–17* (Pusey, ii. 469); *14: 20* (4×) (Pusey, ii. 484, 486, 487, 488); *15: 1* (Pusey, ii. 534); *16: 7* (Pusey, ii. 620); *16: 12–13* (Pusey, ii. 626); *16: 15* (Pusey, i. 639); *17: 18–19* (3×) (Pusey, ii. 720, 722); *17: 20–1* (2×) (Pusey, ii. 734, 737); *17: 22–3* (2×) (Pusey, iii. 2, 3); *20: 22–3* (Pusey, iii. 133); *In Acta 13: 25* (PG 74, 768b); *In Rom. 8: 8–9* (Pusey, iii. 214); *In 1 Cor. 6: 15* (Pusey, iii. 264); *7: 21* (Pusey, iii. 273); *15: 20* (Pusey, iii. 304); *In Heb. 10: 29* (Pusey, iii. 410).

<sup>275</sup> Norman Russell, ‘Partakers of the Divine Nature (2 Pet. 1: 4) in the Byzantine Tradition’, in J. Chrysostomides (ed.), *Kathegetria: Essays Presented to Joan Hussey* (Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1988), 57. Both Russell, ‘The Concept of Deification’, 298, and A. L. Kolp, ‘Partakers of the Divine Nature: The Use of II Pet. 1: 4 by Athanasius’, *SP* 17 (1982), 1018, identify Origen as the first Christian author to cite 2 Pet. 1: 4 (see *De princ.* iv. 4. 4; *Hom. in Lev.* iv. 4; *Comm. Rom.* iv. 9). Russell, ‘The Concept of Deification’, 336, also identifies six citations of 2 Pet. 1: 4 in Athanasius (*C. Ar.* i. 16; iii. 40; *Ep. Serap.* 1. 23, 24; *Vit. Ant.* 74; *Ep. Adelph.* 4), but finds no citation of it in the writings of the Cappadocians.

surprisingly little exegesis of the verse itself. It would appear at first glance to serve as his shorthand way of summing up what Christ has accomplished for us by taking and redeeming the whole of our nature in himself.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate what Cyril means by the phrase, 'partakers of the divine nature' (and importantly, what he does not mean by it), in the hope that this will provide us with a key for unlocking his understanding of the extent and limit of our kinship with God and its relation to Christ's unique sonship. What does Cyril intend, for example, when he says that in Christ we receive things 'above our nature' (*τὰ ὑπὲρ φύσιν*)? What ontological consequences are entailed? Does Cyril's account of our participation in the divine nature threaten to blur the distinction between the Creator and creation, between things divine and things human? And if not, what positive content does he, in the end, accord to human participation in the divine nature?

The investigation will proceed in three stages. First, I will take up the concept of participation in general, and then Cyril's use of it, drawing especially on Cyril's commentary on John 1: 3–10. Secondly, I will attempt to display the meaning of 'participation in the divine nature' in exegetical context. Through a study of Cyril's exegesis of certain key biblical texts (John 14: 20; Heb. 2: 5–18; 1 Cor. 15) we will see the various threads of Cyril's teaching on the appropriation of divine life especially well woven together. Finally, I will examine Cyril's understanding of Christ's divine–human mediation, and of our relation to Christ's unique sonship, and ask whether, and in what sense, the Incarnate Christ is a pattern for our own participation in the divine nature.

## The Concept of Participation in Cyril

### Background to the Concept of Participation

For the purposes of studying the Cyrilline concept of participation and its typical vocabulary, the biblical and patristic usage together provide the immediate background. However, a brief sketch of the philosophical use of the concept of participation will illuminate, if not its use in the New Testament, then certainly the patristic use and transformation of this concept which we encounter in Cyril.

1. *The philosophical background to the concept of participation.*<sup>276</sup> By all accounts, Plato originated the widespread use of the concept of participation as a means ‘to describe how a sensible particular comes to have an ideal Form’.<sup>277</sup> For Plato, participation ‘signifies a relation of sharing in a common character, of having communion, in whatever way, with the absolute and self-subsistent idea’.<sup>278</sup> Plato employed the concept of participation to account for the dependence of the world of becoming on the world of being, to explain how things in flux are completely dependent upon the unchanging Ideas, which are immanent in some way in the particulars and yet possess their own separate existence.<sup>279</sup> It was, in other words, Plato's manner of expressing formal causality. The common term for participation in Plato is *μέθεξις*, though he employed various related terms to convey the same notion (e.g. *μετοχή*, *μετάληψις*, *μετέχειν*, *μεταλαμβάνειν*, *κοινωνία*, *κοιννεῖν*).<sup>280</sup> Yet Plato also made use of other terms and concepts to express the relation between the particular and the Form:

The problem was how to describe such an asymmetrical relation adequately. Plato experimented with many expressions, ‘communion’ (*κοινωνία*), ‘imitation’ (*mimêsis*), ‘imaging’ (*eikasia*). ‘Participation’ came under heavy self-criticism in the *Parmenides*, mainly because it inferred a division of the Form itself...However, on Aristotle's evidence, ‘participation’ seems to have retained favour among Platonists for the relation of particulars to ideals, as that between a derivative and a primary.<sup>281</sup>

<sup>276</sup> When speaking of the philosophical background, I am using the term, ‘philosophical’, in its ancient not modern sense. ‘Participation’ was a technical concept in Greek science which was used to describe relationships of formal causality in what we would today classify as natural science.

<sup>277</sup> Lucas Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 72. Cf. Hermann Hanse, ‘μετέχω, μετοχή, μέτοχος, συμμετοχος’, *TDNT*, ii, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964), 830.

<sup>278</sup> Rudi A. Te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), p. xi.

<sup>279</sup> Leo J. Elders, *The Metaphysics of Being of St. Thomas Aquinas in Historical Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 219. See Mark J. Edwards, ‘On the Platonic Schooling of Justin Martyr’, *JTSNS* 42 (1991), 27, for the complexity of the relationship between the Forms and particulars in Plato. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1946), i. 185–6, observes that Plato also used the terms *κοινωνία* and *μετέχειν* in order to describe the relationship between the Forms themselves. Plato clearly employed the vocabulary of participation in analogous senses.

<sup>280</sup> David L. Balás, *METO ΤΣΕΛΑ ΘΕΟΥ: Man's Participation in God's Perfection according to Gregory of Nyssa* (Rome: Herder, 1966), 2.

<sup>281</sup> Siorvanes, *Proclus*, 72 (see especially Plato, *Parmenides*, 158a–b).

Aristotle's rejection of Plato's notion of separate and independent Forms, and his criticism of the mechanics of participation proposed by Plato,<sup>282</sup> led him to jettison the specific Platonic theory of causality, but not the concept of participation as such or its terminology. He continued to use the *μετέχειν* and *κοινωνεῖν* word groups to express formal causality within his own metaphysical system.<sup>283</sup> Aristotle's transposition of this concept ought to caution us against assuming that a consistent philosophical conception necessarily attaches to the terminology of participation over time and in different authors. Aristotle adopted the vocabulary of participation, and indeed like Plato used the concept of participation to express formal causality, but he did so within his particular scientific system.

The history of the concept of participation is normally traced from Plato through Aristotle to the Neoplatonist school, especially to Plotinus (204–70), Porphyry (232–305), and Proclus (409–84).<sup>284</sup> A key part of the Neoplatonist project, especially from Porphyry onwards, was the reconciling and synthesizing of Plato and Aristotle.<sup>285</sup> Among the Neoplatonists, the notion of participation was employed, not so much for the relation of the Form to the sensible particular, as for the relation of higher and lower forms of being within the intelligible realm.<sup>286</sup> Yet, the basic principle of participation in Neoplatonist metaphysics, namely 'the transference of what is essential of a thing to a subordinate',<sup>287</sup> is similar to that found in Plato and Aristotle. A principle of participation which is identical, or at least closely analogous, to that of Plato and Aristotle, is put to use in a new metaphysical system by the Neoplatonists. While not all Christian use of the philosophical concept of participation can be traced to Neoplatonic influence (e.g. in Justin Martyr), it would appear that the Neoplatonic school played an important role in mediating the concept of participation to the

<sup>282</sup> Elders, *The Metaphysics of Being*, 219–20 (see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, i. 6. 9).

<sup>283</sup> Balás, *METO ΊΣΛΑ ΘΕΟΥ*, 3. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, vii. 4. 6, 12.

<sup>284</sup> For this historical development, see Balás, *METO ΊΣΛΑ ΘΕΟΥ*, 1–5; Siorvanes, *Proclus*, 72–4; Cornelio Fabro, 'Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Thomism: Convergences and Divergences', *The New Scholasticism*, 44 (1970), 73–9.

<sup>285</sup> Lloyd P. Gerson, 'Plotinus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Metaphysics', in Lawrence P. Schrenk (ed.), *Aristotle in Late Antiquity* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 3–21.

<sup>286</sup> Balás, *METO ΊΣΛΑ ΘΕΟΥ*, 4–5; Fabro, 'Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Thomism', 76.

<sup>287</sup> Siorvanes, *Proclus*, 76.

later church Fathers, who then transposed it for use in a specifically Christian theological context.<sup>288</sup> Before examining the use of this concept in the Fathers, however, we will first examine the terminology of participation found in the New Testament.

*2The terminology of participation in the New Testament.* The various terms for participation found in Plato, identified above, each appear in the New Testament, excepting *μέθεξις* itself.<sup>289</sup> Both of the primary word groups (from *μετέχειν* and *κοινωνεῖν*) cover a broad semantic range, and normally carry their ordinary language meaning, ‘to share’, ‘to partake of’, or ‘to share with someone in something’.<sup>290</sup> It is difficult to sustain the view that any instance of these terms in the New Testament is indebted to a particular philosophical framework (e.g. Platonism).<sup>291</sup> This partaking or sharing can be in genealogical descent (Heb. 7: 13), in material goods (Rom. 12: 13; 2 Cor. 9: 13), in the eating of food (1 Cor. 10: 30), or most commonly in spiritual things (Rom. 15: 27; Heb. 12: 10). And though in principle the typical sense of one word group may be distinguished from the other—*κοινωνεῖν* carrying more clearly the sense of partaking with someone in something—in practice they appear to be virtually synonymous in the New

<sup>288</sup> See Siddals, ‘Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria’, 348, for the Neoplatonic mediation of the principles of participation to the Fathers of the church.

<sup>289</sup> *κοινωνέω* (Rom. 12: 13; 15: 27; Gal. 6: 6; Phil. 4: 15; 1 Tim. 5: 22; Heb. 2: 14; 1 Pet. 4: 13; 2 John 11); *κοινωνία* (Acts 2: 42; Rom. 15: 26; 1 Cor. 1: 9; 10: 16; 2 Cor. 6: 14; 8: 4; 9: 13; 13: 13; Gal. 2: 9; Phil. 1: 5; 2: 1; 3: 10; Philem. 6; Heb. 13: 16; 1 John 1: 3; 1: 6, 7); *κοινωνός* (Matt. 23: 30; Luke 5: 10; 1 Cor. 10: 18, 20; 2 Cor. 1: 7; 8: 23; Philem. 17; Heb. 10: 33; 1 Pet. 5: 1; 2 Pet. 1: 4); *συγκοινωνέω* (Eph. 5: 11; Phil. 4: 14; Rev. 18: 4); *συγκοινωνός* (Rom. 11: 17; 1 Cor. 9: 23; Phil. 1: 7; Rev. 1: 9); *μετέχω* (1 Cor. 9: 10, 12; 10: 17, 21, 30; Heb. 2: 14; 5: 13; 7: 13); *μετοχή* (2 Cor. 6: 14); *μέτοχος* (Luke 5: 7; Heb. 1: 9; 3: 1, 14; 6: 4; 12: 8); *συμμέτοχος* (Eph. 3: 6; 5: 7); *μετάλαμβάνω* (Acts 2: 46; 24: 25; 27: 33; 2 Tim. 2: 6; Heb. 6: 7; 12: 10); *μετάληψις* (1 Tim. 4: 3). The term *μετουσία*, which does not appear in the New Testament, appears to have come into common philosophical use only by the third century AD.

<sup>290</sup> Hanse, ‘μετέχω, μετοχή, μέτοχος, συμμετοχος’, 831; Friedrich Hauck, ‘κοινός, κοινωνός, κοινωνέω, κοινωνία, συγκοινωνός, συγκοινωνέω, κοινωνικός, κοινός’, TDNT, iii (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 804; J. Y. Campbell, ‘KOINΩNLIA and its Cognates in the New Testament’, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 51 (1932), 353.

<sup>291</sup> Hanse, ‘μετέχω, μετοχή, μέτοχος, συμμετοχος’, 831, suggests that in the use of *μέτοχος* in Hebrews ‘one might almost detect contact with Platonic modes of expression by way of Philo’. Russell, ‘The Concept of Deification’, 162–3, observes that the terminology of 2 Pet. 1: 4 is unique, and proposes a possible link to a Platonic doctrine of participation. One could argue that Heb. 2: 14 (participation in a common nature) and 2 Pet. 1: 4 (participation in the divine nature) are instances of a general philosophical use of *κοινωνέω* and *μετέχω* respectively, but there is no warrant for attaching this use to a particular philosophical school.

Testament. The juxtaposition and interchangeable use of the two word groups in Luke 5: 7–10 and 1 Cor. 10: 16–21, and the synonymous parallelism found in 2 Cor. 6: 14 and Heb. 2: 14–15, illustrate their rough equivalence.<sup>292</sup> This equivalence and interchangeability of the two word groups is, as we shall see, also characteristic of Cyril's usage. The following instances of the terminology of participation in the New Testament stand out as especially significant for Cyril.

(a) Heb. 2: 14, 'Since therefore, the children share (*κοινωνήσαντες*) in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook (*μετέσχεν*) of the same.' This text provides Cyril with a statement of the Incarnation which is described and conceived of in terms of participation. The two terms, *κοινωνεῖν* and *μετέχειν*, appear in synonymous parallelism and have the same function in the text. Cyril makes frequent use of this text for demonstrating the full assumption of our humanity by the Word.<sup>293</sup>

(b) Three texts express relationship to the Holy Spirit in terms of the language of participation: (1) Heb. 6: 4, 'partakers of the Holy Spirit' (*μετόχους πνεύματος ἁγίου*); (2) 2 Cor. 13: 13, 'the fellowship of the Holy Spirit' (*ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος*); and (3) Phil. 2: 1, 'participation in the Spirit' (*κοινωνία πνεύματος*). It is noteworthy that the language of participation is used to describe the relationship of the Spirit to the believer, and that terms from both of the respective word groups are employed in the New Testament to describe this relationship.<sup>294</sup>

<sup>292</sup> For the parallel and synonymous use of these two word groups in the New Testament, see Hanse, 'μετέχω, μετοχή, μέτοχος, συμμετοχος', 831, and C. Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, ii (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 478.

<sup>293</sup> For references to Heb. 2: 11–17 (which forms a unit around v. 14) in Cyril's New Testament commentaries, see *In Luc. 4: 1–2* (Smith, 86; Reuss, 64); *7: 36–50* (Smith, 170); *12: 49–53* (Smith, 380; Reuss, 150); *22: 17–22* (Smith, 569–70; Reuss, 209); *In Ja. 1: 14* (Pusey, i. 141); *5: 30* (Pusey, i. 355); *6: 42* (Pusey, i. 503); *6: 51* (Pusey, i. 518); *7: 39* (Pusey, i. 693); *10: 14–15* (Pusey, ii. 234); *13: 1* (Pusey, ii. 342); *14: 20* (3×) (Pusey, ii. 481, 483, 486); *17: 18–19* (Pusey, ii. 720–1); *In Rom. 5: 11* (Pusey, iii. 181); *In 1 Cor. 15: 20* (Pusey, iii. 303); *In 2 Cor. 2: 14* (Pusey, iii. 327).

<sup>294</sup> In his New Testament commentaries, Cyril does not cite any of these three texts explicitly, but the expressions, *ἡ τοῦ πνεύματος κοινωνία* (*In Ja. 17: 20–1*, Pusey, ii. 735), *τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸν κοινωνίᾳ* (*In Rom. 8: 8–9*; Pusey, iii. 214), and *ἡ πρὸς τὸ πνεῦμα κοινωνία* (*In Matt. 21: 42–3*, Reuss, 236) closely approximate 2 Cor. 13: 13 and Phil. 2: 1, and it is probable that all three texts stand behind Cyril's statement of our participation in God through the Holy Spirit. *In Luc. 22: 7–10* (Reuss, 207) provides an example of the link Cyril makes between 2 Pet. 1: 4 and Heb. 6: 4: '[That we may become] partakers of His divine nature through participation in the Holy Spirit' (*θείας αὐτοῦ φύσεως κοινωνοῦσθαι διὰ μετοχῆς τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος*).



(c) 1 Cor. 10: 14–22 employs the vocabulary of participation to state the incompatibility between sacrificial pagan meals and the Christian Eucharist. Paul speaks of the cup of blessing as ‘a participation (κοινωνία) in the blood of Christ’, and the bread that is broken as ‘a participation (κοινωνία) in the body of Christ’. In consequence, we are all one body because we partake (μετέχομεν) of one bread. Paul then names those who partake of the sacrifice, whether Israelite or pagan, as partners (κοινωνοί) with the one to whom they sacrifice, and he concludes that Christians cannot partake (μετέχειν) of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Once again, the terms drawn from the two word groups appear to be used interchangeably.<sup>295</sup>

(d) Finally, 2 Pet. 1: 4 states in bold terms that, as the consequence of God's power at work in us, we have become ‘partakers of the divine nature’ (θείας κοινωνοί φύσεως). As we have noted, this phrase functions as Cyril's shorthand expression to denote the new reality the human race possesses in Christ.

The New Testament offers a terminological and theological basis, then, for describing the Incarnation, our reception of the Spirit, our share in the Eucharist, and more generally our union with God in the language of participation. In order to show the relation between Cyril's use of the concept of participation and the biblical text, we must now give attention to the development of the concept of participation in certain church Fathers who preceded Cyril.

3*The concept of participation in the Fathers.* Though the notion of a participatory union with Christ appears in Ignatius of Antioch,<sup>296</sup> the first significant theological use of participationist language is found in the second-century Fathers, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. Justin uses the notion of participation to describe the means by which every race of humankind has a share in the spermiotic Word.<sup>297</sup> The principle he invokes shows some reliance on a philosophical notion

<sup>295</sup> For Cyril's citation of 1 Cor. 10: 16 with reference to participation in the Eucharist, see *In Jo. 15: 1* (Pusey, ii. 542); *17: 11* (Pusey, ii. 698); *17: 20–1* (Pusey, ii. 735). In contrast to Cyril, John Chrysostom (*Hom. 24 in 1 Cor. 10: 16*; PG 61, 200) distinguishes κοινωνία from μετοχή in the context of 1 Cor. 10. He understands the term κοινωνέω to communicate a deeper union with Christ than do either of the terms, μετέχω or μεταλαμβάνω.

<sup>296</sup> *Ep. to the Eph.* 4. 2, 11. 2. Cf. Russell, ‘The Concept of Deification’, 164–9.

<sup>297</sup> Justin uses both μετέχειν (*1 Apol.* 46) and μετουσία (*2 Apol.* 13). See Mark Edwards, ‘On the Platonic Schooling of Justin Martyr’, 24–9, for Justin's use of participation in these texts as well as Justin's relationship to Platonism more broadly.

of participation. He distinguishes between the seed (that is, the imitation which is imparted according to the given capacity) and the thing itself, which is participated in and imitated according to grace.<sup>298</sup> Justin employs the language of participation to describe our reception of the Eucharist,<sup>299</sup> and he speaks of the human soul as possessing life, not in itself, but through participation in the life that belongs properly to God.<sup>300</sup> The basic principle of the philosophical concept of participation is present here, namely, the distinction between that which participates and that which is participated in, the former possessing a quality contingently and in part, the latter having it necessarily and fully. Justin applies this principle only to the distinction between the Creator and things created.<sup>301</sup>

Irenaeus employs the terms *μετέχειν* and *μετοχή* to describe our participation in the light and life of God as the basis for our knowledge of God and for eternal life in him.<sup>302</sup> But he also uses participationist terminology to describe both our participation in the Spirit (*τῇ τοῦ πνεύματος κοινωνίᾳ*)<sup>303</sup> and our partaking of the Eucharist (*μεταλαμβάνοντα τῆς εὐχαριστίας*), through which we are nourished by the body and blood of the Lord, and so partake of life (*μετέχειν τῆς ζωῆς*).<sup>304</sup> Though his utilization of the terminology of participation appears less linked to the philosophical principle observed in Justin, his application of these terms to our share in the Spirit through baptism and our share in the Eucharist is parallel to Cyril's own use.

In Origen we find a more highly developed concept of participation, one which is at the centre of his theology.<sup>305</sup> According to

<sup>298</sup> 2 *Apol.* 13.

<sup>299</sup> For participation in the Eucharist, Justin employs *μεταλαμβάνειν* (1 *Apol.* 65) and *μετέχειν* (ibid. 66).

<sup>300</sup> *Dial.* 6.

<sup>301</sup> Justin's language of participation and imitation, and the immediate reference to Plato in *Dial.* 6, would seem to point to a Platonic idea of participation in play here, though Russell, 'The Concept of Deification', 175, suggests that we find here an Aristotelian use of participation that denotes the dependence of the contingent on the self-subsistent.

<sup>302</sup> *Adv. Haer.* iv. 20. 5.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid. v. 11. 1.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid. iv. 18. 5. The terms *μετέχειν*, *μεταλαμβάνειν*, and *κοινωνία* each appear in this text and are used synonymously.

<sup>305</sup> David L. Balás, 'The Idea of Participation in the Structure of Origen's Thought: Christian Transposition of a Theme of the Platonic Tradition', *Vetera Christianorum*, 12 (1975), 259, claims that the terminology of participation has a central role in Origen's thought. Russell, 'The Concept of Deification', 270, states that 'the concept of participation becomes for Origen the most important aspect of the doctrine of deification'. Cf. Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition*, 86–90.

David Balás, the concept of participation in Origen, at all analogous levels, ‘expresses a relationship of a “lower level” of being, which possesses a certain perfection in a derived, dependent manner to a “higher level” of being, which possesses the same perfection fully, and is the source of it for others’.<sup>306</sup> Origen applies this basic concept principally to two spheres: (1) the relationship between the hypostases within the Trinity, and (2) the relationship of creatures to the Father, Son, and Spirit.<sup>307</sup> Concerning the former, Origen speaks of the Son himself being made divine by participation (*μετοχή*) in the divinity of the Father,<sup>308</sup> and there does appear to be a sense in which the Father possesses divinity in himself which the Son only participates in, albeit fully.<sup>309</sup> In the same way that the Son participates in the Father for his divinity, so the Spirit receives existence and divinity through participation (*κατὰ μετοχήν*) in the Son.<sup>310</sup>

But the more significant sense of the concept of participation in Origen for our purposes concerns the relationship between creation and the Trinity. Origen distinguishes a participation that is natural or ontological from one that is supernatural or dynamic.<sup>311</sup> He proposes in his early work, *De principiis*, a differentiated participation in the three divine hypostases. All creation, rational and irrational, derives its being from God the Father; all rational creation receives its capability for rationality by being partakers (*participes*) of the Word; and the saints are sanctified specially and supernaturally through the Holy Spirit.<sup>312</sup> The first two instances of participation are ontological, involving no exercise of free will in order to obtain. The last instance, supernatural participation in the Spirit, is necessarily voluntary, and can be both gained and lost.<sup>313</sup>

<sup>306</sup> Balás, ‘The Idea of Participation in the Structure of Origen’s Thought’, 270.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid. 262.

<sup>308</sup> *Comm. Jn.* ii. 17.

<sup>309</sup> But see Henri Crouzel, *Origen* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 171–2, for a defence of an implicit Nicene dogma in Origen.

<sup>310</sup> *Comm. Jn.* ii. 75–6.

<sup>311</sup> Russell, ‘The Concept of Deification’, 291–2; Balás, ‘The Idea of Participation in the Structure of Origen’s Thought’, 264–9. I will adopt Burghardt’s and Russell’s terminology of ‘ontological’ and ‘dynamic’ to refer to these two distinct levels of participation, the one in the order of being, the other in the order of grace.

<sup>312</sup> *De Princ.* i. 3. 5–6.

<sup>313</sup> Origen (ibid.) states that it is impossible to be made a partaker (*participem*) of the Father or the Son, except through the Holy Spirit. See also ibid. i. 1. 3 and ii. 7. 2–3 for an account of participation in the Spirit, and i. 8. 3 for the distinction between essential and accidental properties.

In sum, Origen makes use of certain general principles drawn from the philosophical concept of participation, but applies them to the Christian doctrine of God (the relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit), and to the relationship between the created order and God. He transposes certain philosophical principles for service in biblical exegesis and Christian theology.

The concept and language of participation is widely attested in the fourth- and fifth-century Fathers.<sup>314</sup> In order to trace the use of the concept of participation from Origen to Cyril, I will examine its use particularly in Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa, not only because of the important role this concept plays in their respective theologies, but also because of the certain influence of Athanasius, and the probable influence of Gregory, on Cyril. In Athanasius, we can identify three developments in the use of the concept of participation. First, in view of the Arian controversy, he gives a corrective to the potentially subordinationist implication of Origen's teaching that the Son receives his divinity by participation.<sup>315</sup> For Athanasius, the Son possesses fully the very essence of God, and does not partake of that essence in any way comparable to the created order. In one instance, Athanasius describes the Father's begetting of the Son in terms of God being 'wholly participated' (*ὅλως μετέχεσθαι*), that is to say, the Son participates, 'not externally, but from the being of the Father' (*οὐκ ἔξωθεν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς*). But he plainly contrasts this sense of participation with the phrase 'by participation' (*κατὰ μετουσίαν*) in the very same context.<sup>316</sup> For Athanasius, to say that the Son participates in the Father is identical to saying that he is Son 'by nature' and 'essentially'. The distinction in Athanasius between our sonship 'by participation' and 'by grace' and the sonship of the true Son and Word, who is so 'by nature' and 'essentially', is adopted by Cyril and serves as a key principle

<sup>314</sup> Balás, *METOΨΛΑ ΘΕΟΥ*, 14, identifies its use in Basil, Didymus, and Evagrius. The terminology of participation is also found in Eusebius, Methodius, Chrysostom, and Theodoret (see Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 864–6). Abramowski, 'The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia', 13–16, argues for the centrality of the concept of participation in Theodore. The concept of participation appears frequently in Augustine (e.g. *Trac.* 19. 11–13; 23. 5; 26. 19; 39. 8; 48. 6, 10; 70. 1; 123. 2). This broad attestation points to a widely and commonly held concept of participation among various patristic schools, probably dependent on an equally broad concept of participation current in Greek thought and science.

<sup>315</sup> Balás, *METOΨΛΑ ΘΕΟΥ*, 11–12; Russell, 'The Concept of Deification', 325–6.

<sup>316</sup> *C. Ar.* i. 15–16.

in his understanding of the extent and limit of our union with God.<sup>317</sup>

Secondly, Athanasius makes use of the concept of participation to demonstrate the divinity of the Son and Spirit. His argument may be put in the following logical form: (1) we see in the Scripture that both the Son and the Spirit produce in us sanctification and a share in the divine nature; (2) only that which possesses something by nature and wholly can give it to others (and, correlatively, that which possesses a thing by participation cannot); (3) the Son and Spirit must themselves be fully and naturally divine, or else they could not give us a share in the divine nature.<sup>318</sup> Cyril himself adopts this form of argument in his defence of the divinity of Son and Spirit.

Thirdly, the notion of participation in Athanasius is definitively linked to the Incarnation and employed to describe our sacramental participation in Christ.<sup>319</sup> It would appear that Athanasius adopts Irenaeus's fundamental outlook on the centrality of the Incarnation and the mediation of the Incarnation to us through the gift of the Spirit in baptism and the Eucharist, but describes these in terms of principles drawn more clearly from Origen's concept of participation.<sup>320</sup> Athanasius typically conceives of our incorporation into Christ in terms of participation in the Spirit related to baptism,<sup>321</sup> but he also speaks of our partaking of the body of the Word himself in the Eucharist.<sup>322</sup> It is evident that Cyril's own theological use of the concept of participation follows very closely the lines set down by his predecessor in the See of Alexandria.

In Gregory of Nyssa, we find a use of the notion of participation in significant continuity with Origen, but following the lead of Athanasius and Basil, Gregory refrains from using the notion of

<sup>317</sup> For this distinction in Athanasius, see *C. Gen.* 46. 8; *De Decr.* 9–10; *C. Ar.* i. 9, 37; iii. 1, 17, 19–20; *Ep. Serap.* 2. 4. He also follows Origen by accepting the principle that whatever possesses a quality by participation is susceptible of losing that quality (*Ep. Serap.* 1. 27).

<sup>318</sup> See e.g. *De Syn.* 51; *Ep. Serap.* 1. 23–4. Balás, *METOYΣIA ΘEOY*, 12, considers this principle a properly Athanasian contribution to the theological use of participation.

<sup>319</sup> Russell, 'The Concept of Deification', 306, 344. Kolp, 'Partakers of the Divine Nature', 1021, underlines this Christological use of the concept of participation in Athanasius.

<sup>320</sup> Russell, 'The Concept of Deification', 329.

<sup>321</sup> *C. Ar.* i. 15–16, 37; ii. 59; iii. 1, 19–20, 24–5; *Ep. Serap.* 1. 23–4, 29; 3. 6.

<sup>322</sup> *Ep. ad Max.* 2 (PG 26, 1088c): 'We are deified (*θεοποιούμεθα*), not by partaking (*μετέχοντες*) of the body of some man, but by receiving the body of the Word himself.'

participation to designate the relation of the Son and Spirit to the Father.<sup>323</sup> While Gregory applies the concept of participation to various analogous levels, his most frequent use concerns dynamic or supernatural participation of the rational creation in God, and only rarely describes ontological participation in God's being in the created order.<sup>324</sup> On the one hand, Gregory roots our dynamic participation in the Incarnation itself, mediated in a twofold manner through the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.<sup>325</sup> On the other hand, the unique feature of Gregory's account of participation, emphasizing our intellectual participation in the divine perfections, is the idea of infinite progress. To participate in God for Gregory implies a never-ending progress in our share in his goodness and life, even in the next age.<sup>326</sup> Cyril's use of the notion of participation more clearly reflects Gregory's emphasis on the Incarnation and sacramental mediation than it does his notion of infinite progress.

The patristic development sketched here displays a certain synthesis of the Greek philosophical conception of participation (i.e. various analogous levels of formal causality) with the Christian understanding of creation, the Incarnation, the gift of the Spirit, and sacramental mediation. The Fathers explained and interpreted the New Testament teaching concerning our share in Christ, already framed in a vocabulary of participation, by means of principles drawn from the philosophical concept of participation. We now turn to consider how Cyril employs the language of participation in order to describe human participation in the divine life.

## Participation in Cyril: *In Jo. 1: 3–10* (Pusey, i. 74–130)

In this selection from his extensive commentary on the first verses of John's gospel, Cyril presents us with the basic features of his notion of participation. As we shall see, he typically applies the concept of participation to what we have termed the dynamic or supernatural level. In this text, however, he reveals a prior and

<sup>323</sup> Balás, *METO ΨΕΛΑ ΘΕΟΥ*, 23–53.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid. 100, 116.

<sup>325</sup> Gregory, *Or. catech.* 37, states that the soul has union with Life through faith and 'participation in Life' (τῇ τῆς ζωῆς κοινωνίᾳ), while the body comes into participation (ἐν μετονομασίᾳ) in the Saviour in another way, through the Eucharist.

<sup>326</sup> Balás, *METO ΨΕΛΑ ΘΕΟΥ*, 130–40, 166–7.

foundational sense of ontological participation, necessary for correctly comprehending the dynamic sense of participation. The commentary will be examined in three parts, divided according to the logical order of Cyril's treatment.

1. vv. 3b–4a. Having demonstrated that the Word is consubstantial with the Father (vv. 1–2), and that all things are created through the Word (v. 3a), Cyril now proceeds to show how the Word not only brings all things into being, but also sustains them in being, in some way ‘mingling’ (ἐγκαταμύγνυς) himself with those who do not have eternal being from themselves, in order that each thing may be preserved according to the limit of its own nature (Pusey, i. 74). Cyril punctuates vv. 3–4 by grouping together the words, ὁ γέγονεν, ἐν αὐτῷ ζωῆν, so that αὐτῷ refers back to ὁ γέγονεν, and the text reads: ‘That which was made, in it was life.’<sup>327</sup> This reading allows Cyril to interpret the verse as showing the dependence of all things created upon ‘Life’, the Word himself. The Word is both the beginning (ἀρχή) and maintenance (σύστασις) of all things, seen and unseen.<sup>328</sup> And because the Word is Life by nature, he bestows being and life and motion (an allusion to Acts 17: 28) upon all things that are, not through being divided or altered himself, but through advancing his life to each according to its created ability to partake (μετασχεῖν) of that life (Pusey, i. 75). The use of ‘partake’ here is noteworthy, because it shows that Cyril employs the language of participation to describe the participation of all things in the life and being of the Son in the order of creation. Cyril skilfully supplies an allusion to Acts 17: 28 as an exegetical bridge to connect the term ‘life’ in John 1: 4a with the idea of ‘being’ and ‘movement’, thus allowing him to interpret ‘life’ in this context more cogently in terms of creation and sustenance in being.

Cyril next applies the force of this conclusion to the issue of the status of the Word, taking his stand against the Arian position:

For if the Word was in things that are made, as Life by nature (ζωὴ κατὰ φύσιν), mixing (ἐγκαταμύγνυς) himself with things that are by participation (διὰ μετοχήν), then he is different from those in whom he is

<sup>327</sup> Origen, *Comm. Jn.* ii. 114, punctuates John 1: 3–4 in the same manner.

<sup>328</sup> Cf. *In 1 Cor. 1: 22* (Pusey, iii. 254) for the Son as the one through whom all things come into being and are sustained in being.

believed to be...Therefore, if the Word who gives life to them, is in things originate by participation (*μεθεκτός*), he himself will not also be among those who participate (*ἐν τοῖς μετέχουσιν*), but evidently different from these. But if this is so, then he is not originate (*γεννητός*), but is in them as Life by nature. (Pusey, i. 76)

Here we see the basic principle of participation illustrated, which we witnessed in Origen, Athanasius, and Gregory: that which participates is necessarily distinct from that which is participated in, the latter having the quality (in this case, life) by nature.<sup>329</sup> In a series of proofs that follows, Cyril further unfolds his idea of participation: ‘That which participates in life (*τὸ ζῶντος μετέχον*) is not life in its own right (*αὐτοκινῶς*)’ (Pusey, i. 78). This reasoning is grounded in a metaphysical framework described in the following selection: ‘Carefully examining the nature of things that are, we observe God and creation, and nothing other than these. For whatever falls short of being God by nature, this certainly is originate, and whatever escapes the category of being made is surely within the bounds of Deity’ (Pusey, i. 78). Such a metaphysic rules out any intermediary levels of being between God and creation, and allows for only one level of participatory relationship between beings of different orders, namely that between God and the creation.

2 vv. 4*b*–5. Cyril understands the phrase, ‘and the life was the light of men’, not as a repetition of what was asserted in vv. 3*b*–4*a*, but as denoting the further endowment of the gift of rationality to the human race. The Word enlightens the rational living creature and lavishes understanding upon him, rendering him a partaker (*μέτοχον*) in the wisdom of God through the Word (Pusey, i. 80). Cyril adduces identical arguments to those made in vv. 3*b*–4*a* in order to demonstrate this next level of participation in the rationality of the Word: (*a*) that which illuminates (*τὸ φωτίζον*) is different from that which is illuminated (*τὸ φωτιζόμενον*) (Pusey, i. 82); (*b*) the Word who is light by nature mingles himself (*ἀναμειγνύς*) by participation (*διὰ μετοχής*) with those who are perceived to be in him (Pusey, i. 83); (*c*) the Son is light by nature; we participate in light as things originate (Pusey, i. 85).

<sup>329</sup> See *In Jo. 11: 25* (Reuss, 191), where Cyril, commenting on Christ's words to Martha, ‘I am the resurrection and the life’, distinguishes Christ who is life by nature from creatures who are recipients of life.



Moving to v. 5, Cyril explains how all rational beings receive their life and light ‘according to a certain ineffable mode of participation’ (*κατὰ τινα μετουσίως ἄρρητον τρόπον*). God the Word is revealed here as both Life and Light, not of some rational beings only but of all. And importantly this is founded not upon merit or reward for good; all things that have ‘life and light’ have them necessarily by participation in the Word, who is Life and Light (Pusey, i. 87–8). This last point is crucial for distinguishing this type of participation from a dynamic, graced participation. There is no moral foundation here, rooted in faith or the will. The light of rationality is given in the creation. Even the darkness mentioned in v. 5, apart from a passing reference to moral darkness in Rom. 1: 25, is deemed by Cyril to be a characteristic of generate being as such, for what is generated lacks its own illumination and must receive it by participation in the Word. In a concluding sentence Cyril links the two levels of ontological participation, showing them to be distinct yet chronologically concurrent: ‘Nevertheless, out of his love for man, things originate possess the light, and are provided with the power of understanding, as if introduced alongside, coinciding with their passage into being’ (Pusey, i. 89).

Cyril's commentary on vv. 6–8 is a kind of parenthesis in his discussion of participation, concerned as it is with John the Baptist as the witness to the light. Yet, even here, John as the lamp, and the saints as light, are distinguished from Christ *the* Light. The former receive illumination from Christ by grace (Pusey, i. 95). True to the anti-Arian character of this commentary, the distinction between the Word and the creation, mediated by the concept of participation, dominates Cyril's exposition.

3 vv. 9–10. Cyril's commentary on v. 9*a*, ‘He was the true light’, is largely a recapitulation of the argument thus far, comprised of a series of proofs that demonstrate the distinction between Christ as the true Light who enlightens and the human race which is enlightened by participation in the Light. In amassing his arguments, however, Cyril mixes together different levels of participation in Christ the Light, moving from examples that are plainly grounded in creation to those that are founded on the grace of the incarnate Christ, which are received freely through faith. Given the strictly ontological interpretation of Christ as light in vv. 4*b*–5, the inconsistency in the illustrations

adduced here is rather jarring to the reader—Cyril appears to be reaching for whatever combustible material will feed the fire of his argument. Yet this lack of consistency may indicate that for Cyril the lines between the created and the redemptive orders need not be so carefully distinguished.

Cyril opens his discussion of v. 9 by distinguishing that which is by nature from that which is by grace, that which is partaken of from that which partakes. By receiving the light we mount up (*ἀναβήσεται*) to being light, and are illuminated ‘by participation in the divine nature’ (*τῇ μεθεξεί τῆς θείας ... φύσεως*).<sup>330</sup> We both are, and are called, light by our imitation of the light (Pusey, i. 96). Cyril typically uses 2 Pet. 1: 4 to express our participation in the Incarnate Christ either through the Spirit or the Eucharist. Here he applies it to our participation in the ‘Light’, which in the supporting arguments is referred equivocally either to our participation in rationality or to our free participation in Christ through faith.

The first set of supporting arguments concern the dependence of the Creature on the creator for light. Because we are of a created nature, we lack light. But then Cyril begins to call upon various verses from the Old Testament to show our need for light from outside of us, and moral darkness comes to the fore. Finally, he brings forward texts that plainly speak of our moral blindness and need for salvation (2 Cor. 4: 4; John 12: 35; John 3: 19–20). This leads Cyril to state the principle that those who have a quality by nature (*φύσει*) have it rooted firmly, but those that possess a thing by will (*κατὰ θέλησιν*) do not have such stability (*σταῖσιν*).<sup>331</sup> He concludes that the human being is rational (*λογικῶς*), not according to will, but from nature (*παρὰ τῆς φύσεως*), while to do bad or good is in the power of the will (Pusey, i. 101). The problem with this particular comparison is that Cyril has just established from vv. 4b–5 that created rationality is itself received by participation, in contrast with the Son who is light and rationality by

<sup>330</sup> Cyril is clearly alluding to 2 Pet. 1: 4 here, but he has substituted the abstract noun *μεθεξεί* for the more concrete term *κοινωνία*.

<sup>331</sup> This principle, found also in Origen and Athanasius, that only what is rooted in nature is stable, while what is received by participation is capable of being lost, is a characteristic feature of participation in Cyril. Cf. *In Jo.* 1: 32–3 (Pusey, i. 178); 6: 27 (Pusey, i. 446); 15: 26–7 (Pusey, ii. 608).

nature.<sup>332</sup> Cyril seems to have momentarily lost his way here by failing to distinguish in one and the same exegetical context between what it means to say that the Son has something by nature and what it means to say that we have a thing by nature; between the light we receive in the gift of our rationality in creation and the light we receive by faith through the free exercise of our will.<sup>333</sup>

Cyril's commentary on v. 9*b*, 'which enlightens every man coming into the world', goes some way towards alleviating this ambiguity. Consistent with his reading of vv. 3*b*–4, Cyril understands the phrase, 'coming into the world' (ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον) to refer, not to the more remote antecedent, 'the true light' (i.e. Christ), but to the more proximate nominative, 'every man'. For Cyril this verse describes, not the Incarnation of the Word, but the gift of rationality to the human race. He recognizes that according to the Scripture, not only angels, but even human beings, are able to illuminate others. He accounts for this by distinguishing what is compound in us from what is simple in the Word. We possess wisdom and light as those who have freely received and are called to freely give; the Word *is* these things by nature.

For whatever good things are in them, these surely are altogether God-given, and the nature of human beings may not boast at all of its own goods, nor that of the holy angels. For after being called into being, each of those that are has the principle of how it is from God, and we are assured that nothing exists in them essentially (οὐσιωδῶς) which is not a gift of the generosity of the one creator, and it has for a root the grace of the One who made it. (Pusey, i. 110)

Therefore even what a created thing has essentially it has by participation (μεθεκτῶς) from God.<sup>334</sup>

<sup>332</sup> See Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 33–9, for a discussion of rationality in Cyril. He finds fault with Cyril for employing in his exposition of John 1: 9 'a fluctuating or at least ambiguous terminology' (p. 34), for 'failing to discriminate the expression, κατὰ φύσιν, as it applies to God and man', and for oscillating 'rapidly and bewilderingly between the natural order and the supernatural' (p. 36).

<sup>333</sup> Cyril elsewhere distinguishes between what we are by nature—a composite of body and soul—and what we receive by participation in the Holy Spirit at Creation (*In Jo. 1: 14* ; Pusey, i. 138–9). He also speaks of the human qualities of rationality and thought as comprehended 'in the definition of essence' (ἐν τῷ τῆς οὐσίας ὁρῶ), and as distinct from what is received externally (*In Jo. 17: 6–8* ; Pusey, ii. 684).

<sup>334</sup> In his comment on Luke 18: 19, 'No one is good but God alone' (Smith, 487; Reuss, 186), Cyril states that God alone is by nature and unchangeably good; angels and humans are good 'by participation' (κατὰ μεθεξίν), and have their existence as partakers of him who truly exists.

Cyril goes on to explain this conclusion more fully by distinguishing the human activity of teaching from the engrafting of the root of understanding by the Word in each of those called into being, rendering the living creature rational, and showing it a partaker of the Word's own nature (*τῆς οὐκείας φύσεως μέτοχον*) (Pusey, i. 111). This is an unusual instance in which Cyril speaks, in a phrase reminiscent of 2 Pet. 1: 4, of participation in the divine nature in the order of creation. The twofold sense of illumination, in creation and by grace, corresponds to the twofold manner in which the Christ is understood to be the Light of the World. He is Light in the world first of all as the one who sustains the creation as God; but he also came into the world after the manner of the Incarnation (*κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τρόπον*) (Pusey, i. 114). The question, how the Light who was in the world remained unrecognized by those who ostensibly were enlightened by him in Creation (v. 10), propels Cyril into a brief narrative of salvation: 'For the Son enlightens, but the creature blunts the grace' (Pusey, i. 128). With this transition to the narrative of salvation, our investigation of Cyril's concept of participation comes to a close.

## Conclusions

Cyril's commentary on the Word as Life and Light in John 1: 3–10, replete with formal argumentation, introduces us to his analogous uses of the concept of participation, and shows the Word himself to be the link between the various levels to which the notion of participation is applied.<sup>335</sup> The Word is 'Life' as the source of being of which all creation partakes. He is 'Light' in the sense that he grants to all rational creatures the very quality of rationality through participation in himself. These properties of being and rationality define for Cyril what a human being is by nature. Finally, in the Incarnation the Word is the Light who has come into the world to enlighten all who are in the moral darkness of sin, and to restore incorruption to our mortal bodies. In this one commentary Cyril employs the concept of participation in three

<sup>335</sup> The centrality of the concept of participation in Cyril is recognized by Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 11: 'It is the notion of participation, of *μέθεξις* ...which, more than any other concept, dominates Cyril's theology of the image of God in man.'

analogous senses in order to explain how we *are*, how we are *rational*, and how we are *enlightened by grace* through participation in the Word, mounting up to that which is above our nature.

In each instance, the same basic principles of participation are operative. Cyril inherited an already developed and transposed concept of participation, most directly it would seem from Athanasius.<sup>336</sup> It is noteworthy that he never argues for these basic principles, but always argues from them to demonstrate one or another conclusion. These basic principles are: (1) that which participates is necessarily distinct (and distinct in kind) from that which is participated in; (2) that which participates possesses the quality it receives only in part and from without; that which is participated in necessarily possesses that quality fully and by nature; (3) that which participates can lose what it has by participation; that which has a quality by nature cannot lose it.<sup>337</sup> Cyril applies the concept of participation to various analogous levels in order to state the conditions of the relationship between the Triune God and creation. Participation defines at one and the same time both the positive content of that relationship at each respective level and the limits that are necessarily entailed.

In the following section we will extend our investigation of how Cyril employs the concept of participation in his biblical exegesis both to express positively and to delimit what it means to say that we are ‘partakers of the divine nature’.

## Participation in the Divine Nature: Key Texts

Certain biblical texts occupy a place of special importance in Cyril's narrative of the divine life. The three selected portions of Cyril's commentary that follow each display the use of certain key biblical texts within the narrative of the divine economy. In the first selected portion, *In Jo. 14: 20*, Cyril unfolds the narrative of divine life with exceptional clarity through the agency of several

<sup>336</sup> The properly Athanasian principle, that only what possesses a quality by nature can grant it to others, is not made explicit in this commentary, but is certainly implied, and is a characteristic mark of Cyril's concept of participation more generally. See e.g. *In Jo. 14: 23* (Pusey, ii. 497–9), and *Dial. Trin.* vii, 643d–644d (Durand, *Dialogues sur la Trinité*, iii. 176–80).

<sup>337</sup> This last principle is applied only to what we have termed ‘dynamic participation’ in God. While we could presumably lose our participation in being and rationality by simply ceasing to be, Cyril does not envisage this possibility here.

key biblical texts: Phil. 2: 6–7, John 1: 14, Eph. 1: 10, Rom. 8: 3–4, Heb. 2: 14, John 1: 11–13, 1 Cor. 15: 49, and 2 Pet. 1: 4. The two remaining portions, *In Heb. 2: 5–18* and *In 1 Cor. 15*, offer extended expositions on two of the key texts themselves which arise frequently in the narrative of the divine life. Cyril's commentary on these texts not only fulfils the immediate purpose of illustrating his notion of dynamic participation in the divine nature; it also serves as a kind of exegetically based summary to this study, providing a panoramic view Cyril's understanding of the appropriation of divine life.

### *In Jo. 14: 20* (Pusey, ii. 476–88)

The verse under discussion is, 'In that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.' The first third of the commentary is occupied with refuting an Arian reading of this verse, a reading that concludes that the Son is in the Father in just the same way that we are in the Son, namely, through a bond of mutual love alone. In a several-tiered argument, Cyril insists that the Son is in the Father by nature (*κατὰ φύσιν*) or naturally (*φυσικῶς*), and that he has an essential (*οὐσιώδη*) union with him, not one that is by an external relationship (*κατὰ σχέσιν*) (Pusey, ii. 476–7, 481).

Cyril then turns to a consideration of v. 20 itself, and in a first explanation he applies it to our renovation in the resurrection of the dead, when we shall escape death and be conformed to the glorious body of Christ (Col. 3: 3–4; Phil. 3: 21) (Pusey, ii. 479–80). In a second exposition, admitting the difficulty of the text at hand, Cyril beckons to his readers, 'Let us now consider the aim (*τὸν σκοπόν*) of the Incarnation of the Only-begotten', why he emptied himself (Phil. 2: 6–7) and endured the cross (Heb. 12: 2) (Pusey, ii. 481). Cyril sets about this task in an unusually systematic manner. He first identifies Eph. 1: 10 as expressing the most general cause or purpose (*γεννωτῆσθαι αἰτίαν*) of the Incarnation, namely, that the Father may recapitulate all things in Christ. He next analyses three aspects of what Paul has summed up in Eph. 1: 10: (1) to condemn sin in the flesh (Rom. 8: 3–4); (2) 'to slay death by his own death' (Heb. 2: 14–15); and (3) to render us his 'sons' through regeneration by the Spirit (John 1: 11–13) (Pusey, ii. 481–2). These three causes (*αἰτίαι*), together comprising the

aim of the Incarnation, are taken up in succession in the commentary that follows.

The Son voluntarily descended into the flesh subject to sin, Cyril tells us, so that he might transform it to be sinless. And being the firstfruits of our nature (1 Cor. 15: 20), he secured this sanctification of the flesh for us, that we too might bear the image of the heavenly man (1 Cor. 15: 49). Having treated redemption from sin, Cyril advances to what he considers the most fitting topic for explicating John 14: 20, namely the ‘slaying of death’ (Heb. 2: 14) and the gift of eternal life (Pusey, ii. 483). To accomplish this, Cyril directs us back to the narrative of the beginning of our race, to the one made in the image of his Creator (Col. 3: 10). ‘Image’ can mean various things, Cyril informs us, but the characteristics of the image most appropriate to the creation of the ‘rational living creature’ are incorruption and indestructibility (Pusey, ii. 484). These he did not have, however, ‘according to the principle of his own nature’ (*κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἰδίας φύσεως λόγον*). In order that he might be preserved in being, ‘God renders him a partaker of his own nature’ (*μέτοχον αὐτὸν τῆς ἰδίας φύσεως ἀποτελεῖ Θεός*), by breathing into him the breath of life (Gen. 2: 7), that is, the Spirit of the Son (Pusey, ii. 484). The allusion to 2 Pet. 1: 4 in the environment of Gen. 2: 7 and the original inbreathing of the Spirit is significant because it establishes a clear parallel with how Cyril will describe our participation in the divine nature through the Spirit in the restoration accomplished by Christ.<sup>338</sup> The ontological and dynamic levels of participation are in view here, with the gift of the Spirit building upon the gift of existence (Acts 17: 28), but Cyril does not make the distinction explicit.

Cyril next insists that this divine breath in Gen. 2: 7 cannot be the soul of the living creature; rather, with ‘the particularity (*ἰδιότης*) of its perfect nature’ already in place (i.e. a body and soul), the Creator stamped upon it the Holy Spirit, moulding it into the image of God and empowering it with every virtue through the indwelling Spirit (Pusey, ii. 485). Cyril inserts here a principle of dynamic participation, namely, that what is received

<sup>338</sup> In his allusion to 2 Pet. 1: 4 here, Cyril makes two substitutions: *μέτοχος* for *κοινωνός* —a common substitution in Cyril—and the singular for the plural as suited to Adam. That Cyril uses these terms interchangeably is shown from the selection immediately below (Pusey, ii. 487), in which he places them in synonymous parallelism to describe our share in the divine life.

by participation may be lost. That first living creature, granted power over his own purposes, disobeyed and fell, losing the Spirit and the characteristics of incorruption and indestructibility.

The narrative continues with the unfolding of the plan of the Father to recapitulate all things in Christ through a reciprocal participation: Christ partook of flesh and blood, so that we might partake of the divine nature through the Spirit:

It was not otherwise possible for man, being of a nature which perishes, to escape death, unless he recovered that ancient grace, and partook (*μετέσχε*) once more of God who holds all things together in being and preserves them in life through the Son in the Spirit. Therefore his Only-Begotten Word has become a partaker (*μεκοινώνηκε*) of flesh and blood, that is, he has become man, though being Life by nature, and begotten of the Life that is by nature, that is, of God the Father, so that, having united himself with the flesh which perishes according to the law of its own nature...he might restore it to his own Life and render it through himself a partaker (*μέτοχον*) of God the Father...And he wears our nature, refashioning it to his own Life. And he himself is also in us, for we have all become partakers (*μέτοχοι*) of him, and have him in ourselves through the Spirit. For this reason we have become ‘partakers of the divine nature’ (2 Pet. 1: 4), and are reckoned as sons, and so too we have in ourselves the Father himself through the Son. (Pusey, ii. 485–6)

In the last part of his exposition, Cyril develops the third ‘cause’ of the Incarnation, namely divine sonship, by explaining the restoration of divine life by means of the Incarnation, the redemptive death of Christ, and the gift of the Spirit. The climax of his exposition is placed in the mouth of Christ himself:

‘Indeed I myself live’, he says, ‘for I am Life by nature, and have exhibited my own Temple as living. But whenever you yourselves, though you are of a corruptible nature, behold yourselves living in resemblance to me, then indeed you will know very clearly that I, being Life by nature, united you through myself to God the Father, who is also himself Life by nature, rendering you sharers (*κοινωνοὺς*) and partakers (*μετόχους*) as it were, of his incorruption. Indeed I am in the Father naturally (*φυσικῶς*)—for I am the fruit of his essence, and his true offspring, inhering in it, and having come forth from it, Life from Life—and you are in me and I in you, inasmuch as I appeared as a man myself, and made you “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1: 4), having caused my Spirit to dwell in you’. For Christ is in us through the Spirit...(Rom. 8: 11). (Pusey, ii. 487)



The exposition comes to a close with Cyril underlining once more that the Spirit is the agent of eternal life, through the Father and the Son. He cites Ps. 103: 28–30 (LXX) as descriptive of the Creation, the Fall and loss of the Spirit, and the restoration of the Spirit in Christ by which we are rendered ‘partakers of the divine nature’ (Pusey, ii. 487–8).

From Cyril's commentary on John 14: 20 we may draw the following conclusions respecting our participation in the divine nature:

1. The Son is in the Father in a different way than we are in the Son. His sonship is ‘by nature’ while ours is ‘by participation’ and ‘by grace’. This distinction will be pursued in greater detail below.

2 The explanation for how we are in Christ and he in us is given through an account of the Incarnation, inclusive of the entire narrative of redemption. The Incarnation is Cyril's catechetical tool for explaining the mutual indwelling implied in John 14: 20.

3 In this narrative, the primary theme is the gift of divine life, from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. It is a manifestly trinitarian account of how we receive the divine life, and how we then have the Father and Son in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

4 The concept of participation is employed to explain how we are in Christ and he in us. He partook of our nature, so that we might partake of his life. The agent of our participation is the Spirit of Christ, who by coming to dwell in us makes us to be partakers of the divine nature.<sup>339</sup>

5 By applying 2 Pet. 1: 4 to both the original endowment of the Spirit to Adam and to the return of the Spirit in Christ, Cyril links the two events together with particular clarity. Our dynamic participation in the divine nature, accomplished in and by Christ through the Spirit, is viewed through a retrospective glance at the original endowment of the Spirit to the human race.

<sup>339</sup> For the direct link between participation in the Spirit and participation in the divine nature, see *In Matt.* 11: 28 (Reuss, 201); 20: 1–16 (Reuss, 230); *In Luc.* 2: 25–35 (Smith, 61); 3: 21–2 (Reuss, 63; Smith, 80); 4: 1–2 (Reuss, 64; Smith, 86); 7: 24–8 (Reuss, 76–7; Smith, 164); 22: 7–16 (Reuss, 207; Smith, 565); *In Ja.* 1: 13 (Pusey, i. 136); 3: 5 (Pusey, i. 219); 7: 24 (Pusey, i. 639); 14: 4 (Pusey, ii. 406); 14: 16–17 (Pusey, ii. 469); 15: 1 (Pusey, ii. 534); 16: 7 (Pusey, ii. 620); 16: 12–13 (Pusey, ii. 626); 16: 15 (Pusey, i. 639); 17: 18–19 (Pusey, ii. 720, 722); 20: 22–3 (Pusey, iii. 133); *In Rom.* 8: 8–9 (Pusey, iii. 214); *In 1 Cor.* 6: 15 (Pusey, iii. 264); 7: 21 (Pusey, iii. 273); 15: 20 (Pusey, iii. 304).

### *In Heb. 2: 5–18 (Pusey. iii. 382–98)*

1. vv. 5–10. Cyril opens his commentary on these verses by calling us to ‘mount up in our thoughts to the formation of man at the beginning’, in preparation for the exposition to come (Pusey, iii. 382). A brief account of the redemptive narrative follows which includes the following episodes: the original privileges and honours accorded to our race in Adam; the disobedience of the first man and the consequent sickening of the human mind and stripping of its glory; and the restoration by Christ to what was at the beginning. All this, Cyril claims, is contained in the text from Ps. 8 before us, and was in David's mind when he proclaimed with amazement, ‘What is man that you remember him, or the son of man that you visit him?’ (Heb. 2: 6) (Pusey, iii. 383).

What David saw only in part, Paul (the assumed author of the Letter to the Hebrews) now turns with great skill to a mystical interpretation. The time when all things will be in ‘subjection under his feet’ (Heb. 2: 8) applies to the future restoration in the heavenly age. At present ‘we do not yet see everything in subjection to him’, because we are fallen away in Adam. The original purpose of God, to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1: 28), has been thwarted, and the time for its fulfilment delayed. Cyril confirms our vocation to seek the coming age by recourse to other biblical texts (Col. 3: 1; Phil. 3: 14; Matt. 5: 5), pointing to Christ as the recapitulation of all things (Eph. 1: 10). Through him we possess the restoration of all good to our nature. Yet, what we do see now is the firstfruits of that restoration, that is to say, Jesus ‘crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death’ (Heb. 2: 9) (Pusey, iii. 383–4). With remarkable acuity, Cyril unfolds from this midrash on Ps. 8 the main lines of the narrative of redemption.

His commentary next turns to a narrative of the Incarnation: the One enthroned in the heavens (Dan. 7: 10) takes the path of *kenosis* (Phil. 2: 7). He becomes lower than the angels so that by his poverty we might be enriched with things beyond our nature (2 Cor. 8: 9). For not only is Jesus glorified at present, but God has also ‘raised us up with him and seated us together with him in the heavenly places’ (Eph. 2: 6). In the transgression of Adam we were displayed as unworthy; in the obedience of Christ, now seated in heaven, we are glorified (Pusey, iii. 384–5). Eschatology

is already partly realized by our corporate identification with the one who has been enthroned.

With v. 9, the commentary takes a turn towards the redemptive death of Christ. Having tasted death in his flesh, Christ came to life again and ‘trampled upon death’. Cyril has his eye especially on the phrase, ‘he might taste death for all’, and insists in characteristic fashion that ‘he’ in this case is none other than the Word of God, who became for a little while lower than the angels. Though he is immutable and unchangeable in his own nature, he genuinely suffered and tasted death in human fashion. At this point, Cyril turns our attention from the text in order to examine the views of an unnamed commentator who is inquiring about ‘the man’ whom the Only-Begotten deemed worthy of visitation.<sup>340</sup> Critical of this separation of ‘the man’ from ‘the Word’, Cyril insists that Christ Jesus is not a man by himself apart, but is the Word of God become incarnate. He argues from Ps. 8: 2–3 that David saw and announced beforehand the emptying and glorification of the Word made flesh (Pusey, iii. 386–8).

Cyril returns once again to the narrative of redemption, but now with the emphasis on our corporate Fall and restoration. The figure referred to in Heb. 2: 8, Cyril explains, does not denote one individual man only, but signifies in one person (*προσώπῳ*) man in general, who was stripped of participation (*μὲθεξιν*) in the glory given of old (Pusey, iii. 389). As a remedy, the Word of God himself descended and lived with us ‘as man’ (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*), so that ‘becoming obedient to the Father even to death, he might crown human nature (*τὴν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν*) with glory and honour, as being crowned one of us (*ἐὼς ἑξ ἡμῶν*), even though being the Lord of glory’ (Pusey, iii. 389). In this account, both Adam and Christ have an individual identity (Christ is crowned as *one* of us), but also represent in themselves the entire race, fallen and redeemed respectively.

In the remainder of his commentary on v. 9, Cyril continues his criticism of a two-sons Christology, showing the logical absurdity of an exegesis that separates ‘the man’ from ‘the Word’. If, Cyril claims, ‘the man’ of Heb. 2: 6–9 is a mere man like us, visited by the Word, and not united hypostatically (*καθ’ ὑπόστασιν*) to the

<sup>340</sup> As noted above, Parvis, ‘The Commentary on Hebrews’, 415–19, identifies Theodore of Mopsuestia as the unnamed author of this text, and argues that Cyril was already aware of—and critical towards—Theodore’s Christological teaching as early as c. 431.

Word, then we are left with the desperate consequence of being saved by ourselves (Pusey, iii. 390).

2 vv. 11–13. At this point there is a lacuna in the fragment from Cyril's *Commentary on Hebrews*, with nothing recorded for vv. 11–13. In his treatment of Luke 4: 1–2, however, he discusses Heb. 2: 11–13 at some length, and we will make use of this commentary to bridge the gap. Cyril is concerned in Luke 4: 1–2 with the fact that Jesus goes into battle against the devil, 'full of the Holy Spirit'. He beckons us to see in this scene 'human nature anointed by the grace of the Holy Spirit as in Christ, the firstfruits (*ἀπαρχή*)' (Reuss, 64; Smith, 85). He then recalls the promise of the gift of the Spirit in Joel 2: 28, and claims that the promise 'is fulfilled for us in Christ first' (Reuss, 64; Smith, 85). Again we see here Cyril's recognition of Christ as an individual man who embodies the whole of the new human race. As the Spirit departed from all flesh because of sin (Gen. 6: 3), so now in Christ all things are made new, and we are regenerated 'by water and the Spirit' (a clear reference to baptism). In consequence, we possess the boast of sonship, and we are made 'partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4) through participation (*διὰ μετοχής*) in the Holy Spirit' (Reuss, 64; Smith, 86). But all this happened first in the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8: 9), who, though being the giver of the Spirit, is also the first to receive the Spirit. It is here that Cyril cites Heb. 2: 11, 'For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them his brethren', indicating that the sanctification of Christ by the Holy Spirit is representative of the sanctification of a new human race. For 'even though he sanctifies the whole of creation, he himself is sanctified with us', not despising the limitation of humanity (Reuss, 64; Smith 86). Not only, then, does Heb. 2 reveal the design of the Incarnation in the divine economy more generally; in Cyril's hands it also expresses the representative reception of the Spirit by Christ, as the firstfruits of our own participation in the divine nature through the Spirit.<sup>341</sup>

<sup>341</sup> The interpretation of Heb. 2: 11 here is typical of Cyril's pattern elsewhere. See Jean-Claude Dhôtel, 'La "Sanctification" du Christ d'après Hébreux, II, 11: interprétations des Pères et des scolastiques médiévaux' *RJR* 47 (1959), 525–43, for a discussion of eight instances where Cyril expositors Heb. 2: 11 (curiously Dhôtel's treatment lacks any mention of the text discussed here, *In Luc. 4: 1–2*). In each selection, the Incarnation and the gift of sanctification through the Spirit are pivotal. Dhôtel also demonstrates (pp. 518–25) that Cyril's reading of Heb. 2: 11 is anticipated to a large extent by Origen alone. Athanasius and the Cappadocians make no significant use of this text.

3 vv. 14–17*a*. We return now to the fragment from Cyril's *Commentary on Hebrews*. Cyril uses vv. 14–16 as a launching-pad for the renarration of the divine economy in the Incarnation. The Word partook of flesh and blood ‘in the same way’ with us (that is, he assumed our fallen humanity),<sup>342</sup> in order to destroy the power of the devil, and in order to seal us for sonship by his own Spirit (Pusey, iii. 393).<sup>343</sup> And it was necessary, Cyril holds, that death which tyrannized over the flesh be destroyed by flesh, in this case by the Word truly become flesh.<sup>344</sup> The essential link between the Incarnation and the redemption is especially marked here. Then citing 1 Cor. 15: 21, ‘Since by a man came death, by a man also comes the resurrection of the dead,’ Cyril reviews the sin of Adam and the obedience of Christ, concluding that the One who is Life has power over death. He ends this section with a final thrust at a two-sons Christology, asking how such a view could be consistent with the biblical assertion that the Word became like us, his brethren, ‘in every respect’ (v. 17). ‘How did he partake (*κεκοινῶν*) of flesh and blood, if these very things did not become his, as they are ours?’ (Pusey, iii. 395).<sup>345</sup>

4 vv. 17*b*–18. Cyril appears to set off in a different direction at this point in the commentary, moving to a comparison of Moses and Christ and the respective merits of their priesthood. Yet, it is crucial to recognize this move as integral to Cyril's handling of the whole text. He contrasts the temporary and limited scope of the law in Israel with the breadth of what is achieved by Christ as the minister of a new covenant—a new covenant not of law, but of forgiveness and grace. The incapacity of the sacrifices under the

<sup>342</sup> In his commentary, *In Rom. 6: 6* (Pusey, iii. 191–2), Cyril explains how the Word assumed our very flesh with all its various desires, yet did so blamelessly and without sin. Cf. *In Rom. 8: 3* (Pusey, iii. 211–13).

<sup>343</sup> Cyril normally refers vv. 14–17 to Christ receiving the Spirit for our sake (*In Ja 7: 39* ; Pusey, i. 693), but he also refers these verses to the life-giving power of the Eucharist (*In Luc. 22: 17–22* ; Smith, 569–70, Reuss, 209; *In Ja 6: 51*, Pusey, i. 518).

<sup>344</sup> For Cyril's use of Heb. 2: 16–17 to demonstrate the requirement that it be a man who conquers death through his obedience (thus undoing the disobedience of Adam), see *In 1 Cor. 15: 20* (Pusey, iii. 303).

<sup>345</sup> The interchangeability of *κοινωνέω* and *μετέχω* is amply displayed here. In parallel clauses, Cyril writes that the children partake (*κεκοινωνημένοι*) of flesh and blood, and the Word likewise partakes (*μετέσχηκε*) of the same. Even as we partake (*κεκοινωνήκαμεν*) of flesh and blood, he partook (*μετέσχε*) of the same. In his citation of v. 14*a*, he substitutes *μετέσχεν* for *κεκοινῶν*. But then in closing, he employs the term *κοινωνέω* twice to refer to the Word's share in human nature. It would appear that stylistic concerns, rather than any distinction in meaning, determine Cyril's choice of terms.

law (Heb. 10: 8) is measured against the effectiveness of the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 2: 18; 1 Pet. 2: 24; Isa. 53: 5). Christ brings about justification by faith and the washing away of our ancient trespasses (a further reference to baptism) (Pusey, iii. 395–6). If the accent of vv. 14–16 is on the triumph over death, here it is on victory over sin. If we are to regain what we lost of old in Adam (vv. 5–16), it can only come through receiving what is new through a priesthood superior to that of Moses (vv. 17–18).<sup>346</sup>

In his conclusion, Cyril highlights the reconciling work of Christ by recourse to Col. 1: 21–3a and Heb. 3: 1–3, and emphasizes the role of Christ as firstfruits, a way and a door for us (from 1 Cor. 15: 47–9). Drawing on the description of Christ as ‘the man of heaven’ in 1 Cor. 15: 49, he writes: ‘Therefore, we have become heavenly, for through the Spirit we are formed unto Christ, who is from heaven. For on this account, even though walking upon the earth, “we have our citizenship in heaven” (Phil. 3: 20)’ (Pusey, iii. 397–8). For Cyril, we already share through the Spirit in the firstfruits of our redemption which has been fully secured for us in Christ.

Heb. 2: 5–18 presents Cyril with an entire narrative account of salvation, running from the purpose of God in the creation of the human race to the eschatological fulfilment of that purpose. In tandem with Phil. 2: 5–11, it presents the narrative of the Incarnation, integrated with the events of the redemption (the suffering, death, and exaltation of Christ). It expresses for Cyril not only the concrete reality of the Incarnation, but also the corporate effect of that participation, ‘bringing many sons to glory’ (v. 10). The reception of the Spirit by Christ, who sanctifies himself for our sake, is a crucial piece of that corporate effect. Finally this text lays stress on the triumph of life over death and the power of Christ's priesthood for the overcoming of sin. Perhaps more than any other New Testament text, Heb. 2: 5–18 comprehends Cyril's entire narrative of redemption and the corporate consequences of the exchange at the heart of the Incarnation.

### *In 1 Cor. 15 (Pusey, iii. 297–318)*

The extant fragments on 1 Cor. 15 from Cyril's *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* are quite variable, both in length and in significance for our topic here. Though I will attempt to respect the continuity

<sup>346</sup> Cf. *In Luc.* 7: 36–50 (Smith, 170–1).

of Cyril's treatment of the chapter in its entirety, I will give particular attention to his commentary on vv. 12–23 and 35–49.

1. vv. 3 ff. The commentary opens by pointing to the divine origin of the gospel. Paul hands on what he himself has received from the Incarnate Christ (Gal. 1: 12; 1 Thess. 4: 9). The sequence of events named—that Christ died, was buried, and rose again—reveals for Cyril the twofold reality of the one Christ. His death and burial display his true and full humanity; his resurrection manifests that he is God by nature. Cyril brings the corporate consequence of these events quickly to the fore. The Word of God raised his very own body to life so that the good of the resurrection might be available to us: 'For the whole of human nature (*ὅλη ἡ ἀνθρώπου φύσις*) was in him trampling upon death; for so we are said to be buried with him and to rise with him and to be seated with him in the heavenly places' (Eph. 2: 6) (Pusey, iii. 298).

2 vv. 12–23. Cyril's exposition of vv. 12–23 continues this emphasis on the corporate effects of Christ's resurrection, following Paul's own direction-setting comparison of Adam and Christ. The accent throughout is on Christ as the firstfruits (*ἀπαρχή*) of the resurrection (v. 20), the firstborn (*πρωτότοκος*) from the dead (Col. 1: 18), and the beginning (*ἀρχή*) of those who will follow in their turn.<sup>347</sup> Cyril next supplies a catena of texts that witness to our own resurrection following on that of Christ (Rom. 6: 5; Heb. 2: 14–15; Rom. 8: 23; Phil. 3: 21) (Pusey, iii. 299–300). Perhaps here more than anywhere else in Cyril (as noted in Ch. 1), Christ as the *individual* firstfruits of redemption, who bears within himself the corporate human race, is brought into relief: 'For he came to life again and became as it were a kind of firstfruits of humanity, passing over to life and recreated for incorruption and triumphing over death' (Pusey, iii. 301). And as he does throughout the commentary, Cyril also establishes the essential relation between the resurrection and forgiveness of sin, citing Ps. 84: 2–3 (LXX), Ps. 31: 1–2 (LXX), and Rom. 4: 25 to demonstrate this relation. If the resurrection of Christ is rejected, sin is not overcome (Pusey, iii. 302).

Cyril next develops his treatment of the resurrection, that Christ is 'the first one of those upon earth to have trampled death'

<sup>347</sup> See *In Jo. 2: 11* (Pusey, i. 204) and *14: 2–3* (Pusey, ii. 403) for Christ as the firstfruits of our resurrection.

(Pusey, iii. 303), by cross-reference to Heb. 2: 16–17 and Rom. 5: 19. The former passage demonstrates that ‘it was necessary that a man conquer death for us’; the latter establishes the corporate effect of both Adam and Christ:

Therefore, by [Christ] being raised, we too are raised together with him. For the Word of God is Life by nature, bestowing the good of his nature—I mean, life—not of course upon his own flesh alone, but conveying it to the whole of human nature. For admittedly Christ is raised as the firstfruits, ‘that in everything he might have the pre-eminence’ (Col. 1: 18). (Pusey, iii. 304)

The resurrection referred to here, however, is neither immediate nor indiscriminate. Cyril understands the order of resurrection described in v. 23 to mean that the saints of the New Covenant, who have been justified by faith, enriched with the Spirit of sonship, and made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4), will rise first before those of the Old Covenant (Pusey, iii. 304–5). The resurrection completes the appropriation of divine life for those who have already become partakers of the divine nature through the gift of the Spirit.

3 vv. 35–49. Before addressing the questions posed by Paul concerning the nature of the resurrected body, Cyril cites Isa. 26: 19 as a kind of leader to his forthcoming commentary on the resurrection. He identifies the dew of which Isaiah speaks as a figurative reference to ‘the life-giving working of God, by which he grants being ( $\tau\acute{\omicron}\hat{\sigma}\ \varepsilon\hat{\iota}\ \nu\alpha\iota$ ) to those who are not ( $\tau\omicron\lambda\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \omicron\hat{\upsilon}\kappa\ \omicron\hat{\upsilon}\sigma\iota$ ), and freely bestows well-being ( $\tau\acute{\omicron}\hat{\sigma}\ \varepsilon\hat{\upsilon}\ \varepsilon\hat{\iota}\ \nu\alpha\iota$ ) upon those who have already advanced to existence ( $\varepsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \hat{\upsilon}\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\xi\iota\nu$ )’ (Pusey iii. 307).<sup>348</sup> Here in brief is Cyril's twofold notion of participation: participation in being and participation in well-being, that is, in the Holy Spirit, as Cyril's following comments make clear. He begins with a narration of the Fall and redemption in terms of Ps. 103: 28b–30 (LXX). Because of the transgression of Adam, the human race suffered a turning away from the face of God, the Spirit was withdrawn, and corruption ensued. But due to the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten Son, we have been enriched by participation ( $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\theta\epsilon\acute{\xi}\iota\nu$ ) in the Holy Spirit and thus re-created. The gift of the

<sup>348</sup> In two parallel texts, *In Luc.* 7: 11 (Smith, 154) and 20: 27–38 (Smith, 541), in which Isa. 26: 19 and Ps. 103: 29 (LXX) appear in combination (in the second text as a gloss on 1 Cor. 15: 49), Cyril explicitly identifies the dew in Isa. 26: 19 with the Holy Spirit.



Spirit within us now, which will also be the agent of our resurrection, is confirmed by reference to Rom. 8: 11 (Pusey, iii. 307–8). Here we see again Cyril's narrative of salvation, with the gift, forfeiture, and reacquisition of the Spirit at the centre of the commentary on a text that makes no explicit mention of the Spirit.

In his treatment of the resurrected body (v. 35), Cyril offers his judgement that it is *this* flesh that will return to life, a view grounded upon Christ's own resurrection. As he will clarify below, our flesh will return to life as incorruptible and as 'illuminated by a certain divine and inexpressible glory' (Pusey, iii, 315). Cyril, however, directs the greater part of his commentary on vv. 42–9 to the contrast between the soulish/natural (*ψυχικόν*) body and the spiritual (*πνευματικόν*) body, and correspondingly to the distinction between the first and last Adam. The dominant feature of Cyril's exposition is the ethical interpretation he gives throughout.<sup>349</sup> Cyril refers the adjectives, soulish/natural (*ψυχικόν*) and spiritual (*πνευματικόν*), not to the ontological informing principle of the body (in the sense that the soul, *ψυχή*, is the ruling principle of the body), but to the moral quality of the subject. They refer, in short, not to the creation as such, but to the economy of salvation:

For indeed, corruption and weakness and unseemliness inhere in the body which is fallen and, as it were, sown in the earth; and the mind (*φρόνημα*) is that which is soulish (*τὸ ψυχικόν*), which we assert to be also the same as that which is fleshly and more earthly. But when it was brought into being in the beginning, it was not thus by nature. But these things insinuated themselves on account of the transgression... (Pusey, iii. 311)

Cyril contrasts the *ψυχικόν* mind with what it was by nature, that is, what it was in the created purpose of God. Consequently, Cyril understands the *ψυχικόν* body, and Adam as a living soul (*εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν*), to represent fallen human nature, not created human nature as such. It follows then that he understands *πνευματικόν* in fundamentally moral categories as well: 'But I

<sup>349</sup> The ethical interpretation of *ψυχικόν* and *πνευματικόν* is consistent with Cyril's exposition of 1 Cor. 15: 42–9 elsewhere. See e.g. *In Luc. 10: 23–4* (Reuss, 114; Smith, 285); *20: 27–38* (Smith, 540–3); *In Jo. 1: 12* (Pusey, i. 133); *1: 30* (Pusey, i. 170); *7: 39* (Pusey, i. 694); *12: 27–8* (Pusey, ii. 317); *14: 20* (Pusey, ii. 483); *16: 33* (Pusey, ii. 657); *17: 20–1* (Pusey, ii. 729–30); *19: 40–1* (Pusey, iii. 106); *In Rom. 8: 29* (Pusey, iii. 220). An ethical interpretation of 1 Cor. 15: 49 is also found in Origen (*Comm. John.* xx. 226–30).

would say that *πνευματικόν* is not what is in the form of a shadow, that is to say, of a bodiless spirit, but rather that which is removed from and also entirely set free from the fleshly and more earthly mind' (Pusey, iii. 312). This is not to suggest that 'moral' implies 'immaterial' for Cyril, for the sin of Adam results in physical corruption, and the obedience of Christ yields the glorified body. But Cyril understands Paul to be contrasting fallen creation with redeemed creation, not the original creation with the age to come. And significantly, the transfer from *ψυχικόν* to *πνευματικόν* is effected through faith, baptism, the reception of the Spirit, and growth in conformity to the image of Christ.<sup>350</sup>

Cyril's treatment of vv. 42–9 is shaped by reference to two other New Testament texts, both from Paul. The contrast between 'the mind set on the flesh' and 'the mind set on the Spirit' in Rom. 8: 6–7, 27 would appear to inform Cyril's identification of the soulish/natural (*ψυχικόν*) body with the fleshly mind (*τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός*).<sup>351</sup> Cyril himself cites 1 Cor. 2: 14–15 at length, a text which refers the term *ψυχικόν* to the one who does not receive the Spirit (Pusey, iii. 312–13). Cyril in fact addresses the difficulty presented by Paul's use of the phrase, 'a living soul' (v. 45) to describe Adam. He admits that it appears to point to the original creation of Adam, and further he allows that the original desires for food and procreation, for example, were given by the Creator and so are blameless. But he maintains that when the actions of the first man are evaluated, we see that sin has already crept in, and so the term *ψυχικόν* implies the corruption of the original creation (Pusey, iii. 313).

Cyril confirms and strengthens his ethical interpretation of these verses by observing that both Adam and Christ were manifestly in mortal and corruptible bodies. The quality of their respective bodies, therefore, cannot be the point of distinction between *ψυχικόν* and *πνευματικόν*. Rather, just as Adam chose to disobey the commandment and so became *ψυχικόν*, so Christ

<sup>350</sup> For the interpretation of 1 Cor. 15: 42–9 in terms of our reception of the Spirit, see especially *In Jo. 1: 12* (Pusey, i. 133); *7: 39* (Pusey, i. 694); *17: 20–1* (Pusey, ii. 729–30); *In Luc. 20: 27–38* (Smith, 540–3). Cyril also interprets 1 Cor. 15: 21–2 (*In Luc. 22: 17–22*, Smith, 570; Reuss, 209) and 1 Cor. 15: 50 (*In Jo. 15: 1*, Pusey, ii. 543) in terms that point to the Eucharist.

<sup>351</sup> Given that the only New Testament occurrence of the term, *φρόνημα*, is in Rom. 8, and that Cyril equates the term *ψυχικόν* here with what is 'fleshly' and 'earthly', it is very probable that Cyril's use of *φρόνημα* reflects the flesh/spirit dichotomy found in Rom. 8.

lived ‘an altogether divine and God-befitting and blameless life’, that is, a *πνευματικόν* one (Pusey, iii. 313). And because he was also God by nature, he became a ‘life-giving Spirit’ for all who follow him. That Cyril understands this text to point to a present possession of a *πνευματικόν* mind and way of life is indicated by the reading of v. 49*b* which he opts for in this context: ‘And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, that is, the likeness of Adam, having yielded to passions, weakened in sin...so let us also bear the image of the man of heaven, that is, Christ’ (Pusey, iii. 315). By his choice of the aorist hortatory subjunctive, *φορέσωμεν* (‘let us bear’), rather than the future indicative, *φορέσομεν* (‘we will bear’), Cyril interprets this text as an exhortation to the present attainment of the image of Christ.<sup>352</sup>

4 vv. 50–6. Two further points of significance are found in Cyril's commentary on these closing verses. First, the glory of the resurrected state for the saints is a glory fitted to our human nature: ‘And there will be a change of form (*μετασχηματισμός*) which will not carry us away to some other nature, for we will be (*ἐσόμεθα*) the very thing that we are (*ἐσμέν*), that is, human beings (*ἄνθρωποι*), except incomparably greater; for we will be incorruptible and indestructible’ (Pusey, iii. 317).<sup>353</sup> This yields an immensely significant conclusion: for Cyril, the glory that we will partake of in the resurrection—and thus the glory that we begin to partake of now—does not remove us from the limits of our created humanity. Secondly, Paul's assertion that the ‘sting of death is sin’ prompts Cyril to recall again the essential connection between death and sin, for the devil ‘does not sting otherwise than through sin’ (Pusey, iii. 318). Our participation in the life of the resurrection is always linked to and dependent on our participation in the freedom from sin that Christ brings.

<sup>352</sup> Though a majority of patristic commentators opt for the hortatory subjunctive, both readings of the verb are well represented. See *The Greek New Testament*, 3rd edn., ed. K. Aland (Münster: United Bible Societies, 1975), 616, for a listing of respective patristic witnesses. Cyril, curiously, makes use of both forms. On three occasions in his New Testament commentaries, he opts for the future indicative (*In Jo.* 14: 20, Pusey, ii. 483; 16: 33, Pusey, ii. 657; *In Luc.* 10: 23–4; Smith, 285; Reuss, 114); on this occasion and one other (*In Rom.* 8: 29, Pusey, iii. 220), he adopts the hortatory subjunctive.

<sup>353</sup> Cf. *In Heb.* 1: 9 (Pusey, iii. 380): ‘Even if we are called sons of the Father, we are—if we are at all—clearly human beings (*ἄνθρωποι*)’; and *In Matt.* 27: 46 (Reuss, 265): ‘Since indeed we too, if ever we call God Father, did not by this cast off (*ἀπεβαλόμεθα*) being human beings by nature (*ἄνθρωποι φύσει*) and creatures of God.’ (The aorist, *ἀπεβαλόμεθα*, following the subjunctive is unusual and makes for an incongruous verb sequence; one would expect the future here, *ἀποβαλούμεθα*, but Reuss offers no variant for this reading.)

Cyril's extended commentary on 1 Cor. 15 incorporates in some fashion many of the features of his account of the appropriation of divine life we have identified in the course of our investigation. These features include: (a) a narrative description of salvation, with the incarnate Christ, both divine and human, at the centre; (b) the heightened role of the Holy Spirit in this narrative: given in Creation, forfeited in sin, reacquired in Christ, the one through whom we are made 'partakers of the divine nature' and through whom we will be raised from the dead; (c) Christ as both agent and representative subject of salvation, firstfruits and firstborn from the dead, with the accent on our corporate participation in him; (d) the essential relation between death and sin, and between resurrection and justification (and so between the ontological and ethical aspects of redemption and divinization); (e) the brief mention of the two levels of participation: that which is in being (ontological) and that which is in the Holy Spirit (dynamic); (f) an emphasis on the moral aspect of our kinship with Christ (the *πνευματικόν* life), rooted in free choice and obedience, with Christ himself as the model of our obedience; (g) the fully human result of our glorification: even when partaking of the divine nature and rising in glorious bodies, we remain human beings (*ἄνθρωποι*).<sup>354</sup>

## The Incarnate Word: Mediator and Measure of our Participation

In this section, I will try to determine whether, and in what sense, the Incarnate Word serves in Cyril's theology as the mediator and measure of our participation in the divine nature. This is to ask how Christ mediates the divine life to us, and in what sense he is himself the measure and limit of our participation in the divine nature. The Incarnation would appear to perform a complex set of roles in Cyril's understanding of the divine economy. It is the meeting point of the divine and human; it is the ground for human participation in the divine life; and it defines the nature and limit of that participation. In order to arrive at an adequate account of Christ as mediator and measure of our participation,

<sup>354</sup> Cf. Liébaert, *La Doctrine christologique*, 235–6.

we will examine in turn: (1) Christ as the mediator and common frontier of the divine and the human; (2) the fundamental distinction between what Christ is by nature and what we are by participation; and (3) the significance of Cyril's claim that in Christ we attain to things 'above our nature'. In conclusion, I will attempt to come to terms with the more knotty and complex issue of Cyril's conception of the Word's relation to his own flesh, and how this relation provides the pattern for our participation in the divine nature on the one hand, and distinguishes us from Christ on the other.

## Christ as the 'Common Frontier' of the Divine and the Human

In the midst of his commentary on John 10: 15, 'Even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father', Cyril makes this statement concerning the mediation of Christ:

For the Word of God, even with flesh, is the divine nature, and we are his kin (*γένος*), even though he is God by nature, because of his taking the same flesh as ours. Therefore, the manner of the relationship (*οἰκειότητος*) is similar. For as he himself is intimately related (*ἄλλωται*) to the Father, and the Father is intimately related to him because of identity (*ταυτότητα*) of nature, so we are intimately related to him (inasmuch as he has become a man), and he to us. And through him, as through a mediator (*μεσότης*), we are joined to the Father. For Christ is, as it were, a kind of common frontier (*μεθόριον ὡς περ τι*)<sup>355</sup> of the supreme divinity and humanity (being both in the same one, and as it were holding together in himself things so greatly separated); and as God by nature he is joined to God the Father, and again, as truly a man, is joined to men.<sup>356</sup>

The Incarnate Christ, who is divine as eternal Word, and who has taken our nature by becoming a man, becomes the meeting point of the divine and human and holds together in himself 'things so greatly separated'.

We find a similar statement issuing from Cyril's exposition of John 14: 6, 'No one comes to the Father but by me'. Being of the essence of God the Father, the Word has become 'a man like us'

<sup>355</sup> See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 839, for the use of *μεθόριος* in reference to Christ in Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Cyril. I have translated *μεθόριος* as 'common frontier' in order to comprehend the dual aspect of 'link' and 'boundary' found in Cyril's complex view of the Incarnation.

<sup>356</sup> *In Jo. 10: 14–15* (Pusey, ii. 232–3).

(*ἄνθρωπος καθ' ἡμᾶς*), excepting our sin, 'and has become a kind of common frontier (*μεθόριον ὡπερ τι*), holding together in himself the things which run together to unity and friendship'.<sup>357</sup> Here, though, the accent is on what we receive as a consequence of Christ's mediatorship: we advance to a height of blessedness and appear as partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4). Yet, none of this could have happened 'except through Christ alone'. Christ not only provides the link in himself between divinity and humanity; he also remains, as fully divine and fully human, the sole and irreplaceable locus of our dynamic participation in the divine life.<sup>358</sup>

In his commentary on John 20: 17, when explaining how it is possible for Christ to address God as 'my God', Cyril describes with uncommon clarity how the Incarnation brings about the exchange of attributes, that is, how Christ 'receives in himself the things particular to us (*τὰ ἡμῶν ἰδικῶς*) and gives back the things that are of himself (*τὰ ἑαυτοῦ*)'. 'But the Son, somehow mingling (*ἀναμιγνῶς*) himself, as it were, with us, bestows upon our nature the dignity which is properly and particularly his own, calling him who begat him "Father" in common with us. And because of his likeness with us, he receives into himself that which belongs to our nature'.<sup>359</sup> Yet, even in this exchange, he remains Son by nature, while we are ever 'sons' by grace and through the Spirit. Cyril's understanding of the distinction between these two levels of sonship must now be examined in greater detail.

## Two Levels of Sonship: *In Jo. 14: 11* (Pusey, ii. 431–56).

The sharp anti-Arian orientation of this text brings the distinction of different levels of sonship into focus. If in his commentary on John 14: 6, the Incarnation is shown as the cause of our positive participation in God, here the accent is on the limitation of that participation. Our sonship 'by participation' and 'by grace' is set in sharp contrast to Christ who is Son by nature. The

<sup>357</sup> Ibid. 14: 6 (Pusey, ii. 410).

<sup>358</sup> Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 411). For Christ as the mediator of the divine and human natures, see also ibid. 1: 13 (Pusey, i. 136) and 5: 46 (Pusey, i. 393).

<sup>359</sup> Ibid. 20: 17 (Pusey, iii. 122–3). In a similar vein, Cyril writes in his commentary, *In Heb. 1: 1* (Pusey, iii. 365), that the Son 'endured such things, so that having been made a Son as man (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*), even though being God by nature, he might make a way through himself for the participation (*τῇν μεθεξίν*) by human nature in sonship'.

backdrop to these comments, we are told, is the appearance of a treatise that has come into Cyril's hands, an Arian work that, according to Cyril, falsely construes the text of John 14: 11, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me,' by bringing the Son down to the level of creation (Pusey, ii. 434–5). Cyril's extended response, which runs to twenty-five pages, may be summarized in the following points.

1. Cyril first rejects the notion that the Father is in the Son, and works through the Son, in the same way that the Son is in and works through Peter or Paul, that is, as a sort of instrument for his glory. And significantly he chooses to contrast the way the saints are filled with the Holy Spirit and serve as instruments of God with the way Christ has by nature all that the Father is (Pusey, ii. 438–40).

2 Cyril then employs the concept of participation to demonstrate that Christ must be God; and if he is God, then it is absurd to say that he participates in God. He asks his opponents whether they would grant the title 'God-bearer' (*θεοφόρον*) to Paul on the grounds that Christ dwells in him through the Holy Spirit. If they would not, then they are already shown to be speaking nonsensically. (Cyril's assumption that we *are* 'God-bearers' through Christ in the Holy Spirit is itself noteworthy here.) If they would grant this, then clearly Christ must be divine in order to make Paul a 'God-bearer'. But Christ could not then himself be said to participate in God: 'How, then, could he who is by nature God be a God-bearer, that is to say, a partaker (*μέτοχος*) of God? For if that which receives (*τὸ δεχομένον*) by nature should be conceived to be the very same as that which indwells (*τὸ ἐνοικοῦν*), what then would be the need of participation (*μετοχή*)?' (Pusey, ii. 442–3).

3 Cyril next argues that if these opponents go so far as to say that the Word of God is man and one like ourselves, then there remains nothing to prevent them from saying that he exists in God (*ὑπαρχεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν Θεῷ*) in the same way that we do. At this point Cyril delineates two categorically different kinds of sonship. It is utter blasphemy, he claims, for any of the saints to say, 'I am in the Father, and the Father is in me' (v. 11). By reducing Christ to our level, the saints are proved liars, for there is then nothing to distinguish him from being on the same rank as ourselves, who are sons by adoption (*κατὰ θεῶν*) (Pusey, ii. 443–4).

4 In response to the Arian claim that Acts 17: 28 shows the Son to be dependent on the Father just as we are, Cyril distinguishes two senses of the phrase, ‘in God’ (*ἐν Θεῷ*). We are ‘in God’ by receiving our very being and life from him; Christ the true Son is ‘in God’ in an utterly unique way, as sharing his essence (Pusey, ii. 444–8). The terminology of participation is not employed here, but Cyril uses an equivalent expression, ‘by (an external) relationship to the One who is’ (*τῇ πρὸς τὸν ὑπασχέσει*), in order to describe our relationship to the Creator (Pusey, ii. 445). He rejects the idea that the Son is in the Father ‘by an external relationship and not by nature’ (*σχετικῶς καὶ οὐ κατὰ φύσιν*) (Pusey, ii. 449).<sup>360</sup>

5 In a turn in the argument, Cyril describes the positive character of our participation in God. The Son is in the Father as an ‘image of his hypostasis’ (a probable allusion to Heb. 1: 3), but we are in him by means of the virtues ‘according to will’ (*κατὰ θέλησιν*) (Pusey, ii. 452). In support of this, Cyril cites 1 John 1: 3, a text concerning our communion (*κοινωνία*) with the Father and Son. For Cyril the term *κοινωνία* does not imply that our own essence (*οὐσία*) becomes mixed (*ἀναμιγνύοντες*) with the divine nature; rather, it refers to the likeness of our wills (*εἰς τὴν τῷ ν θελημάτων ὁμοιότητα*). Cyril rejects here the notion that we share in the essence of God: ‘We say that by being zealous to illuminate our own minds by means of the virtues according to our will, and by conformity to the divine and ineffable beauty, we appropriate (*περιποιούμεθα*) the grace of communion (*κοινωνίας*) with them’ (Pusey, ii. 453).

6 Finally, Cyril summarizes what it means to say that we are ‘in Christ’ from biblical evidence, drawing upon 1 John 2: 5–6, 24; 3: 11. He concludes that we are ‘in God’ by our practice of love, by striving to walk in the example of the Lord, and by imitating his virtue. Cyril is not referring here to the virtues of God which are proper to his divine power (e.g. creating the world or calming the seas by a word), but to ‘that virtue which would be applicable to the limitations of our humanity’ (Pusey, ii. 454).

<sup>360</sup> Cyril appears to use the terms from the word group, *σχέσις, σχετικός, σχετικῶς*, as equivalents to *μέθεξις* and *κοινωνία*, in order to communicate a participatory relationship of creature to Creator, distinct from one that is *κατὰ φύσιν* or *οὐσιωδῶς*. The equivalence of these terms is shown by such phrases in Cyril as *κατὰ μέθεξιν σχετικῶν* (*In Luc.* 22: 17, Reuss, 209; *Ep.* 17. 5, Wickham, 18) and *σχετικῶν καὶ ἐπιτετηδευμένων κοινωνίαν* (*In Jo.* 14: 11, Pusey, ii. 453). Cf. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1357–8.



The thrust of this commentary is plain. By becoming truly a man, the Word is himself the means of our participation, yet a qualitative difference still distinguishes us from him. He is in God, not 'by an external relationship' (σχετικῶς), nor as a 'partaker' (μέτοχος), but essentially and by nature.<sup>361</sup> And by implication, we are in God precisely by external relationship and as partakers.<sup>362</sup> In this respect, Abramowski criticizes Cyril for a fluctuating use of the concept of participation that wavers between a more full-bodied positive use and a negative use, arising only in polemical situations, which distinguishes Christ from us.<sup>363</sup> I attribute this fluctuation primarily to Cyril's complex view of our dynamic participation in God. On the one hand, participation grants to us a genuine share in the life and power of God, and true union with him; on the other hand, participation necessarily entails that we do not share in the essence of divinity nor ascend without qualification to the status of the Son who is so by nature. The positive and negative implications of participation are equally necessary for a proper understanding of our participation in the divine nature through Christ.

In Cyril's commentary on John 14: 11, our participation in the divine nature is given a strongly ethical colouring, comparable to the second sense of kinship (συγγένεια) noted in Chapter 3. How are we to reconcile this strongly ethical interpretation of what it means for us to be 'in God' with Cyril's ontological-sounding claim that in Christ we have become 'partakers of the divine nature'?

## 'Mounting up to a dignity above our nature'

It is here that we should consider Cyril's oft-repeated phrase, that in Christ 'we mount up' (ἀναβαίνουμεν) to a 'dignity above our nature' (τὸ ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἄξιωμα).<sup>364</sup> Cyril can speak in the singular of the 'dignity'

<sup>361</sup> Cf. *In 2 Cor.* 1: 21 (Pusey, iii. 326), where Cyril contrasts human beings, sealed by the Spirit into the likeness of Christ by participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν), with Christ, the exact image of the Father by nature (φύσει) and essentially (οὐσιωδῶς).

<sup>362</sup> For the distinction between the Word who is Son by nature, and we who are 'sons' by grace and participation, see also *In Ja.* 2: 16 (Pusey, i. 206–7); 10: 34 (Pusey, ii. 256); *In Rom.* 1: 3–4 (Pusey, iii. 175–6); *In 1 Cor.* 8: 4 (Pusey, iii. 276).

<sup>363</sup> 'The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia', 21–2.

<sup>364</sup> *In Jo.* 1: 12 (Pusey, i. 133).

above our nature,<sup>365</sup> in the plural of the ‘dignities’ above our nature,<sup>366</sup> or more generally of acquiring ‘things above our nature’ (τὰ ὑπὲρ φύσιν).<sup>367</sup> In what appear to be parallel expressions, Cyril speaks of our mounting up ‘to being gods by grace’ (εἰς τὸ εἶναι θεοὶ κατὰ χάριν),<sup>368</sup> and (using the voice of Christ) of our ‘mounting up to my glory’ (εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναβαλόντες δόξαν).<sup>369</sup> When these expressions are assessed in context, however, they convey nothing more than what we have already observed about dynamic participation in God. In his exposition of John 1: 12, Cyril writes:

For having become partakers (μέτοχοι) of him through the Holy Spirit, we were sealed with his likeness, and we mount up (ἀναβαλόμεν) to the archetypal form of the image, according to which the divine Scripture says that we were made...Therefore we mount up (ἀναβαλόμεν) to a dignity above our nature (τὸ ὑπὲρ φύσιν) on account of Christ, but we also will be sons of God, not according to him identically, but through grace in imitation (κατὰ μίμησιν) of him.<sup>370</sup>

To participate in Christ through the Holy Spirit, then, is to mount up to a dignity beyond our nature, revealing us to be ‘sons of God’. This yields, not an identity with God, but an imitation of him through grace.<sup>371</sup> The saints, Cyril tells us, mount up by their likeness to Christ through faith and acquire ‘by adoption’ (κατὰ θέσιν) what he is ‘naturally’ (φυσικῶς).<sup>372</sup>

Consequently, when we encounter texts in Cyril that speak of an elevation of our nature in Christ, we should interpret them in the same way. For example, in one instance, *In John 17: 20–1* (Pusey, ii. 737), Cyril states with expansive rhetoric the status that accrues to us because of our participation in Christ through the indwelling Spirit and his own life-giving flesh in the Eucharist: ‘We are well nigh transformed, as it were, even to another nature, being reckoned not human beings (ἄνθρωποι) only, but also sons of God and heavenly human beings (ἄνθρωποι), on account of being shown to be partakers of the divine nature.’ Yet Cyril always

<sup>365</sup> Ibid. 5: 18 (Pusey, i. 316); 14: 20 (Pusey, ii. 482); 15: 14–15 (Pusey, ii. 578).

<sup>366</sup> Ibid. 15: 9–10 (Pusey, ii. 571).

<sup>367</sup> Ibid. 12: 27–28 (Pusey, ii. 317).

<sup>368</sup> Ibid. 6: 15 (Pusey, i. 423).

<sup>369</sup> Ibid. 8: 42 (Pusey, ii. 84).

<sup>370</sup> Ibid. 1: 12 (Pusey, i. 133).

<sup>371</sup> The pairing of the expression, ὑπὲρ φύσιν, with the terms of participation and becoming ‘sons’ and gods by grace, is also attested in *In Luc. 11: 2* (Smith, 300–1; Reuss, 118–19); *In Jo. 5: 18* (Pusey, i. 316); 6: 15 (Pusey, i. 423); 8: 42 (Pusey, ii. 84); 15: 9–10 (Pusey, ii. 571); and 15: 14–15 (Pusey, ii. 578).

<sup>372</sup> *In Jo. 15: 14–15* (Pusey, ii. 579).

places clear limits on what it means to say that we acquire a dignity above our nature. In his comment on John 12: 26, 'If any one serves me, he must follow me, and where I am, there shall my servant be also,' Cyril tells us that the phrase 'Where I am' denotes not a location, but a way of virtue, governed by the following principle:

For by the qualities in which Christ was conspicuous, by those same qualities those who follow him also ought to be so. But not in the honours fitting to God and above man (*ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον*)—for it is not possible for man to imitate the one who is God truly and by nature—but with respect to whatever things it is possible for human nature to be capable of displaying. (Pusey, ii. 314)

In another instance, *In Jo. 17: 18–19* (Pusey, ii. 722), Cyril says that through participation in the Spirit, we are now 'partakers and sharers of the being which transcends all things' (*μέτοχοι καὶ κοινωνοὶ ἡς τὰ πάντα ὑπερκειμένης οὐσίας*). This is an unusually strong statement of our relation to the 'being' (*οὐσία*) of God. But Cyril apparently means nothing more by it than what he intends by the more common expression, 'partakers of the divine nature'. The very meaning of participation guarantees for Cyril that such expressions cannot denote a change in nature or essence.<sup>373</sup> Consequently, though our participation in Christ grants us a dignity 'above our nature' (*ὑπὲρ φύσιν*), the result is none the less one that is humanly fitting, and is not 'above man' (*ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον*).<sup>374</sup>

What are we to make of this paradoxical assertion? As an attempt at synthesis, we may say that for Cyril our participation in the divine nature, which is always in and through Christ, results in the elevation of our nature, enabling us to attain to the ethical imitation of Christ's qualities befitting to our humanity, and granting to us a share in divine power and perfections appropriate to the limitations of our humanity. For Cyril, even when participating in the divine nature, we ever remain human beings (*ἄνθρωποι*).

<sup>373</sup> See *ibid.* 6: 27 (Pusey, i. 449) for a clear assertion of this. Yet Cyril is insistent that our participation must be, not in a created nature, but in the divine nature itself. For this, see *Dial. Trin.* vii, 637b–c.

<sup>374</sup> Cf. *In Rom.* 8: 29 (Pusey, iii. 220–1).

## The Relationship of the Word to His Own Flesh

At this point, a query may be raised concerning the contrast Cyril makes between the way in which we are in Christ and the way in which Christ is in the Father. Are the full implications of the Incarnation in play here with respect to Christ himself? It is evidently because he remains the Only-Begotten Word that Christ is in the Father in a qualitatively different way than we are. But what of the flesh, the full human nature, which the Word has assumed? How is the Word's own flesh related to himself, and through him, to the Father? Does it in any way serve as a pattern for our participation in the divine nature, or is it simply unique, possessing its own distinct manner of union with the Word and its own set of exclusive qualities?

It would appear that the question of the relationship of the Word to his own flesh only came fully into the open with the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy in 429. Hints are already present in the pre-Nestorian *Commentary on John*, and the theological resources for addressing this question were, I believe, already largely in place; but it is only with the Nestorian crisis that Cyril addresses the issue squarely. Indeed the distinction between Christ's union with his own flesh and our participation in him through divine indwelling becomes the standard polemic against Nestorius.

In the post-428 *Homilies on Luke*, Cyril raises the issue of the Word's union to his own flesh in a eucharistic context. Acknowledging that by partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ we have his life within us, Cyril disabuses us of the notion that, in consequence, our bodies too have the power of giving life.

But let him know, rather, that it is one thing for us to have the Son in ourselves by a relation of participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν σχετικῶς), but a wholly different thing that he has become flesh, that is, to make his own the body taken from the holy virgin. For he is not said to become incarnate and become flesh by being in us; for this happened once when he appeared a man, while not ceasing to be God.<sup>375</sup>

The manner of the union of the Word and his flesh, Cyril tells us, is altogether beyond the powers of the mind to understand and is incapable of explanation. But he is in no doubt that this ineffable

<sup>375</sup> In *Luc.* 22: 17–22 (Reuss, 209; Smith, 570).

union is different from the manner in which Christ dwells in us (and we in him). The latter is by a relationship of participation that allows us to receive the divine life, but it does not so alter us that we take on the life-giving property of the Word. The Incarnation, therefore, is a unique, *sui generis* union, and it grants to Christ's own humanity certain qualities that exceed those of our humanity. In this sense, the Word as man is *not* a pattern for our own participation in the divine nature.

It is important that we recognize the complexity of Cyril's thought here. He is insistent that the Word has indeed assumed our very flesh, taken from the Virgin, and so is like us in all things except sin. But in Cyril's view of Christ, this does not debar him from possessing in his humanity more than we possess. He is not less than we are in his humanity, but by virtue of the unique union of the Word with his own flesh, Christ's humanity attains to unique qualities. In the event of the Incarnation, not only is the manner of union unique, but the humanity of the Word obtains certain characteristics different from and greater than those of our common humanity.<sup>376</sup> At the same time, there are clear limits which apply to the assumed humanity of the Word. In his commentary on John 17: 22–3, when discussing the consequences of the *kenosis* of Christ (Phil. 2: 7), Cyril states unequivocally that the flesh assumed from the Virgin is in no way consubstantial with God the Father or with the divine nature. None the less, in the event of the Incarnation, the flesh becomes one with the Word, and so Christ in the flesh enjoys full union with the Father. Speaking more concisely, Cyril says that the flesh, sanctified by union with the Spirit according to an ineffable manner of union, rises up (*ἀναβαίνουσης*) to an unconfused union with the Word of God, and through him with the Father, but by 'an external relationship' (*σχετικῶς*), not naturally (*φυσικῶς*).<sup>377</sup>

It is crucial to recognize the terms used to describe this union: even Christ's own flesh is sanctified by the Spirit in the Incarnation, and attains to a *σχετικῶς*, not *φυσικῶς*, union with the

<sup>376</sup> Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 196, writes concerning Cyril's view of Christ: 'On the one hand Christ is like Adam in that he is *like other men* in every respect save sin; but he is *unlike* other men because he showed himself superior to death and set mankind on a wholly new course.'

<sup>377</sup> *In Jo. 17: 22–3* (Pusey, iii. 2).

Father.<sup>378</sup> On the one hand, Cyril rejects what he understands the Nestorian position to be, namely, that a man is said to be joined to the Word by an external or participatory relationship (*σχετικῶς*). Cyril follows the biblical idiom of Heb. 2: 14, that in the Incarnation the Word partook of flesh and blood, but he clearly does not ascribe to this partaking the full set of characteristics that apply to his technical use of the term elsewhere. It is not conceivable, for example, that in Cyril's view Christ's assumed human nature could ever lose its union with the Word, as we can lose our union with the Word.<sup>379</sup> On the other hand, he appears to be committed to the view that, once joined to the Word in an ineffable union, Christ's own flesh, his assumed humanity, remains ever in a participatory (*σχετικῶς*) relationship with the Godhead as such. The Incarnation displays at one and the same time the most profound union of the human and the divine and their unbridgeable distinctiveness.

It remains to enquire whether Christ's own humanity is a pattern for our participation in the divine nature, and if so, in what manner. Towards a solution to this question, I propose that there are two different senses in which Cyril speaks of the Word in relation to his own assumed humanity.<sup>380</sup> The manner in which the Word is united to the humanity he has assumed in the Incarnation can be distinguished from the manner in which the Word in his assumed humanity is the object of the divine economy of salvation. In the former sense, the Word's own humanity is at certain points distinct from ours, not only in the manner of union with divinity, but also in the qualities that accrue to his human nature. In the latter sense, the Incarnate Word himself serves as the pattern and firstfruits of our own humanity, both in the reception of the divine life through the Holy Spirit, and in moral

<sup>378</sup> In the same way, Cyril writes, *In Heb. 1: 9* (Pusey, iii. 379), that sanctification inheres in the Incarnate Word 'by participation (*κατὰ μέθεξιν*) from God'.

<sup>379</sup> See *Quod Unus* 744d–745a (Durand, *Deux dialogues christologiques*, 402, 404), where Cyril, following the terms of Heb. 2: 14, acknowledges that Christ partook (*μεκοινωνήσθαι*) of flesh and blood, and that therefore 'the same one' (*ὁ αὐτὸς*) was at once God and man. But he rejects any idea of an external (*σχετικῶς*) relation of a man with God, lest Christ be deemed not God truly, but only a 'sharer and partaker of God' (*Θεοῦ κοινωνὸν καὶ μέτοχον*).

<sup>380</sup> Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing* 38, identifies a sense in which the body of the Incarnate Word 'is not in every respect like our bodies', but he does not pursue Cyril's rationale for this distinction.

progress in the divine image of God in man. My proposal here can be understood as an attempt to account for Cyril's assertion (from the text on Jesus's baptism), that the one who receives the Spirit is also the one who gives the Spirit.<sup>381</sup>

In the first sense, in the unique union brought about by the Word's assumption of our humanity, Christ's flesh is sanctified specially from the point of conception.<sup>382</sup> Cyril makes this point strikingly in his exegesis of Heb. 1: 9. He refers the text, 'Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your comrades (*μετ' ὁμοίων*)', to the event of the Incarnation, in order to show that the sanctification by the Word of his own flesh through his own Spirit is not partial nor in the order of a guarantee like our sanctification, but is beyond ours, being full of his own power and glory.<sup>383</sup> Furthermore, Christ's flesh is shown to be powerful and life-giving in the miracles of healing and in the Eucharist. Christ's humanity is like ours, and yet beyond ours in its life-giving properties.<sup>384</sup> In this sense, the Incarnate Christ is the one who breathes the Spirit and who raises the dead in the final resurrection.<sup>385</sup> Significantly, none of these prerogatives are fitting to us or pass over to us. They are incommunicable.

In the second sense, however, Christ as man in the individual humanity he has assumed is a pattern for us, as these examples illustrate: (1) Cyril speaks of Christ receiving the Spirit at his baptism 'by participation' (*μεθεκτῶς*), as a pattern for our reception of the Spirit.<sup>386</sup> (2) Cyril explains the words, 'even as you gave him authority over all flesh' (John 17: 2), in terms of Christ receiving kingship as man: 'For possessing all things as God

<sup>381</sup> *In Jo. 1: 32–3* (Pusey, i. 184); *17: 18–19* (Pusey, ii. 724). Twice in his *Tomes against Nestorius* (*Adv. Nest.* iii, 3, *ACO* 1. 1. 6, 67–8; iv, 2, *ACO* 1. 1. 6, 79), Cyril refers to this twofold activity in relation to the baptism of Jesus. The fact that Jesus both receives and gives the Spirit is proof that the Incarnation is not equivalent to our participatory union. The fact that Jesus *gives* the Spirit demonstrates for Cyril that the Incarnation is distinct from our manner of participation in the Word.

<sup>382</sup> *In Jo. 17: 18–19* (Pusey, ii. 726–7).

<sup>383</sup> Pusey, iii. 380. Cf. *In Is. 11: 1–3* (Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 83–4).

<sup>384</sup> In the treatise, *Contra Synousiastas* (Pusey, iii. 479–80), Cyril states that the body of the Word is 'the same nature' (*ὁμοφύετος*) as our bodies, and yet 'far above our limitations' (*πολύ τι πλεονάζει*). It is divine (*θεῖον*), but not changed into the nature of the Godhead. If the body of the Word were not flesh like ours, Cyril explains, then the Eucharist would be of no use to us, and the whole point of mediation would be lost.

<sup>385</sup> See *Dial. Trin.* iv. 532d–e, for the emphasis Cyril places on Christ breathing the Spirit on the apostles through the very breath of his flesh.

<sup>386</sup> *In Jo. 17: 18–19* (Pusey, ii. 725).

(ὡς Θεός), he says that he receives as man (ὡς ἄνθρωπος), to whom kingly rule (τὸ βασιλεῦεν) is not intrinsic (οὐσιῶδες), but given (δοτόν).<sup>387</sup> (3) Concerning Christ's words in John 17: 6–8, Cyril writes: 'He, then, that of old reigns from the beginning as God (ὡς Θεός) together with his own Father, was appointed king as man (ὡς ἄνθρωπος), to whom like all else kingly rule is given, according to the limitation of human nature.' This dignity is given to Christ 'from without' (ἔξωθεν), 'according to the form and limitation fitting to man' (κατὰ γε τὸ πρόπον ἄνθρωπὸ σχημάτε καὶ μέτρον).<sup>388</sup> Here we see Christ receiving according to the normal mode and limitation of our humanity. In this second sense, then, the prerogatives that Christ receives and gains in his humanity for our sake are communicable and serve as a pattern for us.

I am not suggesting that Cyril himself explicitly proposes this distinction as I have stated it, but I believe such a distinction is in play in Cyril's understanding of Christ, and that it is necessary to make such a distinction in order to make sense of the various and contrasting claims Cyril makes about Christ's humanity as distinct from ours on the one hand, and as a pattern for us on the other. These two notions are held together, I propose, by Cyril's claim that one and the same Incarnate Word is both agent and recipient of human redemption. It may be tempting to read this second sense of Christ's relationship to his own assumed humanity as nominal, as given just in the order of a sign, or perhaps as simply trumped by the Word acting as agent through his own flesh.<sup>389</sup> But this would be to underestimate the seriousness with which Cyril proposes the Incarnate Christ as both agent and recipient of redemption, as genuinely occupying the common frontier of humanity and divinity. All this makes for a rather complex Christology in which the incarnate Christ in one sense is, and in another

<sup>387</sup> Ibid. 17: 2 (Pusey, ii. 665).

<sup>388</sup> Ibid. 17: 6–8 (Pusey, ii. 684). For the same principle applied to the Son receiving 'the name which is above every name' (Phil. 2: 9) in a human way (ἀνθρωπίνως), see ibid. 17: 11 (Pusey, ii. 697).

<sup>389</sup> Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, adopts something of this view, or at least believes there is a strong tendency in Cyril in this direction. But by focusing so strongly on the unique manner of union in Christ (pp. 264–73), Meunier is led to minimize the role of the Incarnate Word as recipient in favour of his role as agent. He fails to take full account of the representative character of Christ as a pattern for us, and thereby is led to diminish the significance of Christ's reception of the Spirit (pp. 124–5), and so the spiritual manner of union in general.



sense is not, the pattern for our participation in the divine life. At points Cyril places emphasis on Christ as the divine agent who imparts the Spirit and who gives us his life-giving flesh and blood. This is due both to his concerns with Arianism and to his earnestness to guard the unity of the Incarnate Christ against Nestorius. But his presentation of Christ who as man is a pattern for us, who receives both the Spirit and kingship, who is raised from the dead as the firstfruits of human nature, and who thus serves as the measure of our own participation in the divine nature, ought not to be lost from view.

In any event, whether comparing us with Christ in his relation to the Father, or with Christ in his relation to his own flesh, Cyril is unerringly consistent regarding the character of our 'participation in the divine nature'. Our union with God is 'by an external relationship' (*σχέτικῶς*), 'by participation' (*κατὰ μέθεξιν*), and 'by grace' (*κατὰ χάριν*). Though we genuinely attain to participation in the divine life, we never exceed the created measure of our humanity. For Cyril our union with God is wholly dependent upon the Incarnate Word, the common frontier of humanity and divinity; we advance to a share in the divine nature only through him.

# 5 Conclusions: Cyril's Narrative of Divine Life

The subject of this study is what I have called Cyril of Alexandria's 'narrative of divine life', that is, his narrative of the economy of salvation in Christ, framed in terms of the gift of divine life to the human race, and the reception of divine life by the human race. My aim in these final conclusions is threefold: (1) to offer a critical summary, under the rubric of 'divinization', of Cyril's account of the appropriation of divine life; (2) to indicate the exegetical foundations of Cyril's narrative of divine life; and (3) to outline the theological structure within which Cyril's narrative of divine life finds its place.

## Divinization in Cyril of Alexandria

In order to grasp Cyril's understanding of divinization we must look to his presentation of the Incarnate Christ. It is in Christ as representative of the human race and Christ as pattern for the human race that we discover Cyril's conception of the divinized life. Thus, the baptism of Jesus, his reception of the Spirit, and his death, resurrection, and ascension are for Cyril more than just the means of our salvation and the pattern for us to follow. These events display the actual sanctification and divinization of Christ the Second Adam, the new root and firstfruits of redeemed humanity. In fact, the entirety of Christ's human existence displays the progressive sanctification—and indeed, divinization—of our nature, which he assumed and transformed in himself first of all. It was the purpose of Chapter 1 to show that Cyril approaches the question of salvation, and therefore of divinization, by looking first of all to the redemption and re-creation of human nature in Christ himself. Christ is for Cyril at one and the same time the agent of our redemption, the representative recipient of our redemption, and the pattern for our progress in the divine life.

How then do we come to share in this new, divinized life accomplished already in Christ? As applied to us, divinization in Cyril may be understood in two senses, a strict and narrower sense, and a broad and more comprehensive one. Importantly for Cyril Christ is our pattern for both senses of divinization. In the strict sense, divinization is the impartation of divine life effected in us through the agency of the indwelling Spirit in baptism, and through Christ's life-giving flesh in the Eucharist. In the broad and more comprehensive sense, divinization includes our progressive growth into the divine image. With respect to both senses, human reception and co-operation is essential. Though I have treated divine action and human response consecutively, they must be understood to operate concurrently.

Cyril typically expresses this first sense of divinization through a collection of biblical expressions: justification, sanctification, adoptive sonship, participation in the Spirit, communion in the divine nature.<sup>390</sup> These are distinguishable, but Cyril normally treats them as aspects of one work rather than as separable steps in our redemption.<sup>391</sup> When applied to entrance into the kingdom of God through baptism, the expressions 'sanctification' (ἁγιασμός), 'participation in the Spirit' (τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος μέθεξιν), and 'partakers of the divine nature' (θείας φύσεως κοινωνοί) are especially closely linked, and together they capture this strict sense of divinization in Cyril's thought. As Burghardt demonstrates, Cyril's use of the term 'sanctification' in this context implies and includes our participation in the Spirit, by which we become partakers of the divine nature.<sup>392</sup> It should also be recalled,

<sup>390</sup> Russell, 'The Concept of Deification', 433, summarizes divinization in Cyril: 'In the case of human beings, deification is equivalent to adoption, salvation, justification and liberation from sin.'

<sup>391</sup> McInerney, 'Soteriological Commonplaces', 181, rightly observes that Cyril typically uses a wide variety of soteriological expressions, without clear definition, in preference to a 'sequential argument or model' to explain salvation. But I take issue with his claim that these statements are 'ghosts of past arguments and explanations, produced by other minds in other circumstances', whose 'motivating force behind their origin is spent'. On the contrary, Cyril is capable of elaborating at length on particular aspects of redemption (e.g. sanctification), but he is normally concerned with redemption seen as a whole, rather than in its distinguishable aspects.

<sup>392</sup> Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 70. Similarly, Wickham, *Select Letters*, 161 n. 40, writes: 'Various senses of sanctification are distinguished by Cyril...Holiness, in the present sense, means participation in the Holy Ghost and so in the divine nature, and for Cyril the divine nature is life itself.' Cf. Young, *Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 252; Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, 54.

however, that though our sanctification and participation in the divine nature are normally associated with the gift of the Spirit in baptism, for Cyril the somatic manner of indwelling through the Eucharist is also an essential, ongoing means of our divinization. In a special way, suited to our human, bodily condition, we receive Christ's divine life through our participation in the life-giving flesh of Christ. Properly speaking, *Christ in us*—through his Spirit and his life-giving flesh—is the source and ground of our divinization, accomplishing our justification, our sanctification, our divine filiation, and our participation in the divine nature. It was the goal of Chapter 2 to investigate the pneumatic and somatic modes of indwelling as ordered and complementary means by which the divine life in the Incarnate Christ is appropriated to us.

The more comprehensive and developmental sense of divinization in Cyril includes our growth into the divine image. Through our free reception of divine life, we are to become progressively conformed to Christ. If for Cyril our divinization is pre-eminently God's life implanted in us, bringing about the full spiritualization of human nature, it cannot be dissociated from our free and faith-filled response to God and our growth in virtue through obedience to the divine commands, yielding a way of life (*πολιτεία*) pleasing to God. In this sense, the divinization of the human race, to be fully accomplished only with the redemption of our bodies, is already significantly underway in this age. This human response is not merely instrumental; it is, I would suggest, a coefficient element in Cyril's understanding of our divinization broadly conceived. For without our free adherence of faith and progress in virtue through obedience it is no longer human life in its entirety that is divinized. It was the goal of Chapter 3 to display this more developmental sense of our divinization, by pointing to the necessity of faith and free human co-operation both in the reception of, and progress in, the divine life. Here especially Christ as pattern for us as man (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*) serves as the model for our divinization.

In the Introduction to this study, I observed that Cyril uses the standard vocabulary of divinization only rarely. At this point it is appropriate to enquire why Cyril, even before the Nestorian controversy, so sparingly employed the terminology of divinization, and why, following the onset of the Nestorian crisis, he ceased using it altogether to describe our participation in the

divine life.<sup>393</sup> The view that Cyril changed from a pre-Nestorian physicalist theory of divinization to a post-Nestorian spiritualized one simply does not stand up to the evidence. On the one hand, in the pre-Nestorian *Commentary on John*, Cyril already strongly accentuates the distinction between what Christ is as the eternal Son of God and what we are as adopted sons. On the other, we see in both the pre- and post-Nestorian periods a firm and consistent complementarity between the pneumatic and somatic modes of divine indwelling.

I offer the following proposal as a way to account for Cyril's use of the language of divinization in the pre- and post-Nestorian periods. I suggest that Cyril employed the terminology of divinization only rarely even in the pre-Nestorian period, because of his own heightened concern to give proper expression to the distinction between what is divine and what is human. The original cause of Cyril's concern is unclear. It is possible that the anthropomorphite controversy of the early fifth century, which raised the question of the nature of the image of God in human beings, prompted Cyril to distinguish the divine and human more decisively.<sup>394</sup> He may have become cautious of using the language of divinization in order not to give credence to those who were propagating a corporeal resemblance between God and human beings. In place of this terminology he normally substituted other, more biblical expressions to communicate the same reality. Then, in the face of Nestorius's charge that he (Cyril) was teaching an 'apotheosis' (*ἀποθέωσις*) of Christ's flesh (i.e. that Christ's flesh became divinity), Cyril defended a proper understanding of the Word's divinization (*θεοποίησις*) of his own flesh on the one hand, and on the other counter-charged Nestorius with teaching that the Incarnation was the divinizing of a mere man.<sup>395</sup> But given the entanglement of this terminology in the debate with Nestorius over the Incarnation, Cyril refrained from this point onwards to employ the vocabulary of divinization to describe our share in the divine life. The terms had become too embattled for wider use. Russell, in fact, suggests in his revised study of deification that Cyril changed his approach to divinization terminology some

<sup>393</sup> See Russell, 'The Concept of Deification', 432, for Cyril's use of the terminology of divinization, both before and after the Nestorian controversy.

<sup>394</sup> For Cyril's anti-anthropomorphite writings, see Wickham, *Select Letters*, 132–221.

<sup>395</sup> *Adv. Nest.* ii. 8 (*ACO* 1. 1. 6, 46).

years before the onset of the Nestorian crisis, due perhaps to both Jewish polemic against Christianity and ongoing concerns with anthropomorphism.<sup>396</sup>

Nevertheless, Cyril's post-Nestorian usage gives at least indirect evidence that he still considered these terms as fitting to describe our share in the divine life through the Spirit.<sup>397</sup> Against Nestorius, Cyril claimed that Christ was not a divinized man, that is, a man in whom the Word had come to dwell. Yet these are just the terms Cyril uses elsewhere in his anti-Nestorian polemic to describe *our* share in the Word through the Spirit.<sup>398</sup> The term *θεοποιέω* therefore, would seem to carry essentially the same meaning for Cyril in both the pre- and post-Nestorian periods; it is his application of the term and its cognates which changed due to the exigencies of the Christological debate.

Notwithstanding Cyril's limited use of Athanasius's favoured terminology of divinization, he does follow Athanasius closely in the latter's use of the concept of participation in order to express the substance of the term *θεοποίησις*. It was the aim of Chapter 4 to determine how Cyril used this concept to express at one and the same time humanity's genuine share in the divine life, and yet the radical, essential difference that must be maintained between the human and divine. I would further suggest that Cyril's use of 2 Pet. 1: 4 serves as a biblical replacement for the language of divinization.<sup>399</sup> It is probably no coincidence that the relative scarcity of such terms as *θεοποίησις* and *θεοποιέω* in Cyril is accompanied by a conspicuous increase in the attestation of 2 Pet. 1: 4. Cyril's reserve in utilizing the language of divinization brings into relief a key element in his conception of divinization: our share in the divine life is a participatory one, granting us effective access to certain divine qualities and attributes suited to the created

<sup>396</sup> Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>397</sup> *Scholia* 12 (ACO 1. 5, 192), *Ep.* 50. 7–8 (To Valerian) (ACO 1. 1. 3, 92–3); *Quod Unus* 742d (Durand, *Deux dialogues christologiques*, 396).

<sup>398</sup> See e.g. *Adv. Nest.* i. 8 (ACO 1. 1. 6, 30), ii. 4 (ACO 1. 1. 6, 40–1), and iii. 2 (ACO 1. 1. 6, 59–60).

<sup>399</sup> Russell, 'The Concept of Deification', 433–4, acknowledges Cyril's use of 2 Pet. 1: 4 even before the Nestorian controversy, but he proposes ('Partakers of the Divine Nature', 67) that this text became popular with Cyril because he needed an alternative way of speaking about deification following the Nestorian controversy. For his more developed views, see *The Doctrine of Deification*.

purpose for humanity, but in no way threatening the unbridgeable distinction between God and creation.

If the account offered here is accurate, then summary descriptions of Cyril's soteriology as 'physicalist' or 'somatic' require significant modification. Our investigation shows on the one hand that a largely somatic reading of Cyril's conception of our union with Christ must be adjusted in the light of the richly developed role Cyril accords to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the means of our union. It shows on the other hand that considerations of faith, free choice, and obedience are not tangential to Cyril's narrative of the divine life. On the contrary, they are part of the fabric of that narrative and are anchored in Christ himself who as man is a pattern for us in the reception of, and progress in, the divine life. Cyril indeed correlates the somatic and pneumatic means of our union with Christ, and impressively integrates the ontological and ethical aspects of our sanctification and divinization.

## The Exegetical Foundations of Cyril's Account

One methodological aim of this study was to investigate Cyril's narrative of divine life as it arises within the context of his New Testament biblical exegesis. By way of conclusion, it may be of value to identify those texts, or clusters of texts, that provide the exegetical foundations for his theology of divinization.

Lars Koen points to the interplay between John 1: 14 and Phil. 2: 5–11 as determinative for Cyril's account of salvation.<sup>400</sup> Koen is certainly correct to designate these texts as pivotal for Cyril's narrative of the economy of salvation. Yet, I would want to include two other texts, Heb. 2: 5–18 and 2 Cor. 8: 9, alongside them, as demonstrating how the Incarnation is pivotal for the recovery of the divine life. For Cyril, Heb. 2 more demonstrably guarantees what John 1: 14 asserts, namely, that Christ partook of flesh and blood in the same way as we do. At the same time it emphasizes the corporate purpose of the Incarnation and its essential connection to Christ's victory over death and Satan.<sup>401</sup> For its part, 2 Cor. 8: 9 undergirds the thrust of Phil. 2, that Christ became poor (that

<sup>400</sup> *The Saving Passion*, 132.

<sup>401</sup> Cf. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, 174.

is, emptied himself), so that we might become rich. For Cyril it neatly captures in a phrase the exchange at the heart of the Incarnation.<sup>402</sup>

Robert Wilken identifies Rom. 5: 12–21; 1 Cor. 15; and 2 Cor. 5: 17 as decisive for Cyril's teaching on the Second Adam and the new creation.<sup>403</sup> To these I would add the key texts concerning our share in the gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6: 19; Gal. 4: 6; Rom. 8: 1–11), and the sequence of texts that Cyril employs to describe the gift, loss, and reacquisition of the Spirit (Gen. 2: 7; 6: 3; Ps. 103: 28–30 (LXX); John 1: 32–3; 7: 39; 20: 22). For expressing the new life which comes through Christ's life-giving flesh in the Eucharist, Cyril most frequently mines the rich exegetical ore from John 6, but also makes regular reference to the Last Supper accounts and 1 Cor. 10: 16–22. And as we have noted, 2 Pet. 1: 4 holds a special place for summing up in shorthand the crowning of the work of salvation in us. It communicates in bold, participatory language the reality, which Cyril is so intent to describe and defend, that in Christ we have become partakers of the very life of God.

Finally, I would like to draw particular attention to Cyril's use of the Letter to the Ephesians and suggest that it plays an important role in Cyril's formulation of the narrative of divine life. The importance of an individual text such as Eph. 1: 10 (the recapitulation of all things in Christ) is evident.<sup>404</sup> Additionally, Cyril finds in Eph. 3 a testimony to the twofold manner of divine indwelling: he applies the term, *σύσσωμα* (3: 6), to eucharistic participation,<sup>405</sup> and the mention of the Spirit in the inner man, and of Christ dwelling in our hearts (3: 16–17) neatly captures for Cyril the divine indwelling through the Spirit, by which Christ also dwells in us.<sup>406</sup>

<sup>402</sup> Angstenberger, *Der reiche und der arme Christus*, 155–68, claims that Cyril's Christological reading of 2 Cor. 8: 9 represents the highpoint of its use in the Fathers, and he shows how Cyril's adoption of its verb tense structure (the present participle used for the ongoing divinity of the Word, the aorist for the event of the Incarnation) neatly captures the core of his narrative Christology.

<sup>403</sup> *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 119–27.

<sup>404</sup> *In Matt.* 18: 10 (Reuss, 224); 24: 51 (Reuss, 249); *In Luc.* 2: 14 (Reuss, 56; Smith, 54); *In Ja.* 7: 39 (Pusey, i. 691); 14: 20 (Pusey, ii. 481); *In Rom.* 3: 21 (Pusey, iii. 179); 10: 11 (Pusey, iii. 237); *In 2 Cor.* 5: 3–5 (Pusey, iii. 351); *In Heb.* 1: 9 (Pusey, iii. 376); 2: 14 (Pusey, iii. 394).

<sup>405</sup> *In Ja.* 15: 1 (Pusey, ii. 542); 17: 3 (Pusey, ii. 669); 17: 20–1 (Pusey, ii. 736). But see *In 1 Cor.* 12: 12 (Pusey, iii. 290–1) for the term *σύσσωμοι* used in reference to the gift of the Spirit.

<sup>406</sup> *In Ja.* 1: 1 (Pusey, i. 36); 1: 32–3 (Pusey, i. 188); 3: 36 (Pusey, i. 259); 6: 47 (Pusey, i. 513).



More generally, the Letter to the Ephesians presents the Christian faith in terms of a grand narrative of redemption, as the unfolding of the eternal plan of God centred around the revelation of Christ in whom all things are recapitulated. This narrative is cast in terms of the economy (*οἰκονομία*) of redemption (1: 10; 3: 2), and the mystery (*μυστήριον*) of the gospel (1: 9; 3: 3, 4, 9; 5: 32; 6: 19), terms that Cyril repeatedly employs in combination.<sup>407</sup> In Ephesians, sin, death, and Satan are linked as the composite enemy (2: 1–4), a linkage quite common in Cyril's narrative of Adam and Christ.<sup>408</sup> The statement in Eph. 2: 15, that Christ creates 'one new man (*ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον*) in himself', depicts very well Cyril's notion of a communal, representative redemption in Christ and his notion of the re-creation of our nature.<sup>409</sup> The use of *συν-* compounds in Ephesians,<sup>410</sup> especially in 2: 5–6—'[God] made us alive together with Christ (*συνεζωοποίησεν*), raised us up with him (*συνῆγειρεν*), and seated us together with him (*συνεκαθήσεν*)'—reflects Cyril's emphasis on our corporate share in Christ's representative saving activity.<sup>411</sup> Finally, the manifold role of the Spirit in Ephesians is quite clearly a characteristic of Cyril's own narrative: the Spirit is the one in whom we are sealed (1: 13), in whom we become a dwelling-place of God (2: 22), and by whom we are strengthened in the inner man (3: 16).<sup>412</sup> Given the frequency with which Cyril quotes this Letter, and the suggestive similarities in language, narrative framework, and theological emphasis, we may reasonably conclude that the Letter to the

<sup>407</sup> *In 2 Cor. 5: 17–18* (Pusey, iii, 353).

<sup>408</sup> *In Ja. 1: 32–3* (Pusey, i, 183–4).

<sup>409</sup> *In Luc. 2: 14* (Reuss, 56; Smith, 54); *10: 3* (Reuss, 108; Smith, 264); *12: 49–53* (Reuss, 149; Smith, 379); *20: 17–18* (Reuss, 200; Smith, 534); *In Ja. 11: 49–52* (Pusey, ii, 295); *13: 35* (Pusey, ii, 390); *17: 20–1* (Pusey, ii, 733); *In Rom. 15: 7* (Pusey, iii, 247).

<sup>410</sup> The deployment of *συν-* compounds is itself a characteristic of Cyril's Greek. See F. L. Cross, 'The Projected Lexicon of Patristic Greek', *Actes du VI<sup>e</sup> congrès international d'études byzantines* (Paris: École des Hautes Études, 1950), i, 392, and Alberto Vaccari, 'La Grecità di Cirillo d'Alessandria', in *Studi dedicati alla memoria di Paolo Ubaldi*, Scienze Storiche, 16 (1937–45), 27–39.

<sup>411</sup> *In Ja. 14: 2–3* (Pusey, ii, 405); *16: 7* (Pusey, ii, 619); *In 1 Cor. 15: 3* (Pusey, iii, 298); *In Heb. 2: 7–8* (Pusey, iii, 384).

<sup>412</sup> Cyril's frequent references to our being sealed in the Spirit are almost certainly founded on Eph. 1: 13 and 2 Cor. 1: 22, the only New Testament texts that speak of being sealed in the Spirit. See especially *In Ja. 14: 25–6* (Pusey, ii, 506–8), *15: 1* (Pusey, ii, 535) and *17: 20–1* (Pusey, ii, 729–37), for a concentrated use of texts from Ephesians to exhibit the role of the Spirit in the economy of salvation.

Ephesians plays a significant part in the exegetical foundation of Cyril's narrative of divine life.

In the end, one must conclude that Cyril of Alexandria not only knew the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) remarkably well, but that he thought theologically in biblical terms and by means of related biblical texts. Only this can account for his ability to draw upon so varied a set of texts, and to do so, in the main, with such astuteness and clarity. In this, at least, he is a true successor to Origen. Furthermore, we can now see more clearly the benefit of selecting Cyril's biblical commentaries for this study. Because of the sheer range of the biblical terrain that he must cover and comment upon, Cyril's account of the divinization of the human race in his biblical commentaries is particularly rich and developed.

## The Theological Shape of Cyril's Account

I set as the aim of this study, not only to trace the narrative of divine life in the New Testament commentaries of Cyril, but also to enquire into the broader theological shape of that narrative. This is to ask what doctrines are in play and what is the manner of their interrelation. How does Cyril construct his account theologically? It would be inaccurate, I believe, to designate Cyril a systematic theologian in either a medieval or modern sense; that is, one who attempts to order the various doctrines of the Christian faith in a scientific account. But there is a kind of architecture to his theological account of salvation. He thinks theologically not only in terms of biblical patterns and cross-references, but also in terms of interconnecting doctrines. What, then, might a summary account of the theological shape of Cyril's narrative of divine life look like?

It is unsurprising that Christology is the central frame of Cyril's account. It is the hub to which all else is connected. In this he is the true heir, not only of Athanasius, but more distantly of Irenaeus, whatever direct or indirect influence there may be.<sup>413</sup> And though Cyril fought endless skirmishes over the doctrine of Christ and the

<sup>413</sup> Scholars commonly connect Cyril's thought to Irenaeus, though to my knowledge there is no evidence that Cyril read Irenaeus directly. Yet, it is difficult to deny at least the indirect influence of the bishop of Lyons on Cyril's thought and formulation.

correct manner of expressing the constitution of the Incarnate Christ, it is more properly the doctrine of the Incarnation (by which I mean to emphasize the narrative and soteriological function of the Word made flesh) that is at the centre of Cyril's thought, rather than the proper conceptual categories for describing that enfleshment. The centre of Cyril's narrative account is the Word who appears among us in the Incarnation, and who through his death, resurrection, and exaltation, redeems the world and bestows on us participation in the divine life. By opting to locate in the one figure of the Incarnate Christ both the divine agent of salvation and the human recipient of that salvation, Cyril has folded into his account of the Incarnation certain perennial Christological issues. How can one who is both fully divine and able to act in a divine way be at the same time fully human as we are, operating within the limitations of our humanity? How can the same one be both the giver of the Spirit and one who receives the Spirit? How can we understand the notion that Christ gives the Spirit to himself, and sanctifies his own human nature by the Spirit? These are questions from Cyril's account that invite further theological elaboration and development, but that are beyond the scope of this study to pursue.

Cyril's doctrine of Creation, and especially of the creation of the human race in the image and likeness of God, must be viewed in very close connection with his Christology. His constant refrain, that Christ came to restore our nature 'to what it was in the beginning' displays this close relation. One might interpret this emphasis on Christ restoring us to what we were in the beginning as giving a kind of precedence to the doctrine of creation, thereby minimizing the newness of Christ's redemption. But I believe this is to read Cyril the wrong way round. For Cyril, as for Irenaeus, the revelation of Christ as the New Adam already influences how the First, unfallen Adam is viewed and described. To claim this is not to conflate the two, or to deny that the Second Adam in Cyril's thinking brings us to a greater glory than we possessed in the First. It is only to suggest that the revelation of the Incarnate Word influences Cyril's understanding of what we were created to be in Adam.<sup>414</sup> Furthermore, Cyril's reading of the creation of

<sup>414</sup> Welch, *Christology and Eucharist*, 131–60, presents an extended argument for the close relation of creation and redemption in Cyril's thought, drawing principally on *Thes.* 15 (PG 75, 293d), where Cyril identifies Christ as the 'original root' of Adam in creation.

Adam also plainly informs his understanding of the manner in which we appropriate and preserve the divine life through observing the divine commands. The creation of Adam and the original inbreathing of the Spirit, already shaped by the revelation of our re-creation in Christ, stands at the centre of Cyril's theological anthropology.

With regard to theological anthropology, Cyril presents an unusual account of the relationship between nature and grace. This may be one of the most theologically fertile aspects of his thought. Cyril's account is founded upon his interpretation of Gen. 2: 7 as the breathing of the Spirit into the first man, as a gift distinct from the creation of that man as a 'rational living creature'. Cyril uses the concept of participation analogously to describe both aspects of Gen. 2: 7 (that is, our coming into being and the gift of rationality on the one hand, and our share in the Spirit on the other), but the two are clearly distinguished. The gift of being and rationality constitutes what we are by nature, and so cannot be lost. The gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit is contingent on the exercise of our will toward the commandment given, and could be (and was) squandered. The gift of the Spirit and its effects in us are properly what we receive 'by grace'. Yet the composite result, the human being of rational soul and body, indwelt by the Spirit, is all one unity at the beginning. On this model, the human race in creation already possesses a share in the divine life through the Spirit. For Cyril, the human state apart from the gift of the indwelling Spirit is a *fallen* human state, characterized by a 'soulish' (*ψυχικόν*) mind. According to Cyril's narrative, the Spirit returns to the human race in Christ, the firstfruits, and finds a secure dwelling. Thus the full image of God is restored.<sup>415</sup> 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

<sup>415</sup> Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 153, asks whether in Cyril's view the divine image was lost through Adam's sin, and concludes: 'Those aspects of the image which are part and parcel of man's essential structure—basic rationality and psychological freedom—were not lost. Those facets of the image which owe their existence to the indwelling of the Spirit—holiness, incorruptibility, kinship with God—were lost.' In any case, for Cyril there is no complete image of God in us without the indwelling of the Spirit.

what we had in Adam; it is less clear what precisely that gain consists in.<sup>416</sup>

With this account, Cyril overturns any strict dichotomy between the natural and supernatural, what we were in Adam representing the former, what we are in Christ representing the latter. Though eminently supernatural and gratuitous, the gift of the indwelling Spirit is in another way natural to the human race, in the sense that it is the intended, ordinary state of the human race in relation to God.<sup>417</sup> Correlatively, to be without the Spirit is unnatural for the human race. In Cyril's thought, to be fully human as intended by the Creator is to have the Holy Spirit and a share in the divine life. Such an account has potentially significant implications for theological anthropology.<sup>418</sup>

If the doctrine of the Incarnation occupies the central frame in Cyril's account of the narrative of divine life, it has been my particular aim in this study to bring to light the essential role of the Spirit for bringing this narrative of divine life to completion in us. Cyril inherited and fully accepted the dogmatic principle that all things are accomplished in the economy 'from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit'. But for Cyril this is more than a wooden formula. As we have seen, one of the characteristic features of Cyril's biblical exposition is the very skilful introduction of the Spirit into texts that make no mention of the Spirit. More importantly, the narrative of salvation frequently has as its central theme the original gift, subsequent forfeiture, and eventual reacquisition of the Spirit through the Incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. From one perspective, the point of the whole narrative is to reintroduce the Spirit to the human race, a result secured by Christ himself first and then accomplished in us. It is principally through the indwelling Spirit

<sup>416</sup> For a discussion of how Cyril conceives what we have received in Christ above and beyond what we possessed in Adam, see Janssens, 'Notre filiation divine', 268–70; Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 118–19; and Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 117–18. For a critique of Janssens and Burghardt, see Welch, *Christology and Eucharist*, 148–57.

<sup>417</sup> I am following D. Balás, *METOTΣIA ΘEOY*, 149, for the distinction between 'natural' and 'by nature' in this context. He summarizes Gregory of Nyssa's account of nature and supernature thus: 'Partaking is "natural" to man, but the divine goods are not his "by nature".'

<sup>418</sup> See John Meyendorff, 'Humanity "Old" and "New"—Anthropological Considerations', in John Meyendorff and Robert Tobias (eds.), *Salvation in Christ: A Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1992), 59–65, for a similar conclusion regarding nature and grace in Irenaeus.

that we are joined in communion with the Father and Son, and so come to share in the divine nature. The narrative of the Incarnate Son and the narrative of the indwelling Spirit are inseparable in Cyril. He reminds us with near monotony of the essential unity of the Son and Spirit: the Spirit is inseparably the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son. The issue of the *Filioque* naturally arises here. Did Cyril, a Greek Father, teach the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son? A full discussion of this question is beyond the scope of this study, but Cyril has been invoked not unreasonably as teaching at the least a view that strongly accentuates the inter-trinitarian relationship of the Spirit to the Son.<sup>419</sup> From her study of Cyril's trinitarian theology, Boulnois concludes that, though Cyril is one of the clearest Greek witnesses to the procession of the Spirit from the Father and/through the Son, he does not directly address this controverted issue, and he prefers to employ a set of mutually correcting formulations to describe the procession of the Spirit.<sup>420</sup>

This points us to a further conclusion: the doctrine of the Trinity provides the wider framework for Cyril's narrative of the divine life. Cyril's pre-Nestorian polemical writings are largely taken up with the defence of the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, and it is plain that his understanding of the Triune God, regarding both internal relations and external working, grounds his narrative of salvation. The springs of that narrative are found in the consubstantial Trinity, in the Father who is Life in himself, and in the Son and Spirit who are also 'Life' by nature. The Incarnation, then, must be viewed as the vehicle for the extension of the life of the Triune God, as the appearance of 'Life itself' in human form. The Incarnate Son then imparts that life to the human race through the twofold means of the indwelling Spirit and his life-giving flesh. In its turn, participation in the Spirit unites us to the

<sup>419</sup> E. B. Pusey, 'Preface', in *Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John by S. Cyril*, i. p. ix, declares Cyril's teaching on the procession of the Spirit to be 'identical' to the Western understanding of the *Filioque*. George C. Berthold, 'Cyril and the Filioque', *SP* 19 (1989), 143–7, finds a great deal of common ground between Cyril's teaching and the *Filioque*. For Aquinas's citation of Cyril in defence of the *Filioque*, see D. P. Renaudin, 'La Théologie de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie d'après saint Thomas', *Revue Thomiste*, 18 (1910), 176–9. For the expansive use of Cyril in the *Filioque* debates at the Council of Florence (1439), see Bernard Meunier, 'Cyrille d'Alexandrie au Concile de Florence', *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum*, 21 (1989), 147–74.

<sup>420</sup> *Le Paradoxe trinitaire*, 527–9.

Father and Son as well, and so we come to share in the divine life of the Triune God.<sup>421</sup> The doctrine of the Trinity, then, surrounds, as it were, the narrative of divine life in Cyril, being its source and final goal, and determines the execution of that narrative in the missions of the Son and Spirit. Cyril's narrative of divine life is not only Christologically centred; it is also pneumatological in execution and trinitarian in shape.

Brief mention of the place of ecclesiology and eschatology will complete this sketch of the theological shape of Cyril's narrative of divine life. Cyril's teaching on the church is grounded in Christ as the Second Adam, who represents in himself the new human race. The Incarnation is thus the centre and starting point for the doctrine of the church. The twofold manner of divine indwelling, brought about through the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, unites the members of the church to one another and to Christ and therefore constitutes the church.<sup>422</sup>

The Incarnate Christ himself, risen and reigning, is the locus of eschatology in Cyril as well. His predilection for Eph. 2, our being raised and reigning with Christ, gives his eschatology a marked realized character. Yet, he also adopts what may be called a traditional eschatology, centred on the events of the end, and he allocates to the new age the completion of what has been fully accomplished in Christ alone as firstfruits.<sup>423</sup> He presents, in fact, a remarkably well-balanced eschatology, giving due emphasis both to the present and future aspects of our salvation. None the less, through his emphasis on the indwelling Spirit and our present share in divine life, as well as through his strong accent on the present attainability of our ethical conformity to Christ, Cyril reveals a high degree of expectation for the transformation of human life in the present age.

From the time of his rise to the Patriarchate of Alexandria until the present day, Cyril of Alexandria has had his share of both eloquent

<sup>421</sup> On the trinitarian shape of our share in the divine life in Cyril, see Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, 35–47, 63–76.

<sup>422</sup> The grounding of the church in the Incarnate Christ, and in the dual means of divine indwelling through baptism and the Eucharist is sketched by Cyril in the following commentaries: *In Jn 17: 11* (Pusey, ii. 697–8); *17: 20–1* (Pusey, ii. 729–37).

<sup>423</sup> For the relationship between realized and future eschatology in Cyril, see Caggiano, 'The Eschatological Implications of the Notion of Re-Creation', 212–356, and O'Keefe, 'Incorruption, Anti-Origenism, and Incarnation: Eschatology in the Thought of Cyril of Alexandria', in Weinandy and Keating (eds.), *The Theology of Cyril of Alexandria*, 187–204.

admirers and impassioned detractors. Ironically, this epoch-long interest in his life and theology—either from admirers or detractors—is perhaps one of the best indicators of the ongoing value of attending to his writings. He continues to stir up both interest and controversy, and a surprising array of contemporary theologians of diverse theological commitments appeal favourably to various aspects of his exegesis and theology.

In this present study I have attempted to investigate and present what I consider to be a remarkable account of the narrative of salvation. There is something of grandeur and even beauty in Cyril's conception of our share in the divine life of the Triune God. In the course of tracing Cyril's narrative of divine life, I have identified what seem to me certain deficiencies in exegesis, inconsistencies in thought and application, and issues that call for development. Cyril's success as an analytic theologian, as has often been observed, is variable. He is plainly at his theological best when speaking in terms of the narrative of salvation, weaving an impressive tapestry of biblical texts in the production of an integrated account of the Gospel narrative that magnifies both the saving initiative of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and the possibility for the divinization of human life, even in this age. His narrative of divine life remains a significant achievement, worthy of renewed attention and study. The following selection, excerpted from his own commentary on the scribe of the kingdom in Matt. 13: 52, neatly sums up Cyril's attainment:

A scribe is one who, through the constant reading of the Scriptures, stows away a treasure for himself of knowledge, both of the Old and the New. Therefore he calls blessed those who gather together in themselves the instruction of the Law and the Gospel, so as 'to bring out from the treasure the New and the Old'. (*In Matt. 13: 52*; Reuss, 209)



## 6 Cyril in Comparison

The aim of this final chapter is to bring Cyril into discussion with three of his contemporaries, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Augustine, and Leo the Great. Due to the controversy surrounding the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), it is Cyril's relationship to his Alexandrian predecessors and Antiochene opponents concerning more narrow Christological questions that has received, like a well-trodden path, the larger share of scholarly traffic. Where Cyril has been compared to his Western contemporaries, the comparison is normally restricted to Christological formulae.<sup>424</sup> The directly Christological issues cannot be ignored, and I will begin each comparison that follows with a summary of Christology. But the primary aim here is to bring the respective narratives of salvation directly into discussion in order better to discern the relationship of Christology and soteriology. The comparisons are necessarily limited in scope and governed largely by categories and questions drawn from our study of Cyril. The purpose of these comparisons will have been achieved if some further light is shed on the relationship between these key figures representing Alexandria, Antioch, North Africa, and Rome.

### Theodore of Mopsuestia

As a pivotal figure in the Antiochene tradition, the Antiochene commentator on the Bible *par excellence*, and the teacher of Nestorius, Theodore is a fitting candidate for comparison with Cyril. Theodore plainly built upon and developed fourth-century Antiochene approaches to theology and exegesis, most notably

<sup>424</sup> See e.g. Paul Galtier, 'S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie et S. Leon le Grand à Chalcédoine', in A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht (eds.), *Das Konzil von Chalkedon* (Würzburg: Echter, 1951), i. 345–87, and Marcel Richard, 'Le Pape Léon le Grand et les *Scholae de Incarnatione Unigeniti* de S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *RSR* 40 (1952), 116–28. N. M. Haring, 'The Character and Range of the Influence of St. Cyril of Alexandria on Latin Theology', *Medieval Studies*, 12 (1950), 1–19, provides a historical survey of the use of Cyril in the West up to Thomas Aquinas.

those of Diodore his teacher, yet with him these tendencies reach a full flowering and attain their characteristic shape. What we commonly call Antiochene approaches are often most fully exemplified in him. As Grillmeier observes, ‘Only with Theodore of Mopsuestia does “Antiochene” Christology properly begin.’<sup>425</sup>

Theodore was born c.350 in Antioch and studied literature and rhetoric with John Chrysostom under the famous sophist, Libanius.<sup>426</sup> Persuaded by Chrysostom to leave aside a promising legal career, he enrolled in a monastic school, the *Asketerion*, where—again with Chrysostom—he studied the Bible, theology, and philosophy under the tutelage of Diodore.<sup>427</sup> He was ordained a presbyter by Flavian of Antioch, and then consecrated bishop of Mopsuestia in 392.

Theodore was a voluminous writer. He composed commentaries (which have largely been lost) on most of the books of the Bible, and wrote numerous dogmatic, apologetic, and catechetical works. Revered widely for his preaching, Theodore also earned a reputation as a formidable apologist against the Arians, Eunomians, Apollinarians, and Origenists.<sup>428</sup> Significantly for the controversy that arose immediately after his death, he was the teacher of Nestorius, John of Antioch, and Theodoret. Theodore died at peace with the Church in 428, highly honoured within his own circles.

We have no evidence of direct communication between Theodore and Cyril, though it is almost certain that they knew of each other by reputation, and at least possible that each would have read something of the other's works (and more likely that Cyril, being the younger bishop, would have read selections from Theodore). The intriguing question is whether Cyril knew of Theodore's teaching on the person of Christ *before* the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy. We have evidence of Cyril's refutation of a passage from Theodore's commentary on Hebrews during the early stages of the Nestorian controversy,<sup>429</sup> and we

<sup>425</sup> *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 421. In his study and critique of Antiochene exegesis, O'Keefe, ‘A Letter that Killeth’, 83, identifies Theodore along with his teacher Diodore as the key representatives of the Antiochene approach to Scripture.

<sup>426</sup> For an account of Theodore's life and writings, see Dimitri Z. Zaharopoulos, *Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Bible: A Study of his Old Testament Exegesis* (New York: Paulist, 1989), 9–43.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.* 11–12.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

<sup>429</sup> For evidence of this, see Parvis, ‘The Commentary on Hebrews’, 415–19.

know that Cyril gained wider access to the writings of Theodore and Diodore during the re-ignition of the controversy with the Antiochenes in 448, resulting in the writing of the treatises *Against Diodore and Theodore*.<sup>430</sup> Cyril was encouraged by his allies at that time to take up his pen against the teachings of Theodore (and Diodore) because, though the Antiochenes had anathematized Nestorius, they were still championing Theodore, whom Cyril considered to be the root and cause of the Nestorian heresy.<sup>431</sup> Though Cyril considered Theodore the 'father of the blasphemy of Nestorius',<sup>432</sup> and believed that his teaching on Christ should be rejected, he acknowledged that Theodore's 'name in the East is great and his writings are admired exceedingly', he recognized that he died in communion with the churches, and so he recommended that Theodore should not be subjected to anathema by name.<sup>433</sup>

Was Cyril, however, aware of Theodore's teaching on Christ before the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy, or did he only later become cognizant of the source of Nestorius's teaching in his master, Theodore? It is probably impossible to establish that Cyril was aware of, and critical towards, Theodore's teaching before 428. Yet, as we noted above, Cyril strenuously rejects in his pre-Nestorian *Commentary on John* what he identifies as a 'two-sons' Christology. It is at least possible that Theodore is the unnamed antagonist Cyril already has in his sights. If so, then the Nestorian controversy might best be seen, not as the eruption of a new imbroglio, but rather the boiling over of a theological grievance that had been simmering—at least within Cyril—for some time.

The comparison between Theodore and Cyril will proceed along three lines. First, I will review the characteristic features of Theodore's Christology, illustrating those features by recourse to his commentary on two key texts: the baptism of Jesus in John and the account of the Incarnation in Heb. 2. Next I will examine Theodore's explanation of the indwelling of the Spirit by means of his interpretation of John 7: 39. Finally, I will consider Theodore's

<sup>430</sup> For a detailed study of this controversy, see Abramowski, 'The Controversy over Diodore and Theodore in the Interim between the Two Councils of Ephesus', in idem, *Formula and Context: Studies in Early Christian Thought* (Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1992), 1–37.

<sup>431</sup> For Cyril's denunciation of Theodore as the teacher of Nestorius and the source of his doctrine, see *Ep.* 55. 42; 67. 7; 69. 2; 70. 1; 71. 2.

<sup>432</sup> *Ep.* 71. 1.

<sup>433</sup> See *Ep.* 72; 91. 5.

teaching on sanctification in his catechetical homilies on the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, viewed in the light of his doctrine of the two ages. I will conclude that Theodore's peculiar account of the Incarnation is consistent with his treatment of the indwelling of the Spirit and with his understanding of sanctification through baptism and Eucharist in the present age: for Theodore, divinity—and our share in that divinity—is always kept at one remove from our humanity.

## Theodore's Christology

Theodore's Christology has received ample study, and only a brief review of its characteristic features is necessary for our comparison here.<sup>434</sup> It is marked by two distinctive features: (1) an insistence that the union of the Word and the flesh in Christ is a union, not of essence or of divine operation, but of 'good pleasure' and grace grounded in the will; and (2) an insistence upon two subjects of attribution in Christ: the Word who assumes and 'the man' who is assumed. As Richard Norris remarks, 'At the basis of Theodore's Christology lies the image of divine "indwelling"'.<sup>435</sup> The Incarnation, for Theodore, is a very special kind of indwelling, for in Jesus God dwells 'as in a son', which is to be distinguished from every other kind of indwelling of the divine in the human. But Theodore notably insists that this union cannot be according to essence or nature, for this would entail the alteration of the two natures involved; it must rather be according to will, according to the 'good pleasure' (εὐδοκία) of God to dwell in the man, Jesus. In his treatise, *On the Incarnation*, Theodore writes:

It seems evident, we shall say, that the indwelling should fittingly be described as taking place by *good pleasure*. And *good pleasure* means that best and noblest will of God, which he exercises when he is pleased with those who are zealous to be dedicated to him, because of their excellent standing in his sight...It is, therefore, proper to speak of the indwelling in this fashion, for since God exists boundless and uncircumscribed by

<sup>434</sup> For studies of Theodore's Christology, see Richard A. Norris, *Manhood in Christ: A Study of the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) ; Francis A. Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, Analecta Gregoriana, 82 (Rome: Gregorian University, 1956) ; Rowan A. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia: Exegete and Theologian* (Westminster: Faith Press, 1961) ; Sellers, *Two Ancient Christologies*

<sup>435</sup> *The Christological Controversy*, ed. and trans. R. A. Norris (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 22.

nature, he is present with all. But by 'good pleasure' he is far from some and near to others.<sup>436</sup>

It is noteworthy that on this account of the Incarnation, Christ had the potential to sin. Through his unique union with the Word, Christ received and co-operated with grace, and so in fact did not sin. But in Theodore's view, if there were no possibility of sin in Christ, then there would be no possibility for true moral choice, and this would make Christ less than a man.<sup>437</sup> Cyril, to the contrary, holds the view that Christ was truly obedient to the Father *as man*, but he simultaneously holds that it was not possible for Christ to sin. The differing views of Theodore and Cyril on the possibility of sin in Christ depend, most probably, not only on differing views of the Incarnation, but also on differing notions of freedom. Theodore's notion of human freedom seems to demand the possibility of a choice to sin; for Cyril, true freedom is choosing to do what is right, and this is precisely what the Word Incarnate did as man. He was truly free in the most important sense because sin was not a possibility for him.

The problem with Theodore's depiction of the Incarnation as indwelling can be expressed in the following question: if the Incarnation is simply the dwelling of the Word in a man according to will—albeit in a special way—how is this different *in kind* from the manner in which God dwells in us through the Son in the Spirit? The Incarnation, on Theodore's view, seems to become only a special and unique instance of the same kind of indwelling that we see in the saints. Given his understanding of the impossibility of a union according to essence or nature, Theodore could not contrive any other way of conceiving the union.<sup>438</sup> Unless the union of Word and man is by grace and according to will, the integrity of the human nature and—more importantly for Theodore in my view—the integrity of the divine nature are jeopardized.<sup>439</sup> Theodore is most certainly concerned to uphold the full integrity of the humanity of Christ and its role in our salvation, but he

<sup>436</sup> *On the Incarnation*, viii. frag. 2, trans. R. A. Norris, *The Christological Controversy*, 115.

<sup>437</sup> For Theodore's view that Christ could have sinned, but did not, see Joanne McWilliam Dewart, *The Theology of Grace of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1971), 74–6.

<sup>438</sup> Cf. Abramowski, 'The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia', 4.

<sup>439</sup> Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 424: 'Theodore is always moved by one concern: to deprive the Arians of any occasion of violating the divine transcendence.'

appears even more concerned to guard the divine nature from any taint of change or suffering.

Consequent on this view of the Incarnation, Theodore repeatedly posits a double predication in Christ, two distinct subjects of attribution, 'the Word' and 'the man assumed'. According to Norris, Theodore is referring here, not to two abstract essences, but to 'two concrete realities of different kinds'.<sup>440</sup> There appear to be two centres of initiative and action in Theodore's Christ. Theodore, for his part, insists that he is not teaching a doctrine of two sons, a doctrine of simple adoptionism for which Paul of Samosata was purportedly condemned. Cyril himself records a text from Theodore in which the latter defends himself against the charge of teaching a doctrine of two sons:

But they argue with us, If you say two things perfect, we shall surely be also saying Two sons. But lo he is called son too by himself in the divine Scripture, without the Godhead, co-numbered with the rest of men, and we do not say Two sons. But One Son there rightly is in our confession, seeing that division of natures must needs remain and union of person be kept indissoluble.<sup>441</sup>

It will be instructive at this point to record Cyril's own response to Theodore's account of Christ. Cyril is incredulous at Theodore's claim to confess only one Son and to teach a unity of person (*πρόσωπον*). If Theodore so sharply divides the 'Son in truth', who is so by nature, from the son who is so by grace and appellation only, how (asks Cyril) can he claim to uphold the unity of person?<sup>442</sup> Cyril not only takes aim at what he believes is tacitly and undeniably a doctrine of two sons in Theodore; he also rejects Theodore's account of the Incarnation as an indwelling based on a union by good pleasure of the will:

What are you saying, O mighty man? Was the holy Virgin mother of God because God was in what was born of her, indwelling in mere good-pleasure of the will? Do you call that union? Then when the Word being God makes his habitation in ourselves too (for he dwells in the souls of the saints through the Holy Spirit), do you confess that in like wise we ourselves too have union with Him?<sup>443</sup>

<sup>440</sup> *The Christological Controversy*, 25. See also Norris's account of what he calls Theodore's Christological dualism, in *Manhood in Christ*, 190–210.

<sup>441</sup> 'Fragments against Theodore of Mopsuestia', in E. B. Pusey (ed. and trans.), *S. Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria* (Oxford: James Parker, 1881), 355.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid. 351.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid. 357 (translation modified for archaic forms).

Here we come to the nub of the debate between Cyril and Theodore (and so in fact between Cyril and Nestorius): Theodore describes the union of Word and man in the Incarnation in the same, or very similar, terms as those that Cyril uses to describe the sanctification and divinization of the saints. Notwithstanding Theodore's protestations, Cyril cannot escape the conclusion that Theodore presents the Incarnation of the Word as simply a special instance of the divinization of a mere man.

These differing conceptions of the Incarnation can be illustrated by their respective treatments of two key texts: the baptism of Jesus in John and the account of the Incarnation in Heb. 2: 5 ff. As we saw above, Cyril interprets the baptism of Christ as the re-creation of human nature in Christ, and as the return of the Spirit to the human race in Christ the Second Adam. But he emphasizes that Christ has no need of the Spirit for himself, for he possesses the Spirit naturally as the Word of God. Christ, then, receives the Spirit as man, so that we can receive the Spirit in and through him. Cyril carefully guards the single subject of the Word incarnate in his treatment of the baptism: it is the Word who both gives the Spirit as God and receives the Spirit as man.

From what we can glean from the fragments of Theodore's commentary on John, he interprets the baptism of Jesus in rather different terms. In his initial consideration of John 1: 32–3, Theodore is largely concerned with defending the true and full divinity of the Spirit by distinguishing the vision of the dove seen by John from the invisible divine nature of the Spirit.<sup>444</sup> His first concern is to ensure that the divinity of the Spirit is not sullied, and so he distinguishes the Spirit's true nature from the vision of the dove. Theodore next interprets the Baptist's testimony, 'This is the Son of God' (v. 34), in a quite surprising manner. He claims that these words refer, not to the divine nature or the divine generation of the Word as the Son of God, but to the human nature according to which he [Christ] is joined with the Only-Begotten Word.<sup>445</sup> Here we see evidence of the characteristic

<sup>444</sup> *Commentarius in Evangelium Iobannis Apostoli* (*Comm. in Io.*), ed. and trans. J.-M. Vosté, CSCO (Scriptores Syri, ser. 4, vol. 3) (Louvain: Officina Orientali, 1940), 31–2. For the Greek fragments of Theodore's commentary on John, see Robert Devreesse, *Essai sur Théodore Mopsueste*, Studi e Testi, 141 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1948), 287–419. For Theodore's interpretation of the baptism of Jesus in John, see Ferraro, *Lo Spirito Santo nel quarto Vangelo*, 29–31.

<sup>445</sup> *Comm. in Io.* 33.

duality in Theodore's treatment of Christ. Theodore goes on to state that it is 'Christ in the flesh' (*Christo in carne*) who is the first to be born of the Spirit, and by the mediation of the Spirit is joined to the Only-Begotten Word. It is then this same Christ, the one who has received the true dignity of sonship, who communicates the gift of the Spirit to us, through whom we too are adopted as 'sons of God' (Rom. 8: 15).<sup>446</sup> As Ferraro rightly observes, Theodore plainly distinguishes here between Christ, who receives the fullness of the Spirit, and the saints who receive the Spirit only in part through Christ.<sup>447</sup> Yet Theodore's treatment of the baptism draws a rather sharp line between the Only-Begotten Word and 'Christ in the flesh' who is joined to the Word by the Spirit.

Cyril takes umbrage at Theodore's reading of the baptism of Jesus. Whether he was reading Theodore's commentary on John or some other work, Cyril understands Theodore to be saying that Christ reached the perfection of holiness only when the Spirit came down upon him in the form of a dove:

But if he [Christ] were holy always, and was not so made in time, how does he [Theodore] say that the Spirit soared down upon Him and showed that He was worthy of the connection and added to Him what he lacked? For this too he has put in his other books...When therefore he says that Jesus would not have been counted worthy of connection with God the Word except He has first been rendered spotless, he is indicting very many accusations against his empty talk.<sup>448</sup>

Cyril presumably had access to a more expansive account of Theodore's treatment of Jesus' baptism than we possess, and he is probably reading into Theodore's account more than Theodore intended to say, but he is plainly worried about the division Theodore makes between 'Christ in the flesh' and the Only-Begotten Word. As Theodore conceives it, the figure on whom the Spirit descends at the Jordan is the human Christ, the 'Son of God' according to his human birth, who is joined to the Only-Begotten Word by the Spirit. For Cyril, this figure on whom the Spirit descends *is* the Word, now made flesh, who sanctifies by his own Spirit the flesh he has assumed.

When we turn to compare the commentaries of Theodore and Cyril on Heb. 2: 5 ff., we see the differences between them

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

<sup>447</sup> Ferraro, *Lo Spirito Santo nel quarto Vangelo*, 31.

<sup>448</sup> 'Fragments against Theodore', 359.



magnified. Theodore's commentary on Heb. 2 is preserved for us by Cyril himself, first in a brief summary in his own *Commentary on Hebrews* (written between 428 and 432), and then in a more extended selection in his work, *Against Theodore* (written c.438).<sup>449</sup> In the latter text, the question at issue is the interpretation of Ps. 8 as used by the author of the Letter to the Hebrews (presumed to be Paul by both Theodore and Cyril). Theodore asks his reader to consider who the man might be who is marvelling at being visited and cared for by the Only-Begotten Word. It is clear, insists Theodore, that these words cannot pertain to just any man; rather, they must refer to Christ. The man referred to here is Jesus, of whom the Word is mindful and whom the Word graciously visits. Theodore concludes:

For you see...how vast the difference of natures in that the one is astounded for that He [the Word] deigns to be mindful of man and to visit him and to make him partaker of the other things whereof He made him partaker; the other [the man, Jesus] on the contrary marvels, that he has been vouchsafed to be a partaker of so great things above his nature: and the one is marvelled at as bestowing a kindness and giving great things and above the nature of him who obtains it; the other, obtaining the kindness and receiving from Him greater things than he is.<sup>450</sup>

Here we see Theodore's characteristic dualistic Christology with particular clarity. He interprets the use of Ps. 8 in Heb. 2 in terms of the Word visiting 'the man' Jesus in the event of the Incarnation, and describes this visitation in terms of participating in a nature greater than one's own. We have already seen that it is precisely in these terms that Cyril conceives of *our* divinization, distinguishing this sharply from the union of the Word with the Word's own flesh. Notably, Theodore understands *βραχὺ τι* (vv. 7, 9) as meaning 'a little lower', rather than 'for a little while', a reading which better fits the notion of 'the man', who is on a plane 'a little lower' than the angels, and who is visited by the Word from on high.

Theodore's interpretation of Heb. 2: 5 ff., as recorded here by Cyril, is confirmed by a selection from Theodore's *Hom. 8, On the*

<sup>449</sup> *In Heb. 2: 9* (Pusey, iii, 386–7); 'Fragments against Theodore', 352–3. Parvis, 'The Commentary on Hebrews', 416–18, traces the history of this latter fragment up to its inclusion at the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553).

<sup>450</sup> 'Fragments against Theodore', 353.

*Nicene Creed*.<sup>451</sup> Once again, Theodore applies Ps. 8 to the man Jesus who is visited and indwelt by the Word. But here we see more clearly the rationale for Theodore's dualistic Christology: the Word must remain apart from the sufferings of the man Jesus. Adopting the text of v. 9 which reads, 'apart from God (χωρὶς Θεοῦ) he tasted death for every man', rather than the more common attestation, 'by the grace of God (ὁπῶς χάριτι Θεοῦ) he tasted death for every man',<sup>452</sup> Theodore writes:

In this he shows that Divine nature willed that He [Jesus] should taste death for the benefit of every man, and also that the Godhead was separated from the one who was suffering in the trial of death, because it was impossible for Him [Jesus] to taste the trial of death if (the Godhead) were not cautiously remote from Him, but also near enough to do the needful and necessary things for the nature that was assumed by it. It was necessary for the one through whom and for whom everything was (done) to perfect with sufferings the source [i.e. Jesus] of the life of the many children whom he [Jesus] brought to His [i.e. God's] glory. He [God the Word] was not tried with the trial of death but he was near to him [Jesus] and doing the things that were congruous to His nature as the Maker who is the cause of everything, i.e., He brought him to perfection through sufferings and made him for ever immortal, impassible, incorruptible, and immutable for the salvation of the multitudes who would be receiving communion with him.<sup>453</sup>

In this grammatically complex comment, Theodore argues that, since the Godhead plainly cannot suffer, the Word had to remain 'cautiously remote' from the man Jesus, if Jesus was to suffer for the salvation of all, and yet at the same time be close enough to accomplish in Jesus the perfections of that salvation that only God can bring about. It is noteworthy that Theodore conceives of salvation as occurring through the sufferings of, and through communion with, the man Jesus, who is himself indwelt by the Word and perfected by the power of the Word.

Cyril, unsurprisingly, breathes the fire of indignation at Theodore's interpretation of this text, perceiving in it a form of adoptionism that divides the Word from 'the man' he deigns to

<sup>451</sup> *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Nicene Creed*, ed. and trans. A. Mingana, Woodbrooke Studies, 5 (Cambridge: Heffner & Sons, 1932), 82–92.

<sup>452</sup> See Mingana, *Commentary on the Nicene Creed*, 86–7 n. 6, for the significance of this reading of Heb. 2: 9 for the Christological controversies.

<sup>453</sup> *Hom. 8, Commentary on the Nicene Creed*, 87.

visit. As we saw in Chapter 4, Cyril himself interprets these verses in terms of the whole narrative of salvation from Adam to Christ. For Cyril, 'the man' of Ps. 8 refers, not to the man Jesus, but to Adam, and therefore to the whole human race. Originally given a place of honour and exaltation, the human race has fallen through the transgression of Adam and is restored only through the *kenosis* of the Word, who assumed our nature by becoming man, and then raised it up to the right hand of God. In Cyril's interpretation of Heb. 2: 9, Jesus (who *is* the Word incarnate) became lower than the angels 'for a little while' (*βραχύ τι*), so that he might restore and exalt our nature in himself. The man who is visited in vv. 6–8 is, for Cyril, not the man Jesus, but rather the whole human race; and the visitation is nothing other than the Word himself becoming a man and assuming our nature, which Cyril sees sketched out in vv. 14–15. It is by the sufferings of the Word made flesh, and by communion directly with him, that we attain to salvation and to the divine perfections intended for our nature.

We are able to see from these two texts the characteristic (and at points opposing) Christologies of Theodore and Cyril. Our primary concern here, however, is not Christology *per se*, but the implications of Christology for soteriology. What do the respective Christologies of Theodore and Cyril entail for their accounts of our sanctification and divinization? Before attempting an answer to this question, we will pursue two further lines of comparison: the indwelling of the Spirit and the nature of our sanctification in the present age.

## The Indwelling of the Spirit

Theodore's commentary on John 7: 37–9 opens on a point of agreement with Cyril's treatment. When Jesus says, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water' (v. 38), both writers insist that this should be understood as referring to the believer's heart.<sup>454</sup> After this basic agreement, however, the two commentators diverge. In a reading that Ferraro calls 'original',<sup>455</sup> Theodore assigns the citation-phrase, 'as the Scripture says', not to the text which follows, 'out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water', but to the preceding text, 'he who believes in me'. This is significant because Theodore then centres his interpretation of this passage

<sup>454</sup> *Comm. in Ia. 7: 37*, 115.

<sup>455</sup> Ferraro, *Lo Spirito Santo nel quarto Vangelo*, 80.

on belief in Christ through the medium of the Scriptures (citing John 5: 39), concluding that ‘everyone who follows the Scriptures and believes in me will be filled with grace’ (*Omnis qui sequitur Scripturas et credit in me, implebitur gratia*).<sup>456</sup> The reference to grace here is significant, as the remainder of Theodore's commentary is occupied with demonstrating the distinction between the person of the Spirit and the grace that he confers. Theodore explains that in the Scripture the term ‘Holy Spirit’ often designates, not ‘the person of the Holy Spirit and his nature’ (*personam Spiritus sancti eiusque naturam*), but ‘his operation and grace’ (*eius operationem eiusque gratiam*).<sup>457</sup> Theodore insists that the reference to the Holy Spirit here refers to the grace of the Spirit which the apostles were to receive, and which would then be transmitted to others.

It is on this very point that Durand identifies an important difference between Cyril and Theodore: while Cyril insists that Christ promises the actual indwelling of the Holy Spirit in John 7: 37–9, Theodore takes pains to explain that Christ's words refer, not to the actual indwelling of the Spirit in his own nature, but to the grace and working of the Spirit.<sup>458</sup> This reading is characteristic of Theodore's interpretation of the indwelling of the Spirit elsewhere. In *Hom. 10, On the Nicene Creed*, when explaining the article of the creed, ‘and in one Holy Spirit’, Theodore repeatedly speaks in terms of the grace of the Holy Spirit that is bestowed on the saints: ‘You will be receivers of no less a gift than the grace of the Holy Spirit.’<sup>459</sup> Commenting on John 15: 26, Theodore explains why he speaks in this manner:

Here also He [Christ] revealed in advance the gift of the grace of the Holy Spirit which was to be bestowed upon all the disciples after His ascension. In saying, ‘When the Paraclete is come, whom I will send unto you’, He refers to the grace of the Spirit which He was about to bestow on them. He was not going to send unto them the Divine nature of the Spirit which was everywhere, but He said this of the gift of the grace which was poured upon them...<sup>460</sup>

Theodore then follows this with an interpretation of John 7: 39:

<sup>456</sup> *Comm. in Ia. 7: 37*, 115.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>458</sup> *Dial. Trin.* vii. 278 n. Ferraro, *Lo Spirito Santo nel quarto Vangelo*, 81, also observes that the distinction between the nature and grace of the Spirit is characteristic of Theodore's *Commentary on John* throughout.

<sup>459</sup> *Commentary on the Nicene Creed*, 105.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.* 107–8.

He [the evangelist] explains here clearly that He was speaking of the gift of the Spirit. He did not speak of the person or of the nature of the Holy Spirit that they were not yet, when he said that Jesus was not yet glorified, because He [the Spirit] was eternally before all creation, but He said it of the gift of the Holy Spirit which after the ascension of our Lord into heaven was poured and seen on the blessed Apostles and on those who were with them.<sup>461</sup>

The fact that Theodore takes such pains to make the distinction between the person and the grace of the Spirit when explaining biblical references to the gift of the Spirit demonstrates how important this distinction is for his conception of our share in the Spirit, and so of our share in the divine life. In her study of the doctrine of grace in Theodore, Joanne McWilliam Dewart concludes that, 'it is in fact open to question whether Theodore understood the indwelling of the Spirit in at all the same sense that the other patristic writers did'.<sup>462</sup> Moreover, we can recognize a parallel between Theodore's description of the Incarnation and that of the indwelling of the Spirit: as the Word is cautiously remote from the sufferings of the man Jesus, so the person and nature of the Spirit is at one remove from the saints. For Theodore, the indwelling of the Word in the flesh is plainly different from the operation of the Spirit in the saints; yet his depiction of the two is analogous in that in both cases Theodore explains the scriptural testimony in a way that ensures that the divine nature is at one remove from what is human.

As we saw above, Cyril interprets John 7: 37–9 as the promise of the inhabitation of the Spirit himself in the saints. The 'narrative of the Spirit' from Adam to Christ, so central to Cyril's understanding of the divine economy, requires 'the complete and entire dwelling of the Holy Spirit in human beings'.<sup>463</sup> Cyril is insistent that our transformation is accomplished, not simply by a received grace from the Spirit, but by the actual indwelling of the Spirit himself.<sup>464</sup> It is at least possible that, by making this distinction so sharply in his pre-Nestorian trinitarian works, Cyril again has

<sup>461</sup> *Commentary on the Nicene Creed*, 108–9.

<sup>462</sup> *The Theology of Grace of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 146.

<sup>463</sup> *In Jo. 7: 39* (Pusey, i, 698).

<sup>464</sup> See especially *Dial. Trin.* vii. 638c–640a. In trying to capture Cyril's understanding of 'participation in the divine nature', Abramowski, 'The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia', 22, draws this conclusion: 'In μετοχή we do not merely experience a proof of grace, but in a fully literal sense obtain a share in the divine nature' (emphasis added). She rightly observes that Cyril means more by participation (μετοχή) than simply 'by grace alone' (χαριτι μόνον), because through participation in the Holy Spirit who comes to dwell in us we have real communion with the divine nature (see *In Jo. 1: 13*, Pusey, i, 136–7). But it is unclear just what she means by asserting that, for Cyril, we obtain a share in the divine nature, 'in a fully literal sense'.

Theodore directly in his sights and is already objecting to what he perceives to be an inadequate account of our share in the divine life through the Spirit.

## Sanctification through Baptism and Eucharist

Theodore's account of sanctification in the present age, which follows naturally from a discussion of the indwelling of the Spirit, is most fully sketched in his catechetical homilies on baptism and the Eucharist.<sup>465</sup> At first glance, Theodore presents to his readers a robust and realistic account of our baptismal regeneration, our share in the firstfruits of the Spirit, and our communion with Christ in the Eucharist. Employing the language of participation, he repeatedly speaks of our present share, through baptism and the Eucharist, in heavenly benefits. But on closer reading, Theodore appears to diminish the present reality of our sanctification through baptism and the Eucharist by locating the fruition of these sacraments in the age following the resurrection from the dead.

In *Hom. 14, On Baptism*, Theodore gives the following explanation to the catechumens:

You should now proceed towards baptism in which the symbols of this second birth are performed, because you will in reality receive the true second birth only after you have risen from the dead and obtained the favour to be in the state of which you were deprived by death...All these things will happen to you in reality at the time appointed for your birth at the resurrection; as to now you have for them the word of Christ our Lord, and in the expectation of them taking place you rightly receive their symbols and their signs through this awe-inspiring Sacrament, so that you may not question your participation in future things.<sup>466</sup>

In this description, baptism ushers in a new birth in symbol and sign, but the reality of that new birth awaits the resurrection. The

<sup>465</sup> *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, ed. and trans. A. Mingana, Woodbrooke Studies, 6 (Cambridge: Heffner & Sons, 1933).

<sup>466</sup> *Commentary on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, 49–50.

participation that baptism brings appears to be a participation in future things that are not yet a reality.

Further in the same homily, when commenting on the guarantee of the Spirit (2 Cor. 1: 22) and the firstfruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8: 23), Theodore moderates this conclusion:

[Paul] uses the words 'firstfruits of the Spirit which we have here' to imply that, when we shall dwell in the joy of the realities, we shall receive *all* the grace, and by the words 'we wait for the adoption of children, unto the redemption of our bodies', he shows that here we only receive the symbol of the adoption of children but that hereafter, having been born afresh, risen from the dead, become also immortal and incorruptible, and received complete abolition of pains from our bodies, we shall receive the real adoption...The power of holy baptism consists in this: it implants in you the hope of future benefits, enables you to participate in the things which we expect, and by means of the symbols and signs of the future good things, it informs you with the gift of the Holy Spirit, the firstfruits of whom you receive when you are baptised.<sup>467</sup>

Theodore clearly acknowledges in this text that we do indeed receive the firstfruits of the Spirit now in baptism, but the accent is again on future benefits and on the fullness of adoption in the resurrection.

Theodore's description of baptism as 'symbol', 'sign', and 'type' might lead us to conclude that for him baptism is merely an outward sign of a reality not yet granted and experienced; but this would be to misconstrue his meaning. As Abramowski rightly observes, for Theodore 'the type contains the reality it copies *because it participates in it*' (emphasis in original).<sup>468</sup> The question at issue, then, is the meaning of participation in Theodore's theology. At the close of *Hom. 14*, Theodore offers an analogy that enables us to grasp something of his understanding of the relation between present participation in future benefits and the full experience of those benefits in the resurrection. Comparing our spiritual rebirth to our natural birth, he posits a two-stage process. Building on notions of human generation current in his day, Theodore says that 'we are first born of the male in the form of human semen, which has not a single vestige of human form'. We are then born of the female, according to laws formulated by God, in full and

<sup>467</sup> Ibid. 53–4.

<sup>468</sup> 'The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia', 13.

proper human form. Theodore compares this twofold natural birth to our spiritual regeneration:

It is in this same way that we are also born, first in the form of semen through baptism, before we are born of the resurrection, and we have taken shape in the immortal nature into which we expect to be changed, but when by faith and hope in the future things we have been formed and fashioned into the life of Christ and remained till the time of the resurrection, then we shall receive according to the decree of God, a second birth from dust, and assume an immortal and incorruptible nature...<sup>469</sup>

From this analogy, we may conclude that in Theodore's view there is a real rebirth in baptism, but it is one in seed, a rebirth in faith and hope (as he calls it) that will only yield the true fruits of the new birth at the resurrection.

We see in Theodore's catechesis on the Eucharist that he understands our participation in the Eucharist in the same terms as he does our participation in baptism. Comparing the two, he writes:

And as the real new birth is the one which we expect through the resurrection, and we nevertheless perform this new birth symbolically and sacramentally through baptism, so also the real food of immortality is that which we hope to receive truly in heaven by the grace of the Holy Spirit, but now we symbolically eat the immortal food which is given to us by the grace of the Holy Spirit, whether in symbols or through symbols.<sup>470</sup>

Theodore appears to hold a realistic account of the change of the bread and wine into the very body and blood of Christ through the power of the Spirit, and he speaks of a genuine participation in Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist. Once again, however, the fruits of this participation are largely reserved for the future:

[Christ] firstly in the likeness of the love of a carnal mother, strove to feed us from His body, and secondly placed before us the elements of bread and cup which are His body and His blood through which we eat the food of immortality, and through which the grace of the Holy Spirit flows unto us and feeds us into an immortal and incorruptible existence, by hope; and through these leads us steadfastly and, in a way that no one can describe, unto the participation in the future benefits, when we shall

<sup>469</sup> 'The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia', 69.

<sup>470</sup> *Hom. 15, Commentary on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, 82.



really feed ourselves from the grace of the Holy Spirit, without signs and symbols, and shall become completely immortal, incorruptible, and unchangeable by nature.<sup>471</sup>

The backdrop to Theodore's account of baptism and the Eucharist is what Norris calls Theodore's 'doctrine of the two ages'.<sup>472</sup> The present age is that of mutability, the future age of immutability, with the general resurrection being the temporal divide between the two. This present age is marked strongly by corruption, sin, and mutability, yet it is also the age in which human beings grow through free choice into moral obedience. The future age is not yet a reality, except in the person of Christ who has been raised from the dead and now lives an incorruptible and immortal life.

This sharp division between the two ages informs—and in my view to some extent distorts—Theodore's interpretation of certain New Testament texts which speak about our *present* possession of new life in Christ. For instance, when commenting on 2 Cor. 5: 17, 'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come'—a key text for Cyril's proclamation of our present possession of new life—Theodore puts off the possession of this new life until the resurrection:

Death and corruption have ceased, passions and mutability have passed away, and the life of the new creature has been made manifest, a life which we hope to reach after our resurrection from the dead. At the resurrection from the dead He will make us new instead of old, and incorruptible and immortal instead of corruptible and mortal.<sup>473</sup>

In context, 2 Cor. 5: 17 describes the new life which has already come to those who are in Christ. Theodore, defining this new life in terms of incorruption, impassibility, and immutability, can apply the text only to Christ himself in reality; for the saints, the real possession of this life is put off until the resurrection. We can see the same procedure in Theodore's handling of Eph. 2: 5–7, which speaks of our being raised up with Christ and sitting with him (present tense) at the right hand of the Father:

Indeed, after the blessed Paul had said, 'You were dead in your trespasses and your sins and He quickened you in Christ', he added: 'You are

<sup>471</sup> *Hom. 16, Commentary on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, 112.

<sup>472</sup> *Manhood in Christ*, 160–72.

<sup>473</sup> *Hom. 1, Commentary on the Nicene Creed*, 19.

saved. And He has raised you up and made you sit together in heaven in Jesus Christ' in order to show us the sublimity of the communion *that we shall have* with Him.<sup>474</sup>

Given this strongly future eschatology, how shall we estimate Theodore's account of sanctification in this present age? What benefits accrue to the saints in the present? McWilliam Dewart concludes that, for Theodore, baptism results in the actual forgiveness of our sins, and causes the fruit of charity to dwell in us.<sup>475</sup> Throughout his catechetical homilies, Theodore expresses the expectation that, through the grace actually conferred in baptism, we will be able to begin to live a new life in Christ and to grow in virtue.<sup>476</sup> Yet for all this, our participation in new birth and new life is fundamentally a participation in hope. In his study of Theodore's sacramental theology, Enrico Mazza concludes: 'The gift of life thus belongs essentially to the heavenly phase of redemption. It follows that for Theodore, redemption is essentially eschatological.'<sup>477</sup> He continues:

The sacrament can only give the hope of and participation in future gifts, not the gifts themselves, which continue to be future. The sacraments are 'figures and mysteries' of those gifts; they give only their firstfruits. It follows that the sacraments give salvation only in a 'rough draft', to use Theodore's term. Salvation in the full sense of the word, that is, salvation in more than a rough draft, will be attained only in the last times through the resurrection.<sup>478</sup>

McWilliam Dewart concludes her study of Theodore on a similar note:

For Theodore the climaxing grace is eschatological. It would be hard to overstress the totally future character of Theodore's understanding of the real society of man with God. Only in the future will immortality and immutability be received in actuality...There is no present 'other' life

<sup>474</sup> *Hom. 7, Commentary on the Nicene Creed*, 78 (emphasis added).

<sup>475</sup> McWilliam Dewart, *The Theology of Grace of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 111.

<sup>476</sup> Cf. Frederick G. McLeod, 'The Christological Ramifications of Theodore of Mopsuestia's Understanding of Baptism and Eucharist', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 10 (2002), 52.

<sup>477</sup> *Mystagogy: A Theology of Liturgy in the Patristic Age*, trans. Matthew O'Connell (New York: Pueblo, 1989), 73.

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.* 96.

than that which exists in *hope* and *figure* through the Church and sacraments.<sup>479</sup>

In Theodore's account, the 'real society of man with God' is at least to a great extent postponed. In this mutable and corruptible age, our share in the divine benefits is largely a participation in hope. Once again, we witness in Theodore the tendency to put the divine at one remove—this time a temporal remove—from what is human and changing.

## Conclusions

We are now in a position to offer a summary of Theodore in comparison with Cyril by drawing together the threads of this brief study. As noted above, one chief consequence of Theodore's Christology is a distinct human subject in Christ. Due to his view of the Incarnation as indwelling, the 'man assumed' has a distinct subjectivity and role in salvation. It is the 'man assumed' who properly suffers for our salvation—albeit in significant conjunction with the Word—and it is through our communion with the 'man assumed' that we receive salvation. As Norris emphasizes, our sonship does not consist in a participation in the divine nature, but in a participation in the assumed, glorified humanity of the Son: 'Believers receive fellowship and communion with God their Creator through assimilation in baptism to the glorified humanity of Christ.'<sup>480</sup> Christ obtains his unique sonship through a union of 'good pleasure' with the Word; we obtain our sonship by communion with the humanity of Christ. Our contact with the divine nature, on this account, is indirect, mediated by the glorified humanity of Christ who is himself related to the Word only through a unique union of the will.

Throughout his biblical commentaries and catechetical homilies, Theodore presents the Spirit as the primary agent effecting our communion with Christ. Yet, as we have seen, he maintains a cautious distance between the person of the Holy Spirit and the

<sup>479</sup> McWilliam Dewart, *The Theology of Grace of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 152. But see Abramowski, 'The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia', 15–16, who argues that Theodore's notion of participation does entail present possession of the reality of salvation. McLeod, 'Christological Ramifications', 37–75, agrees with Abramowski in principle, but modifies her conclusions and offers an intermediate position between the two views.

<sup>480</sup> *Manhood in Christ*, 170. McLeod, 'Christological Ramifications', 69, writes: 'In fact, Christ's body is the sacrament par excellence [for Theodore].'

human race, by carefully defining the indwelling of the Spirit in terms of operation and grace. Our sanctification is accomplished, not by the divine indwelling through the Spirit himself, but through the operation of the Spirit acting upon our nature. Baptism and Eucharist function as the primary means of our union with Christ through the activity of the Spirit, but Theodore consistently reminds us that the fruits of these sacraments are largely reserved for the future age of the resurrection.

Consequently, as many commentators have noted, we cannot speak of 'salvation as divinization' in Theodore. According to Norris, Theodore does not take the goal of redemption to be the divinization of man, but rather a return to humanity's true obedience to God. The goal is the acquisition of immortality and sinlessness grounded in a free, rational obedience to God.<sup>481</sup> This is precisely what Christ accomplished in his human life, through his union with the Word, and what we are called to accomplish through the grace of our union with Christ in the Spirit. According to Grillmeier, 'The idea that comes into play here is not so much that of divinization as the idea of "conjunction", *coniunctio*, and moral obedience, always with reference to Christ.'<sup>482</sup> Even when describing our heavenly existence where the full reality of our salvation will be accomplished, Theodore refrains from using language that would denote or even imply a direct participation in divine life. It is unsurprising that Theodore makes no use of 2 Pet. 1: 4, 'partakers of the divine nature', in his estimation of the goal of salvation: he and the Antiochene tradition more widely did not accept 2 Peter as part of the canon of the New Testament.<sup>483</sup>

The characteristic feature of Theodore's account of Christ, of the gift of the Spirit, and of our sanctification, is the 'cautious remoteness' of the divine from the human. The dominant note sounded in Theodore's theology is the careful distance he puts between the human and the divine; it is a consistent and peculiar feature that runs through his theology. It is evident that Theodore

<sup>481</sup> Ibid. 190.

<sup>482</sup> *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 341. Nonna Verna Harrison, 'Women, Human Identity, and the Image of God: Antiochene Interpretations', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 9 (2001), 222, suggests that Theodore redefines divinization, not as participation in the divine nature in the traditional sense, but as 'sinlessness and immortality in the age to come'. Cf. McLeod, 'Christological Ramifications', 66.

<sup>483</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 224.

displays certain typical Antiochene approaches in theology and exegesis, and that he develops a Christology which he received from his teacher, Diodore. Yet it is none the less the case that his approach to the mystery of Christ shows a peculiar and consistent tendency—even in comparison with other Antiochenes—to place the divine and human spheres at one remove from each other. It is noteworthy that his friend and fellow pupil, John Chrysostom, does not manifest this tendency in anything like the same degree. Here I take issue with Rowan Greer's influential thesis that Theodore's theology 'springs from the very text of the Scriptures'.<sup>484</sup> It seems to me, rather, that Theodore's pre-commitment to a view of how the human and divine must interact impels him at important points to alter and to distort the plain sense of the Scripture. Assessing Theodore's *Commentary on John*, Wiles concludes that

[Theodore's] commentary as a whole is a disappointing book. He has attempted to expound the meaning of the Gospel too narrowly within the confines of his own way of thought. To borrow a phrase from Origen, it is as if he has never lain upon the Evangelist's breast; his mind has never found spiritual communion with the mind of St. John, and therefore he cannot reveal the Gospel's most precious secrets to us. His work never does full justice to the whole range and depth of the theological meaning of the gospel.<sup>485</sup>

The conclusion I offer here, without calling into question Theodore's many contributions to theology and catechetical practice, is that Theodore's account of Christ—and our share in him through the Spirit—is hobbled by his commitment to shield the divine from the taint of mutable humanity.<sup>486</sup>

The contrast with Cyril's narrative of divine life is evident. Where Theodore distinguishes the Word from the man assumed, Cyril emphasizes the single subject in Christ: it is the Word himself

<sup>484</sup> *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 11.

<sup>485</sup> *The Spiritual Gospel*, 159. In this regard, I follow O'Keefe, 'Impassible Suffering? Divine Passion in Fifth-Century Christology', in his view that the driving force behind the Antiochene Christology of Theodore, Nestorius, and Theodoret was the desire to preserve the impassibility of God.

<sup>486</sup> Harrison, 'Women, Human Identity, and the Image of God', 222, criticizes Greer for his approval of Theodore's rejection of the idea of salvation as divinization: 'One could equally suggest that the impenetrable wall between divine and human is the foundational problem with Theodore's theology. One of the primary consequences of such a wall is to make any genuine divinization impossible.' Cf. McLeod, 'Christological Ramifications', 73.

who has become man, and who suffers and dies for us as man. The model of indwelling that Theodore uses to describe the Incarnation is the model Cyril uses to describe *our* share in the divine life. Where Theodore repeatedly teaches that it is the grace of operation, not the person or nature of the Spirit who inhabits the saints, Cyril insists that it is the Holy Spirit himself who dwells in us as the source of all grace and working. Where Theodore postpones to a large extent the fruits of our new birth in Christ and communion with him, Cyril accents the present possession of our new birth and communion through baptism and the Eucharist. Where Theodore views the final goal of human salvation as an immortal, sinless existence lived in free obedience to God, Cyril speaks in terms of a participation in the divine life as the goal of our salvation, and as the ground for our incorruptible and sinless existence in heaven. The very point of Cyril's narrative of divine life is to show how we are inserted into the communion of divine life through the mediation of the Word incarnate and the gift of the indwelling Spirit.

Standing within the confines of a shared Nicene reading of biblical revelation, Theodore and Cyril share in common many elements of faith and practice; but in terms of their particular accounts of the divinely instituted means and goal of our salvation, they diverge significantly. If indeed it is the case that Cyril was aware of—and had rejected—Theodore's account of Christ and his description of the nature and goal of our salvation before Nestorius's elevation as bishop of Constantinople, then the sharpness and vehemence of Cyril's reaction to Nestorius becomes more comprehensible. Whatever role political rivalry may have played, the decisive issues in the Nestorian controversy were theological in nature.

## Augustine of Hippo

There is curiously little written about the relationship between Cyril and Augustine. Given the eighteen-year overlap of their tenure as bishops (from Cyril's accession in 412 until Augustine's death in 430), and given the towering influence each had on the church in his respective region, it is striking that so little attention has been given to a comparison of the men and their thought.

Two reasons for this scarcity of comparison come immediately to mind. First, neither one knew the other's language well, and so neither read the other at any length (if at all). And because by the fifth century the linguistic division between East and West was increasing, the writings of each one remained largely within the orbit of his own language area, Augustine in the Latin West and Cyril in the Greek East. Secondly, there would appear to be very little overlap between their respective theological concerns and ecclesiastical controversies. Augustine's preoccupations with Manicheanism, Donatism, and Pelagianism were largely Western concerns; by the time Cyril's controversy with Nestorius erupted, Augustine was near his death.

We now have evidence, however, that there was more intercourse between Cyril and Augustine than was previously known. Peter Brown, in a new edition of his biography of Augustine, recognizes this shift in our knowledge: 'The reticence with which [Augustine] veiled disagreements with fellow-Catholics has often misled us into speaking of Augustine's "splendid isolation" from the world of Greek Christianity. Yet the Divjak letters show Augustine in extensive contact with eastern bishops...'<sup>487</sup> In this set of newly discovered letters of Augustine, published by Johannes Divjak in 1981,<sup>488</sup> we find one (*Letter 4*<sup>\*</sup>) addressed to Cyril. According to Gerald Bonner's reconstruction, the letter was written by Augustine between 417 and 421 in order to warn Cyril of possible Latin-speaking Pelagian sympathizers who had taken refuge in Alexandria.<sup>489</sup> In the letter, Augustine acknowledges that it was Cyril himself who sent the *Acta* of the Synod of Diospolis to him in c. 416, presumably upon Augustine's request. These *Acta*, which vindicated Pelagius in the eyes of the bishops present at Diospolis, were then the basis for Augustine's anti-Pelagian work, *De Gestis Pelagii*. Bonner suggests as a probable hypothesis that,

<sup>487</sup> *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd edn. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 498.

<sup>488</sup> *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera: Epistulae ex duobus codicibus nuper in lucem prolatae*, CSEL 88 (1981).

<sup>489</sup> 'Some Remarks on Letters 4<sup>\*</sup> and 6<sup>\*</sup>', in J. Divjak (ed.), *Les Lettres de saint Augustin* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1983), 155–64. Bonner initially opts for 417 as the probable date of the letter, but acknowledges the evidence for a later dating to 420–1. Robert B. Eno, *St. Augustine: Letters*, vi (1<sup>\*</sup>–29<sup>\*</sup>), trans. Robert B. Eno, FC 81 (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1989), 38–40, cites the year 417 as the more probable date for the publication of this letter.

along with *Letter 4*\*, Augustine also sent a copy of *De Gestis Pelagii* to Cyril, who then had it translated into Greek, thus providing the Greek version of this work that Photius had in his possession four centuries later.<sup>490</sup>

The discovery of *Letter 4*\* not only shows Cyril to have been Augustine's primary agent in the East, but also casts fresh light on Cyril's contact with the Pelagian controversy. Cyril may not have become keenly interested or involved in the controversy itself,<sup>491</sup> but he plainly had first-hand information about it from Augustine, and may have read Augustine's anti-Pelagian work, *De Gestis Pelagii*. This discovery also indicates, as Bonner observes, that Cyril's later hostility to Pelagianism at the Council of Ephesus in 431 was not rooted simply in hostility to Nestorius; he had long before been warned about Pelagian teaching by Augustine himself.<sup>492</sup> And it is at least possible that Cyril's early contact with the Pelagian controversy, occurring in the initial years of his episcopal career, may have influenced his teaching on sin and the possibility of moral perfection in this life, though this is probably impossible to establish.

Irrespective of the extent of personal contact and possible influence between Cyril and Augustine, the comparison of their thought has potentially significant consequences both for the history of Christian doctrine and for a better understanding of the relationship between Eastern and Western theology—and it is a task that remains largely undone. I propose to offer here only a brief and preliminary study of one aspect of this comparative work, namely, the relationship between their theologies of sanctification and divinization.

The life of Augustine is well known, and for our purposes only a summary sketch is required. Born at Thagaste in North Africa in 354 of a Christian mother and a non-Christian father, Augustine initially followed a path, described by his own hand in the *Confessions*, first of youthful pleasure-seeking and then of philosophical searching. Rejecting the Christian faith in which he was raised, he

<sup>490</sup> Bonner, 'Some Remarks on Letters 4 and 6', 158, points to 'the efficient translation service' that was available to Cyril in Alexandria in support of this hypothesis.

<sup>491</sup> Wickham, 'Pelagianism in the East', 203–5, proposes that Cyril declined to get very involved in the Pelagian affair as Augustine had encouraged him to do in *Letter 4*\*, yet he allows that Cyril was 'well acquainted with the Pelagian question', and that he sincerely condemned several of its key tenets.

<sup>492</sup> Bonner, 'Some Remarks on Letters 4 and 6', 156.



attached himself for a time to the Manicheans (374–83), but eventually became dissatisfied with a Manichean account of the world. He came to Milan via Rome in order to take up a post as professor of rhetoric (384), and there by stages took interest in Christianity, in large part through the preaching of Ambrose, bishop of Milan. Following a crisis that led to his conversion and his acceptance of the Christian faith (386), he submitted to instruction and baptism by Ambrose in 387. After three years of monastic retreat near his home in Thagaste, he reluctantly consented to be ordained presbyter in the city of Hippo in 391. He became sole bishop of that city in 396 (having been ordained as coadjutor bishop with Valerius in 395), and remained in that role for thirty-five years until his death in 430.

For this study I will give special attention to Augustine's *Tractates on John*,<sup>493</sup> as these provide an obvious parallel to Cyril's *Commentary on John*, the primary source for our study of Cyril. The comparison will proceed along three lines. First, I will attempt to summarize the main features of Augustine's Christology as a foundation for our comparison. Secondly, I will examine Augustine's understanding of the Incarnate Word as the mediator of our participation in the divine life, and so of our divinization. Finally, I will consider the role of the Holy Spirit and the sacraments of baptism and eucharist in the appropriation of our share in the divine nature. In the end, we will find striking similarities between Cyril and Augustine, both in their understanding of the Incarnation of the Word and in their account of our participation in the divine nature. A notable difference of emphasis will appear, however, with respect to Augustine's eschatological orientation. For Augustine, our share in divine life, though available to us now, is pre-eminently a heavenly reality.

<sup>493</sup> Translations of *Tractates* 1–111 are from *St. Augustine: Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 4 vols., trans. John W. Rettig, FC 78 (1988), 79 (1988), 88 (1993), 90 (1994) (Washington: Catholic University of America Press); translations of *Tractates* 112–24 are from *Augustine: Homilies on the Gospel of John*, trans. John Gibb, NPNE, 1st ser., vii. 416–52. Citations of the Latin text are from *Sancti Aurelii Augustini: In Iobannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV*, CSEL 36 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954). The dating of the *Tractates* is a matter of some dispute, but there is general agreement on a division into two distinct groupings: the first group, 1–54, makes regular reference to the Donatists, and is dated either c. 405–8 or c. 411–14; the second group, 55–124, shows a Pelagian backdrop, and is dated c. 416–18. See Rettig, *Tractates on the Gospel of John: 1–10*, FC 78 (1988), 23–31, for a summary of the scholarly debate over the date of the *Tractates*.

## Augustine's Christology

To the reader schooled in thinking about Augustine only in terms of his role as controversialist—with the Manicheans, Donatists, and Pelagians—his consistent attention to the doctrine of the Word made flesh is indeed surprising. Because Augustine never engaged in a specifically Christological controversy, it is all too easy, by focusing on Augustine the controversialist, to miss the importance of the Incarnation in his thought.<sup>494</sup> The following selections from the *Tractates on John*, though they cannot provide a thoroughgoing account of Augustine's Christology, illustrate the centrality of the Incarnation for his thought.

In *Trac.* 21. 7 (on John 5: 20–3), Augustine offers us a description of the Incarnation that establishes the identity between the eternal Word and Christ:

For he descended to us; and he, who a little before was speaking as God, has begun to speak as man. Nevertheless, he who [is] God is man because God was made man, but he was made what he was not without losing what he was. Therefore, man was added to God that he who was God might be man, not that he might now be man and not be God.<sup>495</sup> (Rettig, ii. 185)

A narrative view of the Incarnation characterizes this text: the Word who was (and remains) God became man, and now *is* man, without ceasing to be God. This single identity in Christ is further specified and biblically grounded in *Trac.* 23. 6 (on John 5: 19–40). Here we are told how Christ is both Word and flesh at once:

But I was saying that the Word is Christ, and the Word of God is Christ, and God the Word is Christ. But not only is the Word Christ, but because 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1: 14), therefore both the Word and the flesh are Christ. For although 'he was in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God' (Phil.

<sup>494</sup> For the relative inattention paid to Augustine's Christology by scholars of the history of Christian doctrine, see Basil Studer, *The Grace of Christ and the Grace of God in Augustine of Hippo*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1997), 9–13; Hubertus R. Drobner, 'Outlines of the Christology of St. Augustine', *Melita Theologica*, 40 (1989), 45; Anders Tune, 'Immutable, Saving God: The Import of the Doctrine of Divine Immutability for Soteriology in Augustine's Theology', Ph.D. thesis (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1994), 75, 257. Tune traces Augustine's soteriology from his early period (385–401) to his middle (402–20) and late periods (420–30), and concludes that, though the Incarnation was always central to Augustine's thought, it gradually moved more towards the centre of his soteriology through his study of the Scriptures.

<sup>495</sup> Cf. *Trac.* 8. 3; 28. 1; *Ep.* 137.

2: 6). And what about us down at the bottom who, being weak and crawling on the ground, were unable to reach God, were we to be left behind? Far from it. 'He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant' (Phil. 2: 7). Not consequently losing the form of God. So he who was God became man, by receiving what he was not, not by losing what he was; so God became man. (Rettig, ii. 217–28)

Augustine combines John 1: 14 and Phil. 2: 6–7—notably Cyril's two favourite Christological texts—to depict the narrative descent of the Word in the Incarnation.<sup>496</sup> Christ is the Word, but for our sake he also became flesh (that is, man), without renouncing his divinity. The parallel to Cyril's use of these very texts to portray the narrative of the Word made flesh is telling. A new feature, though, emerges in the text which immediately follows: the Incarnation is also the means by which we attain to salvation:

There you have something in view of your weakness; there you have something else in view of your perfection. Let Christ raise you up through the fact that he is man, let him lead you through the fact that he is God-man; let him bring you to that which is God. And this is the whole preaching and dispensation through Christ, brothers, and there is no other, that souls may rise and bodies may rise. Both of course were dead, the body from infirmity, the soul from wickedness. Because both were dead, let both rise. (Rettig, ii. 218)

Though his thought is not developed here, Augustine evidently sees the constitution of Christ as God and man at once as the very means and end of our salvation.<sup>497</sup> As man, he meets us in our humanity and draws us up; as God-man, he leads us from our humanity to his divinity; as God, he is himself the end and source of our salvation—a salvation that will include both body and soul. In the next section we will explore in greater detail this relationship between the Incarnation and our divinization in Augustine's thought.

Three other features of Augustine's Christology demand our notice. First of all, he strongly affirms the *communicatio idiomatum*, the application of divine predicates to Christ as man, and the application of human predicates to Christ as God.<sup>498</sup> In his

<sup>496</sup> For Augustine's use of John 1 and Phil. 2, either singly or in combination, to describe the Incarnation, see *Trac.* 15. 6; 18. 2; 40. 4; 49. 18; 78. 1–2; *Ep.* 140. 4. Cf. Studer, *The Grace of Christ*, 32, 41.

<sup>497</sup> Bonner, 'Christ, God and Man, in the Thought of St. Augustine', *Angelicum*, 61 (1984), 280–1.

<sup>498</sup> Studer, *The Grace of Christ*, 11, 42.

commentary on John 6: 62, 'Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?', Augustine draws on John 3: 13, 'No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven,' to demonstrate that, even while on earth, the Son of Man (that is, Christ as man) rightly says that he is in heaven:

Where does this lead except that we understand...that Christ, God and man, is one person, not two (*unam personam esse Christum Deum et hominem, non duas*), so that our faith is only a Trinity and not a Quaternity? Therefore Christ is one, the Word, soul and flesh, one Christ; the Son of God and the Son of Man, one Christ. The Son of God always, the Son of Man in time, nevertheless, one Christ according to the unity of person (*unitatem personae*). He was in heaven when he was speaking on earth. So the Son of Man was in heaven as the Son of God was on earth; the Son of God was on earth in the flesh he had taken, the Son of Man in heaven in the unity of Person. (*Trac.* 27. 4, Rettig, ii. 279–80)

Theodore, as we have seen, unswervingly distinguishes the Son of God and son of man, and is reluctant to apply the attributes of the one to the other. Augustine, by identifying the Son of God with the son of man, and by glorying in the exchange of attributes between the two, agrees with Cyril's conception of the Incarnation.<sup>499</sup> Moreover, he makes an assertion about the birth of the Son of God from Mary that is equivalent to the *Theotokos* (θεοτόκος), so beloved of Cyril: 'How could we confess in the rule of faith that we believe in the Son of God who was born of the virgin Mary, if it wasn't the Son of God but the son of man who was born of the virgin Mary?'<sup>500</sup> Augustine, like Cyril and in contrast to Theodore, also teaches that it was not possible for Christ to sin.<sup>501</sup>

A second important feature of Augustine's Christology is his use of the soul–body analogy to describe the Incarnation. In *Trac.* 47. 12 (on John 10: 14–21), Augustine probes the meaning of Christ's saying, 'I lay down my life', and he asks whether these words have reference to the flesh of Christ, to the soul of Christ, or to the Word himself. It pertains to all three, he answers, yet there are not

<sup>499</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 187. 9, *St. Augustine: Letters*, iv, trans. Wilfrid Parsons, *FC* 30 (New York: Fathers of the Church Inc., 1955), 228: 'Thus the Son of man as God was in heaven and the Son of God as man was crucified on earth...it could rightly be said that the Lord of glory was crucified on earth...'

<sup>500</sup> *Serm.* 186. 1, *Sermons*, vi, trans. Edmund Hill (New York: New City Press, 1995), 25.

<sup>501</sup> *Trac.* 52. 3; 60. 2. Cf. Tune, 'Immutable, Saving God', 217.

three Christs but only one. To explain how this is so, he makes use of the soul–body relationship.

Examine the human being, and from yourself make a step to those things which are above you, and if these things are not yet understandable, at least they ought to be believed. For as one human being is soul and body, so one Christ is the Word and a human being (*Verbum et homo*). See and understand what I have said. Soul and body are two things, but there is one human being; the Word and the human being are two things, but there is one Christ.<sup>502</sup> (Rettig, iii, 225)

It is important to recognize that Augustine uses the soul–body relationship as Cyril does, as an analogical description, not as a model for how the word and the flesh are joined. It is an analogy for how two things can be one, and does not imply that the Word takes the place of the soul in Christ.<sup>503</sup> Augustine—in this same homily—explicitly rejects the teaching of the Apollinarians who deny a rational soul in Christ (*Trac.* 47. 9, Rettig, iii. 220–2). Christ is Word and a complete man consisting of both soul and body.<sup>504</sup>

A third notable feature of Augustine's Christology concerns the terminology he employs to describe the Incarnate Christ. For Augustine it is essential to Catholic faith to hold that Christ is both God and man; to deny either truth is to deny our salvation:

If you have said that Christ is God only, you deny the medicine by which you have been healed; if you have said that Christ is man only, you deny the power by which you have been created. Therefore hold each...believe each, profess each faithfully. Both Christ is God, and Christ is man.<sup>505</sup> (*Trac.* 36. 2, Rettig, iii. 82–3)

In the *Tractates*, Augustine normally uses the terms 'God' and 'man' to describe this twofold reality in the one Christ. But on one occasion at least, he speaks of the 'one Lord Jesus Christ', both 'Son of God and Son of Man', as 'one person consisting of

<sup>502</sup> Cf. *Trac.* 78. 3; *Ep.* 187. 8; *Serm.* 186.1. See especially *Ep.* 137 for Augustine's use of the soul–body analogy to depict how God and man have come together in the one person of Christ.

<sup>503</sup> Weinandy, 'Cyril and the Mystery of the Incarnation', 33, shows how Cyril uses the soul–body relationship as an analogical description of the Incarnation, not as a model for the Incarnation.

<sup>504</sup> Cf. *Trac.* 49. 18, where Augustine distinguishes the way in which the Word assumed the whole nature of man (John 1: 14) from the way in which the Word enlightens the souls of the saints.

<sup>505</sup> Cf. *Trac.* 37. 10; 66. 2; *Serm.* 341. 1–4.

two substances, divine and human' (*personam unam ex duabus substantiis divina humanaque constantem*) (*Trac.* 99. 1, Rettig, iv. 219).<sup>506</sup> Regarding Augustine's use of the term 'person', Grillmeier observes that, 'it is clear that for Augustine the unity of person in Christ was not merely the result of a synthesis of two natures. It is rather the pre-existent person of the Word who is the focal point of this unity and who takes up the human nature into the unity of his person.'<sup>507</sup> The use of the term 'substance' to describe what is human and divine in Christ reflects the Latin tradition Augustine inherited.<sup>508</sup>

What conclusions can we draw from this brief sketch of Augustine's Christology? On the one hand, Augustine's conception of the Incarnation is very much akin to Cyril's: he adopts from John 1 and Phil. 2 a narrative view of the Word made flesh; he maintains that the Word remains God even as he becomes what he was not, namely man; he strongly embraces the *communicatio idiomatum* as a consequence of the Incarnation; and he employs the soul-body analogy as a description of the Incarnation while upholding the full humanity of the Word. In short, like Cyril he strongly and repeatedly upholds the identification of Christ with the eternal Word.

On the other hand, Augustine's use of terms differs from Cyril's. Where Cyril prefers to speak of the 'one incarnate nature' (*φύσις*) of the Word' (or the 'one nature of the Word incarnate'), Augustine typically speaks of the one person (*persona*) of the Word made flesh. Cyril rejects the use of the term *hypostasis*, and only reluctantly allows the use of the term 'nature' (*φύσις*), to denote Christ's humanity and divinity respectively; Augustine readily

<sup>506</sup> For the use of 'two substances' language in Augustine's depiction of Christ, see *Serm.* 130. 3 and *De Trin.* 13. 17. 22; for the use of 'two natures' language, see *Ench.* 12. 38, *Serm.* 294. 9, and *Ep.* 140. 10. See Studer, *The Grace of Christ*, 32, for Augustine's technical use of the language of two substances or two natures in Christ.

<sup>507</sup> *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 408. Studer, *The Grace of Christ*, agrees that for Augustine the oneness in Christ 'has its basis in the eternal sonship of Christ' (p. 43), but he judges that the expression, 'the one person of Christ' describes, not the starting point of the Incarnation, but its result (p. 34). For a detailed study of the formula 'one person' (*una persona*) in Augustine's Christology, see Drobner, 'Outlines of the Christology of St. Augustine', 52–8, 143–54.

<sup>508</sup> The language of two substances (*substantiae*) in one person (*persona*) is found already in Tertullian (*Adv. Prax.* 27). For the development of Christological terminology in the Western tradition prior to Augustine, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 117–33, 392–413; and Drobner, 'Outlines of the Christology of St. Augustine', 53–63.

employs the term ‘substance’ (*substantia*) for the same designation. These findings oblige us to draw one further conclusion: the use of differing sets of terms does not necessarily indicate differing conceptions of the Incarnation. To put it the other way round, our investigation shows that two very similar conceptions of the Incarnation can be expressed in different terms.

## Incarnation to Divinization: Participation in the Divine Nature

Augustine, like Cyril, employs the technical terminology of divinization, but (also like Cyril) does so only sparingly.<sup>509</sup> More commonly, he speaks about our ‘becoming gods’ and our new birth from God with reference to the Incarnation. In the following text from *Trac.* 2. 15 (on John 1: 6–14), Augustine outlines how the Incarnation provides the basis for our new birth in God:

But that men might be born of God, God was first born from among men. For Christ is God, and Christ was born from among men...He was born of God, that we might be made through him; and he was born of a woman, that we might be remade through him. Do not wonder, then, O man, that you are made a son through grace, that you are born of God according to his Word. The Word himself wished first to be born of man, that you might be born safely of God... (Rettig, i. 72–3)

Augustine skilfully works the theme of birth and rebirth to show that the Incarnation—the birth of the Word from a woman—is ordered to our new birth in that same Word. Just as we were first made through the Word in Creation, so through the Word made flesh we are remade children of God through grace.<sup>510</sup>

Augustine often links the Incarnation and our divinization by means of various ‘formulae of exchange’. He adopts a way of speaking—as the following texts illustrate—that harks back to Irenaeus and Athanasius, and that has long been identified as the classical Greek view of salvation as divinization: (1) ‘God wanted to be the Son of Man and he wanted men to be the sons of God’ (*Deus voluit esse filius hominis, et hominis voluit esse filius Dei*);<sup>511</sup>

<sup>509</sup> Bonner, ‘Augustine’s Conception of Deification’, *JTSNS* 37 (1986), locates fifteen references in Augustine’s corpus where forms of *deificari/deificatus* are used, eight of which are relevant to the theology of divinization. I am indebted to Bonner’s study both for locating the key texts on divinization and for his concise commentary upon them.

<sup>510</sup> For the identification in Augustine between divinization and ‘sonship by adoption’ (*uiiothesia*), see Bonner, ‘Augustine’s Conception of Deification’, 378.

<sup>511</sup> *Trac.* 12. 8 (Rettig, ii. 36).

(2) 'and the Son of God become the Son of man that he might make the sons of men the sons of God' (*et Filius Dei, factus hominis filius, ut hominem filios faceret filios Dei*);<sup>512</sup> (3) 'we cannot take his divinity if he himself did not take our mortality' (*capere non possumus divinitatem ipsius, si non caperet ipse mortalitatem nostram*).<sup>513</sup> Variations on these formulae of exchange can be found here and there in Augustine's corpus.<sup>514</sup> Regarding Augustine's use of them, Bonner concludes: 'Whether Augustine had actually read either Irenaeus or Athanasius cannot be established, and does not greatly matter. What is important is that he is plainly in full agreement with the two Greek-writing Fathers.'<sup>515</sup>

But Augustine does more than simply repeat classical formulae; he presents us with a coherent theology, parallel to Cyril's in certain points, of how the Incarnation leads to our divinization. Three characteristics may be noted. First, when Augustine refers to the Incarnation in the context of our divinization he understands it to include the entire work of salvation accomplished by the Word in the flesh. The Incarnation is much more than just the nativity of Christ; it comprises all that Christ did in the flesh, culminating in his passion, death, and resurrection.<sup>516</sup> Secondly, Augustine teaches that Christ accomplished the sanctification of our humanity in himself first of all. He interprets John 17: 19, 'And for their sake I sanctify myself,' as referring to the sanctification of the Word's own flesh in the Incarnation:

<sup>512</sup> *Trac.* 21. 1 (Rettig, ii. 179).

<sup>513</sup> *Trac.* 22. 1 (Rettig, ii. 197).

<sup>514</sup> See e.g. *Ep.* 137; 140. 4; *Serm.* 192. 1. Hill, commenting on *Serm.* 192, writes: 'That the divinization of humanity was the purpose of the incarnation is generally accepted as being a commonplace of the theology of the Greek Fathers, and the Orthodox tradition; and it has been too lightly assumed that it is to all intents and purposes lacking in the Latin tradition. Well, here we have Augustine, the kingpin of the Latin tradition, being as Greek as you could wish' (Hill, vi. 48 n. 3).

<sup>515</sup> 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 376. In the same way, Bonner, 'Christ, God and Man', 291, also judges that Augustine teaches 'a doctrine of deification not less than Gregory of Nyssa, and this deification must be seen as a consequence of the Incarnation of the Son of God'. For a more detailed comparison of Augustine and the Greek Fathers on divinization, see Patricia Wilson-Kastner, 'Grace as Participation in the Divine Life in the Theology of Augustine of Hippo', *Augustinian Studies*, 7 (1976), 135–52. Cf. G. B. Ladner, 'St. Augustine's Conception of the Reformation of Man to the Image of God', in *Augustinus Magister*, ii (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), 867–78.

<sup>516</sup> See especially *De Trin.* 4. 2. 4 for the link between the Incarnation and Christ's death and resurrection. Augustine shows here how Christ, having taken on our mortality, needed freely to die and be raised again in order for us to be made partakers of his divinity.



And in him the Son of Man himself was also sanctified from the beginning of his creation when the Word was made flesh because one Person was made Word and man. Then, therefore, he sanctified himself in himself, that is, himself as man in himself as Word, because one Christ is Word and man, sanctifying the man in the Word.<sup>517</sup>

The redemption of our humanity, for Augustine, begins with Christ himself. The Word sanctifies his own humanity so that our humanity may be sanctified in him.<sup>518</sup> As we saw above, Cyril also interprets John 17: 19 as the sanctification by Christ of his own human nature, though with one noteworthy difference. For Cyril, Christ accomplishes the sanctification of his own humanity through the Spirit. Augustine's lack of reference to the role of the Spirit in his commentary on John 17: 19 is consistent with his interpretation of the baptism of Jesus in John's gospel. He understands the baptism, not as the sanctification of human nature in and by Christ himself through the Spirit (as Cyril does), but as a witness to the fact that it is Christ alone who truly administers the Spirit in baptism.<sup>519</sup> How Augustine views the role of the Spirit in our sanctification and divinization will be taken up more fully below.

Thirdly and finally, the dual reality of the one Christ—God and man—is for Augustine also the way and means of our divinization. In *Trac.* 42. 8, Augustine explains the meaning of John 8: 42, 'I proceeded and came forth from God', in the following manner:

Therefore, he proceeded from him as God, as equal, as the only Son, as the Word of the Father; and he came to us because the Word was made flesh that he might dwell among us. His coming is his humanness; his abiding is his divinity. His divinity is that to which we are going; his humanity is the way by which we are going. Unless there were a way for us by which we might go, we would never reach him who abides.<sup>520</sup>

<sup>517</sup> *Trac.* 108. 5 (Rettig, iv. 282).

<sup>518</sup> Cf. *Trac.* 52. 1–3 and 60. 2–5, where Augustine shows how Christ assumed even our moral weaknesses, so that what is weak in us may be transformed in him. For the full and final glorification of our humanity in Christ, see *Trac.* 63. 3.

<sup>519</sup> Augustine's extensive commentary on the baptism of Jesus (*Trac.* 5, 6) is dominated by his debate with the Donatists over the correct understanding of baptism in the church. He reads the account in John primarily through the lens of Matthew: Christ is baptized to fulfil all righteousness, and as an example for us.

<sup>520</sup> Rettig, iii. 154–5. Cf. *Trac.* 14. 12. Studer, *The Grace of Christ*, 154, claims that nearly the entirety of Augustine's teaching on Christ is summed up in this 'terse formula': 'through Christ as man to Christ as God'.

Here with special clarity Augustine presents the divinity of Christ as our goal, and the humanity of Christ as the means by which we attain to his divinity. The idea here is parallel to Cyril's notion of the Incarnate Word as the 'common frontier' between divinity and humanity, possessing both in himself, and being the way and means for us to become 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1: 4).

What does Augustine mean, however, when he says that divinity is the goal of our salvation? To answer this question, we must look to Augustine's concept of participation, which in its details follows very closely that of Cyril's.<sup>521</sup> Like Cyril, Augustine employs the language of participation to distinguish how human beings are 'sons of God' from how the Word is 'the Son of God'. He is Son by nature, we are 'sons' by grace through participation in Him.

The Son does not so say, 'the Father is in me and I in him', as men can say it. For if we should think well, we are in God; and if we should live well, God is in us: as believers, participating in his grace, enlightened by him, we are in him and he in us. But not so the only-begotten Son; he is in the Father and the Father in him, as an equal is in him to whom he is equal...The proper mark of the Lord is equality with the Father, the gift of the servant is participation in the Saviour.<sup>522</sup>

For the purpose of comparison with Cyril, we should note that Augustine not only utilizes the language of participation frequently, but he also speaks quite eloquently of our participation in the divine life. His commentary in *Trac.* 19. 11–13 is worth quoting at length. The text in question is John 5: 26: 'For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.'

What, then, did he [the Father] give to the Son? He has given to him to be the Son; he begot him to be life, that is, 'He gave him to have life in himself', that he might be life, not needing life, that he not be

<sup>521</sup> For Augustine's own explanation of participation, see *Trac.* 19. 11–13; 48. 6; 39. 8. For an overview of Augustine's theory of participation, see David Vincent Meconi, 'St. Augustine's Early Theory of Participation', *Augustinian Studies*, 27 (1996), 81–98. For the importance of participation for Augustine's account of divinization, see Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 372–3; José Oroz Reta, 'De l'illumination à la déification de l'âme selon saint Augustin', *SP* 27 (1993), 374, 379; and Victorino Capánaga, 'La deificación en la soteriología agustiniana', in *Augustinus Magister* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), ii. 748.

<sup>522</sup> *Trac.* 48. 10 (Rettig, iii. 236). For the distinction between the Word who is Son by nature, and human beings who are 'sons' by grace, see *Trac.* 2. 13; 21. 3; 54. 2.

understood to have life by participation. For if he had life by participation, he could also be without life by losing it...What about you, soul? You were dead, you had lost life. Hear the Father through the Son. Rise, receive life that in him who has life in himself you may receive life which you did not have in yourself. Therefore the Father gives you life, and the Son; and the first resurrection is effected when you rise to sharing life (*ad participandam vitam*), a thing which you are not, and by participation you are brought alive. Rise from your death to your life which is your God, and pass from death to life everlasting. (Rettig, ii. 153)

Augustine distinguishes, as Cyril does, between the Son who has life in himself and human beings who gain life only through participation. From the context it is clear that by 'the first resurrection' Augustine is referring to the present reception of divine life through believing in the Word, and the reference to rising from death to life plainly points to Christian baptism. Salvation, in other words, is depicted here in terms of participation in the divine life through Christ who is himself the divine life.<sup>523</sup>

Concerning the outcome of human participation in the divine life, Augustine gives effectively the same answer as Cyril does: human nature is transformed, glorified, and made immortal in Christ (and so in us), but it remains ever human, not divine, by nature. As to Christ's own glorified human nature, Augustine writes: 'Do not doubt, then, that the man Christ Jesus is now there whence He shall come again...And He will so come, on the testimony of the angel's voice, as He was seen going into heaven, that is, in the same form and substance of flesh to which it is true, He gave immortality, but He did not take away its nature.'<sup>524</sup> In his typical paradoxical language, Augustine claims that human beings, following the pattern set by Christ himself, are destined to become 'gods' (Ps. 82: 6) precisely by becoming a new kind of humanity in Christ.

You see, it is in order not to be a man that you have been called by the one who became man for your sake. Don't take umbrage. I mean, you are not being told not to be a man, in the sense that you are to be a beast, but rather that you are to be among those to whom he gave the right to become the children of God (John 1: 12). God, you see, wants to make

<sup>523</sup> For human participation in Christ who is Life, see *Trac.* 22. 9–10; 48. 6; 70. 1. Cf. *Trac.* 12. 11; 26. 10.

<sup>524</sup> *Ep.* 187. 10 (Parsons, iv. 228). For Augustine's explanation of how the Word assumed humanity while remaining God, see *De Div. Ques.* 73. 2.

you a god; not by nature, of course, like one whom he begot; but by his gift and by adoption. For just as he through being humbled came to share your mortality; so through lifting you up he brings you to share his immortality... Just a short while ago, you see, you were the old sort of man; you have approached the grace of God, you have become the new sort of man.<sup>525</sup>

In summary, the Incarnate Word is himself the instrument and means of our divinization for Augustine. The sanctification that he accomplished in his own humanity is the basis on which we, through union with his humanity, rise to a participation in the divine life. This is what it means to pass from death to life and to become 'gods' and 'sons of God'. The ultimate goal of salvation for Augustine, then, is correctly stated as participation in the divine nature, whereby we are transformed by grace into new, immortal human beings.<sup>526</sup> We must now clarify, through an examination of the role of baptism, the Eucharist, and the gift of the Spirit, how Augustine understands our appropriation of the divine life in the present age.

## Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Gift of the Spirit

As already noted, Augustine interprets the baptism of Jesus in the fourth gospel primarily through the lens of Matthew's account: it was fitting for Jesus to be baptized in order that 'his servants might know with what eagerness they ought to run to the Lord's baptism'.<sup>527</sup> Christ's own baptism is revelatory of who he is (the Son of God), and exemplary of our baptism, but it is not, for Augustine, a major event in the narrative of salvation history as it is for Cyril.<sup>528</sup>

Christian baptism is, none the less, centrally important for Augustine's account of the human reception of salvation in Christ. The Pelagian controversy brought the theology of baptism to front and centre for Augustine, but the importance of baptism is already evident in his pre-Pelagian *Tractates* on the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3. Augustine draws a clear line between Catechumens preparing for baptism and those who have been

<sup>525</sup> *Serm.* 166. 4 (Hill, v. 209–10).

<sup>526</sup> Cf. Reta, 'De l'illumination à la déification de l'âme selon saint Augustin', 370.

<sup>527</sup> *Trac.* 5. 3 (Rettig, i. 111). Cf. *Trac.* 4. 13.

<sup>528</sup> In *De Trin.* 15. 26. 46, Augustine rejects the view that Christ himself received the Spirit at his baptism. Rather, the descent of the Spirit on Christ simply prefigures the church's reception of the Spirit in baptism.

'born again of water and the Spirit', that is, the baptized.<sup>529</sup> He identifies the crossing of the Red Sea and the subsequent feeding upon manna as a foreshadowing of baptism and the Eucharist.

If, therefore, the figure of the sea has such value, how much value has the actuality of baptism? If that which was done figuratively led the people who had been crossed over to manna, what will Christ make manifest to us in the truth of his baptism, when his people have been crossed over through him?<sup>530</sup>

The Red Sea signifies Christ's own baptism in his death, a baptism that is red because consecrated in the blood of Christ (probably an allusion to Luke 12: 50). And like Moses, Christ leads believers through the Red Sea of baptism to the true manna in the Eucharist, which is himself, the living bread from heaven. This is what it means, Augustine tells us, for Christ to entrust himself to us (John 2: 24). He entrusts himself in the Eucharist, not to Catechumens, but only to those who have crossed over through him in baptism.

The pairing of baptism and Eucharist appears again in *Trac.* 12, where Augustine once more addresses the Catechumens:

From that we have encouraged and do encourage our brothers, the catechumens. For if you should ask them, they have already believed in Jesus; but because they do not yet receive his body and blood, Jesus has not yet trusted himself to them. What are they to do that Jesus may trust himself to them? Let them be born again of water and the Spirit; let the Church which is pregnant with them bring forth. They have been conceived; let them be brought forth into the light. (*Trac.* 12.3, Rettig, ii. 30)

Augustine says that this new birth occurs invisibly through the Spirit,<sup>531</sup> but he does not here expand on the role of the Spirit in our sanctification and divinization.

The place of the Eucharist receives further attention in Augustine's commentary on John 6. Though we cannot pursue his discussion of the bread of life discourse in any great detail here, three features of his commentary—which are parallel to Cyril's own treatment—call for our attention: (1) Augustine interprets the multiplication of the loaves and fishes in terms of the Scripture and a spiritual feeding on the word of God;<sup>532</sup> (2) he identifies the

<sup>529</sup> *Trac.* 11. 3–4 (Rettig, ii. 12–13).

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.* 4 (Rettig, ii. 13).

<sup>531</sup> *Trac.* 12. 5.

<sup>532</sup> *Trac.* 24. 5–6. Augustine, like Cyril, identifies the five loaves with the five books of Moses (and so with the Old Testament in general). Yet where Cyril refers the two fish to the gospels and epistles, Augustine refers them to the Old Testament figures of priest and king, now fulfilled in Christ.

'bread of life' with Christ himself, the Incarnate Word;<sup>533</sup> and (3) he reserves the eucharistic interpretation for the last part of the discourse.<sup>534</sup> Moreover, Augustine employs the language of participation to show how we receive eternal life through our sharing in the Eucharist:

For the Son who was begotten equal does not become better by participation in the Father, as by participation in the Son through the unity of his body and blood, the thing which that eating and drinking signify, we are made better. Therefore we, eating him, live because of him, that is, by receiving him as eternal life which we do not have from ourselves.<sup>535</sup>

The statement here on the Eucharist corresponds to his earlier claim regarding baptism (*Trac.* 19. 11–13). Just as we participate in eternal life, who is Christ himself, through baptism, so we participate in that same eternal life through the Eucharist.

What initial conclusions may we draw from this? Augustine plainly links together baptism and the Eucharist as the key events that define entry into the kingdom of God and mediate our participation in Christ, who is himself eternal life. As they are for Cyril, these two sacraments are for Augustine the primary means by which the divine life in the Incarnate Christ is appropriated to us and by us.<sup>536</sup> Furthermore, the language of participation, used more broadly elsewhere by Augustine to show our divinization through participation in the Incarnate Word, is applied to both baptism and the Eucharist. Yet, this usage is rather infrequent, at least in the *Tractates*; one has to search carefully to find it. This may in part account for the fact that Augustine is normally not credited with teaching a doctrine of participation in the divine life or a doctrine of divinization more generally. It is not

<sup>533</sup> *Trac.* 25. 13.

<sup>534</sup> *Trac.* 26. 1–20.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.* 19 (Rettig, ii. 275). Cf. *Trac.* 123. 2, where Augustine speaks of the eucharistic meal yielding participation in eternal beatitude.

<sup>536</sup> Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 383: 'Furthermore, for Augustine deification is an ecclesial process, in that it takes place within the communion of the Church, to which the Christian is admitted by baptism. For this reason, it can be called a sacramental process, in that the Christian grows in grace by being nourished by the eucharist...'

his most common way of speaking.<sup>537</sup> There is, in addition, one conspicuous absence in Augustine's account of baptism and the Eucharist *vis-à-vis* Cyril's account: Augustine makes no use of 2 Pet. 1: 4, 'partakers of the divine nature'. Augustine teaches in substance what this text affirms for Cyril, but he does not make use of it, either in a sacramental context or when speaking more generally of our divinization.<sup>538</sup> Augustine plainly accepts this epistle as canonical Scripture, but he does not employ 2 Pet. 1: 4 directly for expressing our share in the divine life through Christ.

When we turn our attention to Augustine's depiction of the Spirit's role in our appropriation of divine life, it appears—on a first reading—that Augustine's account is somewhat underdeveloped in comparison with Cyril's. Augustine's theological development of explicit references to the Spirit in the fourth gospel is thin at points. For example, where Cyril unfolds the entire narrative of salvation from the reference to the Spirit remaining on Jesus at his baptism (John 1: 32–3), Augustine uses this text more narrowly as a debating point with the Donatists to show that it is Jesus (and not the human minister of baptism) who gives the Spirit in baptism. Furthermore, where Cyril finds a role for the Spirit in his exegesis of key Johannine texts that do not explicitly name the Spirit, Augustine usually does not. In the parable of the vine and branches (John 15: 1), for instance, Cyril introduces the Spirit as the primary source of our union with Christ, and as the agent of our pruning; Augustine makes no mention of the Spirit in this context. As we have noted, the words of Christ in John 17: 19, 'For their sake I sanctify myself,' inspire Cyril to expound on the role of the Spirit in the sanctification of human nature in Christ; Augustine speaks here simply of the Word sanctifying his own flesh.

<sup>537</sup> Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 383, posits that Augustine's emphasis is more on the faithful as the Body of Christ—and so on becoming what they have received—who are themselves offered on the altar, than on 'the divinization of the individual by the life-giving mysteries'. As we shall see below, this also reflects Leo's emphasis.

<sup>538</sup> Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 371. A computer search of Augustine's entire corpus (*Corpus Augustinianum Gissense*) records three citations of the phrase from 2 Pet. 1: 4, 'partakers of the divine nature' (*divinae consortes naturae*). In two related occurrences (*De Gest. Pel.* 42, 65), Augustine refutes the use made of 2 Pet. 1: 4 by the Pelagian, Coelestius, who appears to have claimed that, because we are 'partakers of the divine nature', we have the power to be without sin. The third reference, which appears in *Speculum*, 45, in the context of Augustine's brief overview of the second epistle of Peter, is simply a quote of the verse without comment.

This first impression of underdevelopment, though, is offset to some degree by occasions in which Augustine himself introduces a role for the Spirit where Cyril does not. Commenting on John 10, Augustine suggests that, if Christ is the gate for the sheep, we should perhaps look to the Holy Spirit as being the gatekeeper who will lead us into all truth (which is Christ himself). It is a tentative and teasing suggestion which is not developed further.<sup>539</sup> Again, in his commentary on John 16: 33, 'I have overcome the world,' Augustine explains that it is only with the giving of the Spirit after Christ's glorification that this word can be fulfilled in the apostles. Moreover, Augustine links the Eucharist itself to the gift of the Spirit (as Cyril does only infrequently), advising us that in the sacrament 'we eat and drink for participation in the Spirit' (*ad spiritus participationem*).<sup>540</sup> But if we wish to engage Augustine's understanding of the role of the Spirit in our sanctification and divinization, we must look beyond these brief, undeveloped references to his more extensive commentary on the Spirit in John 7: 37–9 (*Trac.* 32) and John 14: 15–16 (*Trac.* 74).

In *Trac.* 32, Augustine addresses the exegetical crux of John 7: 39: what does the evangelist mean when he says that the Spirit was 'not yet given' because Jesus was 'not yet glorified'? Like Cyril, Augustine recognizes that the Spirit was quite obviously working in the prophets and in New Testament figures (Mary, Zechariah, John the Baptist, etc.) before Christ's glorification. He also points to the connection between the breathing of the Spirit by Jesus on the apostles (John 20: 22) and the breathing by God into Adam (Gen. 2: 7), though unlike Cyril, he interprets the breathing upon Adam as the giving of his soul, not the initial giving of the Holy Spirit (*Trac.* 32. 6, Rettig, iii. 46). How, then, are we to understand the meaning of the phrase, 'not yet given'? It refers to a new mode (*modus*) of the Spirit's action, Augustine tells us, which grants to human beings the ability to speak in the languages of other nations. This construal of John 7: 39, however, leaves Augustine with a serious problem. Since (as Augustine admits) baptized believers no longer speak in the tongues of many nations, are they then bereft of the gift of the Spirit? He answers: the gift of speaking in many tongues, in evidence at Pentecost, has now

<sup>539</sup> *Trac.* 46. 4 (Rettig, iii. 206).

<sup>540</sup> *Trac.* 27. 11 (Rettig, ii. 286).



passed over to the church which, by its spread throughout the world, now speaks in the languages of all nations.

If left here, this would be a most unsatisfying exegesis of John 7: 39. It simply does not do justice to the significance of the gift of the Spirit through Christ that the fourth gospel appears to envision. But Augustine proceeds to show, by linking 1 Cor. 13 with Rom. 5: 5, how the gift of charity, leading to unity, is the pre-eminent gift of the Spirit in the church. Though he does not say so explicitly, Augustine *de facto* interprets John 7: 39 in terms of Rom. 5: 5 ('God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit'), and cites 1 Cor. 13 to show the superiority of charity to all the other gifts of the Spirit (*Trac.* 32. 7–8, Rettig, iii. 46–8).<sup>541</sup> Here we see Augustine's narrative of the Spirit in the divine economy emerge, with charity occupying the chief place in defining the New Covenant gift of the Spirit.

In *Trac.* 74, Augustine builds on this foundation and extends our understanding of how he views the role of the indwelling Spirit. As a first step, he links the command to love with Christ's promise of the Paraclete by means of Rom. 5: 5: it is through the Spirit that the love of God is poured out in us. But the order of Christ's words in John 14: 15–17 puzzles him.

Therefore, how does the Lord say, 'If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete', since he says this about the Holy Spirit, and yet unless we should have him, we can neither love God nor keep his commandments? How is it that we love in order to receive him, and yet unless we should have him, we cannot love? (*Trac.* 74. 1, Rettig, iv. 88–9)

Augustine solves this dilemma by explaining that 'he who loves has the Holy Spirit, and by having deserves to have more, and by having more to love more' (*Trac.* 74. 2, Rettig, iv. 90). According to Augustine, the apostles already possessed the Spirit secretly and to a limited extent before Christ's glorification; Christ is speaking here about a fuller measure of the Spirit they were to receive after his resurrection. The principle guiding this exegesis is that human beings cannot even begin to love God or one another

<sup>541</sup> This interpretation is confirmed in *De Trin.* 15. 26. 46, where Augustine interprets the twofold reception of the Spirit after Christ's resurrection in terms of Rom. 5: 5 and the twofold commandment to love God and neighbour. For the use of Rom. 5: 5 in Augustine's treatment of the Spirit, see *Trac.* 27. 6; 94. 2; *Ep.* 140. 4, 37.

properly unless the Holy Spirit already abides in them: 'Let it be established that without the Holy Spirit we cannot love Christ and keep his commandments, and that we can and do do that so much the less as we receive him less, but so much the more as we receive him more' (*Trac.* 74. 2, Rettig, iv. 90).<sup>542</sup> The abiding of the Holy Spirit in the saints—which for Augustine implies the abiding of the entire Trinity<sup>543</sup>—is the *sine qua non* of all human response to God (*Trac.* 74. 5, Rettig, iv. 92).

How shall we estimate Augustine's account of the Spirit in comparison to Cyril's? The two accounts are not easy to compare because they are based on two somewhat different narratives of the Spirit in the divine economy. As we saw in Chapter 1, Cyril places great emphasis on the return of the Spirit to the human race, lost in Adam and his descendants and regained only in Christ. The abiding and indwelling Spirit is then the source of all good things for the Christian, granting a participation in the divine nature and a reminting of the image of God. It is the primary mark of the kingdom of God.

Augustine gives less evidence of an overarching narrative of the Spirit, and thus his explanation of John 7: 39—of what is new in the post-resurrection gift of the Spirit—is in the first instance less persuasive. The link he makes between Pentecost, Rom. 5: 5, and 1 Cor. 13, however, is a very impressive piece of theological exegesis, which relates the gift of the Spirit in the New Covenant essentially to divine charity. For both Cyril and Augustine, the gift of the Spirit—received in baptism and nourished in the Eucharist—is central to new life in Christ and brings about our participation in the divine life. Crucially for both authors, the gift of the Spirit is the pre-condition for all good works, for the very ability to love and keep the commandments. If one were to join Cyril's overarching narrative of the Holy Spirit with Augustine's emphasis on the link between the gift of the Spirit and the love of God, the result would be a pneumatology more theologically rich and more encompassing of the biblical revelation than either account on its own.

<sup>542</sup> Cf. *Trac.* 93. 1, where Augustine states the insufficiency of Christ's moral example without the indwelling of the Spirit in the saints. Cf. Wilson-Kastner, 'Grace as Participation in the Divine Life', 147.

<sup>543</sup> *Trac.* 76. 4; 77. 1; 110. 1.

## Conclusions

We must now attempt to bring together and sum up the individual results of our brief comparison of Cyril and Augustine. The principal conclusion is that these two authors present markedly similar accounts of our sanctification and divinization in and through the Incarnate Word. Their respective Christologies, despite differences in terminology, show many of the same characteristics and are governed by similar theological concerns. Each author makes the divine-human constitution of the Word-made-flesh the basis for our salvation, and each depicts that salvation as participation in the divine life and in the divine nature. For both Cyril and Augustine, our appropriation of the divine life is effected sacramentally through baptism and the Eucharist, and for both, the indwelling of the Spirit is the precondition for our divinization and for our progressive imitation of Christ. Despite the highly restricted scope of this comparison—which has left many potentially significant areas of difference to one side—we may conclude that Cyril and Augustine present us with comparable and compatible accounts of our appropriation of the divine life.

If our chief conclusion, though, is the striking similarity of the two accounts, we should also attempt to come to terms with two potentially significant differences we have observed. First, though Augustine employs without apology the technical terminology of divinization and the formulae of exchange characteristic of the Eastern tradition, and though he speaks of baptism and the Eucharist as our participation in the divine life, he does so less frequently than Cyril. This manner of depicting our salvation could not be said to predominate in his writings. While Cyril reminds us repeatedly, in page after page of his biblical commentaries, of our new birth in Christ and of our participation in the divine nature, often by recourse to 2 Pet. 1: 4, Augustine speaks in this way more occasionally. One has the impression that this manner of speaking of our life in Christ is not always at the forefront of his mind. How might we account for this?

Secondly, Augustine's interpretation of John 7: 39, as simply a new mode of the Spirit's activity in the human race, may indicate a difference between these two authors, at least in degree, over the extent of our transformation in Christ in this present age. As we

have seen, both authors hold to the actual indwelling of the Spirit in the saints as the precondition of all good works. But Cyril's narrative of the Spirit gives a dramatic newness and decisiveness to the possession of the Spirit in this age that is not found in the same way in Augustine. One has the impression that Cyril somehow expects more from the transforming work of the Spirit in this age than does Augustine. Is such an impression justified?

I would propose, as a working hypothesis, that Augustine's emphasis on divinization as primarily a heavenly reality goes some way to account for the differences we see here between the two authors. Augustine certainly understands divinization to be a present reality for the Christian. The 'first resurrection' in baptism is for Augustine already a participation in the divine life,<sup>544</sup> and our justification is the event by which we are 'deified' and so become 'gods':

It is evident, then, that he has called men gods, that are deified of his grace, not born of his substance. For he justifies, who is just through his own self, and not another; and he deifies who is God through himself, not by the partaking of another. *But he that justifies does himself deify, in that by justifying he makes sons of God.* 'For he has given them power to become sons of God' (John 1: 12). If we have been made sons of God, we have also been made gods, but this is the effect of grace adopting, not of nature generating.<sup>545</sup>

More frequently, though, Augustine identifies divinization with the heavenly life; it is only following the resurrection of the body that full and entire divinization will be a reality.<sup>546</sup>

So, *putting aside lying, speak the truth* (Eph. 4: 25), in order that this mortal flesh too, which you still have from Adam, may itself earn renewal and transformation at the time of its resurrection, having been preceded by

<sup>544</sup> *Trac.* 19. 13; cf. *Serm.* 81. 6. See Reta, 'De l'illumination à la déification de l'âme selon saint Augustin', 370, for the relation of baptism and divinization in Augustine.

<sup>545</sup> *Ennar. in Ps.* 49. 2 (*Augustine: Exposition on the Book of Psalms*, trans. A. C. Coxe, NPNF, 1st ser., viii. 178, adjusted for archaic language and emphasis added). Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 378, cites this text as evidence for the 'clear identification of adoption and deification' in Augustine. For the important link between justification and divinization in Augustine, see Capánaga, 'La deificación en la soteriología agustiniana', 747–51.

<sup>546</sup> *Trac.* 32. 9; *Serm.* 22. 10; 126. 14; *Ep.* 140. 34. For divinization as primarily a heavenly reality in Augustine, see Tune, 'Immutable, Saving God', 266; Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 382; and Capánaga, 'La deificación en la soteriología agustiniana', 750.

newness of spirit; and thus the whole man being deified and made divine may cleave forever to the everlasting and unchangeable truth.<sup>547</sup>

As Augustine explains it, we are now in the present age made new in spirit through the grace of God in baptism. The process of our divinization is underway but remains painfully incomplete.<sup>548</sup> The true and full possession of this divinization awaits the transformation of the body and the putting away of sin. It is this future eschatological pole which receives the greater accent in Augustine's thought.

In Cyril's writings, both eschatological poles receive a strong and comparable emphasis. I indicated above that I think it is a mistake to attribute to Cyril a dominant realized eschatology. He does indeed place great weight on the present possession of the Spirit and the new life in Christ this brings, but he also consistently looks to the final glorification of the human race in the resurrection of the body. He captures with remarkable balance the realized and future senses of New Testament eschatology, and applies these skilfully to our participation in the divine life and to the moral possibilities and demands of this life. Augustine recognizes both poles as well, but he accents our final destiny when hope will be fully realized. Leaning heavily on texts in Paul which describe the longing for a reality not yet possessed (Rom. 8: 24–5; 1 Cor. 13: 12), Augustine most commonly depicts our present situation in terms of a faith, hope, and love that are ordered to a 'salvation yet be revealed' (1 Pet. 1: 5).<sup>549</sup> It is the awareness of what is still lacking in our sanctification and divinization that appears to be uppermost in Augustine's mind. I concur with Gerald Bonner that the notion of divinization is not 'something added to [Augustine's] system as an afterthought', but rather is 'integral to the whole',<sup>550</sup> yet I suggest that it is the incompleteness of our divinization in this age, rather than our present possession of it, that figures most prominently in Augustine's thought.

If this assessment of certain observed differences between Cyril and Augustine is on the right track, we may also conclude that, in this respect, Augustine is closer to Theodore than to Cyril. Though they differ markedly in their theological foundations,

<sup>547</sup> *Serm.* 166. 4 (Hill, v. 210). Cf. *C. Jul.* 6. 13. 40.

<sup>548</sup> *Trac.* 21. 1 (Rettig, ii. 178–9). Cf. Tune, 'Immutable, Saving God', 184.

<sup>549</sup> See especially *Trac.* 86. 1; 96. 4; 124. 5.

<sup>550</sup> 'Christ, God and Man', 291.

the bishops of Hippo and of Mopsuestia share an orientation towards a salvation and a glorification of the human race yet to be revealed. None the less, it is Cyril and Augustine who in fact share the greater theological ground in their respective accounts of Christ, of the actual indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and of salvation as a participation in the divine nature. It is tempting to speculate what might have occurred if the ageing bishop of Hippo had lived long enough to receive and accept the invitation to attend the Council of Ephesus. What specific contribution he might have made to that controverted set of proceedings is impossible to judge. Our study indicates, however, that concerning the *Theotokos* and the identity of Christ with the Word of God, he would gladly have joined hands with Cyril.<sup>551</sup>

## Leo the Great

At first glance, Leo may seem an unlikely choice as a discussion partner for Cyril. As we have seen, Cyril was a biblical commentator *par excellence* and a master of extended polemics. Leo wrote no biblical commentary as such, and confined his written works to relatively brief sermons and letters.<sup>552</sup> This difference of genre makes a comparison of Cyril's New Testament biblical commentaries with Leo's sermons and letters appear at least ungainly. Yet the comparison is not as incommensurable as it first appears. Leo's sermons, laced with biblical citation, follow the liturgical year of the fifth-century Roman church and are centred on the main events of the life of Christ. They function as a kind of topical commentary on the gospel,<sup>553</sup> and attain to a surprising likeness in

<sup>551</sup> Bonner, *ibid.* 270, calls Augustine 'by anticipation anti-Nestorian', in part on the basis of his teaching on divinization.

<sup>552</sup> The genuine extant works of Leo, acknowledged by a wide consensus of scholars, consist in 96 sermons and approximately 140 letters. Selections of Leo's sermons are taken from *St. Leo the Great: Sermons*, trans. Jane P. Freeland and Agnes J. Conway, FC 93 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1996). Adjustments made for the sake of theological clarity are based upon *Sancti Leonis Magni*, ed. A. Chavasse, CSEL 138, 138A (Turnholt: Brepols, 1973). Selections of Leo's letters are taken from *St. Leo the Great: Letters*, trans. Edmund Hunt, FC 34 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1957), and *The Letters and Sermons of Leo the Great*, trans. Charles L. Feltoe, NPNF, 2nd ser., xii. Adjustments are based on *Sancti Leonis Magni*, PL 54, 593–1218.

<sup>553</sup> In *Serm.* 19. 2, Leo himself compares the four seasons of the Church's year with the four gospels.

tone and content with, for example, Cyril's homilies on Luke.<sup>554</sup> Differences in genre, and so to a degree in purpose and intended audience, remain. Nevertheless, the close kinship between Cyril's commentaries and Leo's sermons allows for a fruitful comparison.

A comparison between Leo and Cyril is of considerable interest for at least three reasons: first, because of the respective roles that they played in the fifth-century Christological controversies. They were contemporaries, embroiled in the same extended series of Christological controversies and ecclesiastical disputes. Leo was elected bishop of Rome in 440, only four years before Cyril's death in 444, but he had long been involved in papal affairs as an archdeacon. It was Leo who, on behalf of Pope Celestine, recruited John Cassian to write against the errors of Nestorius in 430.<sup>555</sup> And we have Leo's own testimony that Cyril wrote to him in 431 to gain his support in a controversy concerning Juvenal's attempt to promote the patriarchate of Jerusalem.<sup>556</sup> As pope, Leo was drawn into the resurgent Christological conflict in the East, the sequel to Cyril's strife with Nestorius. Both protagonists in that conflict, Eutyches and Flavian, appealed to Leo as arbiter in 448. This conflict prompted Leo to write his *Letter to Flavian* (the so-called *Tome*) which played a central role in the Chalcedonian definition (451). Leo's correspondence from 448 until the end of his life in 461 shows a continuous intercourse with affairs in the East, doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and political.<sup>557</sup>

Secondly, the comparison is of considerable theological importance because of Leo's explicit claim that he and Cyril teach the

<sup>554</sup> Antoine Luras, 'Saint Léon le Grand et l'Écriture sainte', *SP* 6 (1962), 127–40, demonstrates that despite Leo's brevity of style, the intertextual exposition of Scripture figures prominently in his sermons. See Basil Studer, 'Die Einflüsse der Exegese Augustins auf die Predigten Leos des Großen', in Paolo Barrera (ed.), *Forma futuri: Studi in onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1975), 916–17, for the exegetical character of Leo's homilies.

<sup>555</sup> Cassian dedicated his anti-Nestorian work to Leo, calling him 'the ornament of the Roman Church and of the divine ministry'. See Charles Gore, *Leo the Great* (London: SPCK, 1880), 17.

<sup>556</sup> In *Ep.* 119 to Bishop Maximus (AD 453), Leo writes: 'Cyril of holy memory, Bishop of Alexandria, was rightly dismayed at this and in his letter informed me of what was being attempted by the greed of the bishop mentioned, and with solicitous entreaty he urgently insisted that no consent be given for this unlawful attempt. Now, be it known to you that, after a search in our archives, we found the original of that letter of Cyril of holy memory' (Hunt, 206).

<sup>557</sup> For a thorough discussion of Leo's relations with the East, see Trevor Jalland, *The Life and Times of St. Leo the Great* (London: SPCK, 1941), 33–42, 205–398.

same truth concerning the doctrine of Christ. Writing in defence of his *Tome* in 453, two years after the Council of Chalcedon, Leo declares: 'If they think there is anything uncertain about our teaching, at least let them not deny the writings of those Alexandrian bishops of holy memory, Athanasius, Theophilus, and Cyril. The tenets of our faith are so in harmony with theirs that the man who says he agrees with them will in no way be at odds with us.'<sup>558</sup> Leo's claim to teach the same truth as Cyril invites an assessment of how their respective Christologies are played out in the arena of soteriology.<sup>559</sup> To what extent do their narratives of salvation coincide? Viewing the matter through the lens of soteriology,<sup>559</sup> can we justify Leo in his claim to teach only what Cyril has taught concerning Christ? And if we can, are there noteworthy differences that still remain between them?

Finally, the comparison between Cyril and Leo is potentially instructive because it puts side by side two figures broadly considered to be representative of the respective Greek and Latin traditions that preceded them, just at the point when those traditions were in the process of moving towards greater separation and distinctiveness. Cyril and Leo are commonly and correctly assessed as synthesizers and faithful traditors of the theological heritage that preceded them, Cyril at least of the Alexandrian tradition if not more broadly of the Greek-speaking East, and Leo of the Latin-speaking West (including Augustine). And each plainly made a significant contribution to the theological tradition that succeeded him. It is potentially valuable to bring these two contemporaries into comparison, both as a window onto the theological relationship between East and West in the fifth century, and as a possible indicator, a kind of barometer, of the distinctive emphases in soteriology that have come to characterize the Eastern and Western theological traditions.

<sup>558</sup> *Ep.* 117. 3 (Hunt, 201). For Leo's profession of his agreement with Cyril, see also *Ep.* 67; 129. 2.

<sup>559</sup> Leo's soteriology has—undeservedly—received scant scholarly attention, but see Jean Rivière, 'Le Dogme de la rédemption après saint Augustin: La rédemption chez saint Léon le Grand', *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 9 (1929), 11–42, 153–87, and Jean-Pierre Jossua, *Le Salut: Incarnation ou mystère pascal chez les Pères de l'Église de saint Irénée à saint Léon le Grand* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1968), 251–382. Discussions of Leo's soteriology can also be found in Germain Hudon, *La Perfection chrétienne d'après les sermons de Saint Léon*, Lex Orandi, 26 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1959), and Marie-Bernard de Soos, *Le Mystère liturgique d'après saint Léon le Grand* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1958).



The investigation of Leo will proceed in the following manner: first, as a foundation for the comparison with Cyril, I will review Leo's Christology by briefly examining his *Tome* and his subsequent commentary upon it in *Ep.* 124. Secondly, I will show that Leo's narrative of salvation and his conception of the redemption of our nature is grounded in the Incarnate Christ himself. Thirdly, I will assess Leo's teaching on the means whereby salvation is appropriated to us through baptism, the gift of the Spirit, and the Eucharist. Fourthly, I will explore Leo's emphasis on our reception of salvation through faith, and on the dual role of Christ as *mysterium* and *exemplum* in our growth into the image of God. Finally, I will take up the question of Leo's understanding of our participation in the divine nature. In the conclusions I will assess the similarities and differences between Cyril and Leo, and conclude that, though notable differences remain, we can sustain Leo's claim to teach the same truth as Cyril regarding Christ.

## Leo's Christology

In his *Tome* (*Ep.* 28, to Flavian), Leo presents his Christological doctrine in summary form against the backdrop of the condemnation of Eutyches by Flavian of Constantinople.<sup>560</sup> The presumed errors of Eutyches are the chief target of Leo's presentation, but the rejection of Nestorius's position is implicit throughout. Whether Leo correctly and fully understood Eutyches or Nestorius is open to question, but it is instructive that he frequently articulates his own teaching on Christ in opposition to what he perceives to be their correlative errors.<sup>561</sup>

Leo opens his case against Eutyches by appeal to the confession of the Roman baptismal creed concerning the co-eternal Son who took flesh from the Virgin Mary (*Ep.* 28. 1–2). From this confession, Leo draws two conclusions. First, the Son who is coeternal with the Father is the very same one who was born of the Virgin. There is an identity of subject between the Word and the Incarnate Christ.<sup>562</sup> Leo presents here what I have identified elsewhere as a

<sup>560</sup> Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 530, describes the *Tome* as 'virtually a synthesis of what Leo had to say on the Christological question before the Council of Chalcedon'. For other important Christological texts in Leo, see *Ep.* 35, 59, 88; *Serm.* 21–30 (on the Incarnation).

<sup>561</sup> e.g. *Ep.* 31. 1; 35. 1; 59. 5; 75. 2; 88. 3; 102. 2; 119. 1–2; *Serm.* 28. 4–5; 91. 2.

<sup>562</sup> In *Serm.* 69. 3 (Freeland, 302), Leo underlines the strict identity between the Incarnate Christ and the Word: 'Let true divinity and true humanity be believed in Christ. He is flesh who is the Word' (*Ipse est caro qui Verbum*).

single-subject Christology, and he does so in a narrative framework in which the eternal Son assumes our nature without ceasing to be God.<sup>563</sup> By this assertion, he implicitly rules out what he elsewhere describes as a Nestorian two-sons Christology.<sup>564</sup> Secondly—and this is the heart of his concern with Eutyches—Leo asserts Christ's genuine birth from Mary and his full share in our human nature. Christ's miraculous birth in no way detracts from the genuineness of his flesh and its identity with ours. Both of these conclusions, which Leo supports by ample references to the Scripture, are in full agreement with Augustine and Cyril.

In the next stage of his argument Leo defends the integrity of the divine and human natures united in the one person of Christ. Here again the narrative framework is much in evidence. The lowliness, weakness, and mortality of human nature were taken up and repaired by the majesty, strength, and immortality of the eternal Son: 'In the whole and perfect nature of the true man, then, the true God was born, complete in his own nature, complete in ours' (*Ep.* 28. 3, Hunt, 96). Leo also describes the 'one and the same mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ', as capable of dying in his human nature but incapable of dying in his divine nature. This paradoxical claim is comparable to Cyril's jarring assertion that the Incarnate Word 'suffered impassibly' for our salvation.<sup>565</sup>

The next stage of the argument brings us to the controversial part of Leo's Christology, namely, the seeming attribution of agency to the respective human and divine 'forms' of the one Christ. Leo frames his argument by a reminder of the single identity of the Word and his descent to earth for our salvation. Then in a momentous phrase he speaks of the reciprocal spheres of the two natures and the proper activities of each: 'Each form carries on its proper activities in communion with the other. The Word does what belongs to it, and the flesh carries out what belongs to it' (*agit enim utraque forma cum alterius communione, quod proprium est; Verbo scilicet operante quod Verbi est, et carne exsequente quod*

<sup>563</sup> The narrative framework for Leo's teaching on the Incarnation can also be seen in *Ep.* 35. 3; 59. 3; 75. 2; *Serm.* 23. 1; 24. 1; 96. 2. On Leo's salvation-historical Christology, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 531.

<sup>564</sup> *Ep.* 102. 3; 119. 2; *Serm.* 28. 5.

<sup>565</sup> For Cyril on impassible suffering, see Weinandy, 'Cyril and the Mystery of the Incarnation', 49–53.

*carnis est*) (*Ep.* 28. 4).<sup>566</sup> In order to emphasize the full integrity of each nature, Leo appears to accord agency to each ‘form’ of Christ (*forma Dei, forma servi*), according to the expressions found in Phil. 2: 6–7. Both before and after the Eutychian controversy, Leo uses these two phrases from Paul’s Christological hymn (‘form of God’, ‘form of a servant’) with great frequency in order to denote the fully active humanity and divinity in the one person of Christ.<sup>567</sup> Yet it is Leo’s apparent ascription of agency to the divine and human forms of Christ that caused the Easterners to suspect him of tacit Nestorianism. In defence of Leo against those who accuse him of Nestorianism, Grillmeier observes: ‘The choice of the neuter [in describing the activity of the natures] shows that the recognition of the nature as the principle of action does not in any way claim for it the character of a person.’<sup>568</sup>

As if in response to this charge, Leo again asserts, in the passage that immediately follows, the single identity of Christ: ‘He is one and the same, truly Son of God and truly Son of Man.’ (*Ep.* 28. 4, Hunt, 98). And in order to reinforce the oneness of person and agency in Christ, Leo accentuates the exchange of attributes (*communicatio idiomatum*):

‘The Son of man’, as we read, came down from heaven when the ‘Son of God’ assumed flesh from that Virgin through whom He was born. And again, the ‘Son of God’ is said to have been crucified and buried, although this did not pertain to His divinity as such, in which the Only-begotten is co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father; but he endured this in the weakness of His human nature.<sup>569</sup> (*Ep.* 28. 5, Hunt, 99–100)

In his use of the *communicatio idiomatum* and in the terminology he employs to describe the two natures or substances in Christ in one person, Leo—following Augustine quite closely—ensures the single identity and agency in Christ.<sup>570</sup>

<sup>566</sup> Trans. R. A. Norris, *The Christological Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 150.

<sup>567</sup> *Ep.* 164. 3; *Serm.* 21. 2; 23. 2; 27. 1; 28. 1; 30. 5–6; 34. 1; 46. 2; 51. 6; 52. 2; 53. 1; 54. 2; 63. 4; 69. 3; 69. 5; 77. 5; 91. 2.

<sup>568</sup> *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 536.

<sup>569</sup> For Leo’s use of the *communicatio idiomatum*, see *Ep.* 35. 2; 88. 2; *Serm.* 30. 3–4; 67. 5–7; 71. 2–4.

<sup>570</sup> Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church*, trans. Matthias Westerhoff, ed. Andrew Louth (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 200, writes: ‘With Leo Augustine made himself felt, as it was he who had summed up the Western tradition with his *una persona in utraque natura*, in this way decisively influencing the christology of Leo, who can be regarded as his disciple.’

Many in the East looked with suspicion on Leo's manner of expressing the activities proper to each *forma* of Christ, and Leo plainly felt the sting of their criticism. In *Ep.* 124 (to the monks of Palestine), written two years after the Council of Chalcedon, he directly addresses his critics and offers a clarification of his teaching on Christ found in the *Tome*. Leo explains to the monks that they were misled about certain of his statements because the translators were either malicious or were unable through ignorance to turn 'the Latin into Greek with proper accuracy' (*Ep.* 124. 1, Feltoe, 91). Maintaining that in his teaching on the Incarnation he has not departed in any way from the Scripture and the confession of the creed, Leo clarifies his views against what he calls the two contradictory heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches.

On the one hand, Nestorius's teaching must be rejected because he believed that the Virgin Mary was the mother of Christ's manhood only, and because he spoke of the Son of God as separate and distinct from the son of man. Citing John 1: 14 as evidence, Leo insists—contrary to Nestorius—that Mary 'was, in virtue of the union of the two substances, both handmaid and mother of the Lord (*secundem unionem utriusque substantiae, et ancilla Domini esset et mater*)' (*Ep.* 124. 2). Against the charge that he is a crypto-Nestorian, Leo confesses, in Latin terms, that Mary is *Theotokos*, truly the bearer and mother of the Son of God.

On the other hand, Leo urges that Eutyches' teaching too must be rejected because he denies the true humanity of Christ. Leo takes Eutyches to task for his view that Christ is 'of one nature' (*unius naturae*), plainly unaware that Cyril himself had famously used this very expression, though with a very different meaning than the one Leo ascribes to Eutyches. Leo sums up the contradictory heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches as teaching that the Virgin produced 'either the flesh without the Godhead or the Godhead without the flesh' (*Ep.* 124. 3, Feltoe, 92).

Leo uses the remainder of the letter to clarify his teaching on the activities proper to the two forms of the one Christ. His first statement emphasizes the single identity of the one who needed to be in both forms in order to act as mediator of human salvation. 'And in what way could he properly fulfil his mediation, unless he who in the form of God was equal to the Father, were a sharer of our nature also in the form of a slave: so that the one new Man might effect a renewal of the old' (*Ep.* 124. 3, Feltoe, 92). For Leo,

the two forms of Christ are necessary for the accomplishment of his mediatorial work, that is, the renewal of the old Adam through the new Adam, the Son of God. Leo's Christology is ordered to a 'formula of exchange' soteriology that will be explored more fully below.

Leo next clarifies the actions proper to the two forms of Christ. Though there is only one Christ, we must distinguish the two kinds of actions.

Although therefore in our one Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of God and man, the person of the Word and the flesh is one, and both beings (*utraque essentia*) have their actions in common: yet we must understand the character of the acts themselves, and by contemplation of sincere faith distinguish those to which the humility of his weakness is brought from those to which his sublime power is inclined. (*Ep.* 124. 5, Feltoe, 93)

Like Cyril, Leo teaches that it is the mind guided by faith that recognizes a true distinction of natures in the one Christ. The reality of the Incarnate Christ is one, but faith recognizes the difference between the humanity and the divinity and the kinds of activities that pertain to each. Leo's use here of the term 'essence/being' (*essentia*) to denote the humanity and divinity of Christ respectively is equivalent to, and interchangeable with, the terms 'substance' (*substantia*) and 'nature' (*natura*) that he uses elsewhere.<sup>571</sup> In the Formula of Reunion, Cyril agrees (perhaps reluctantly) to this very manner of phrasing the distinction of activities in the one Christ, and as we have seen he readily employs this same kind of language in his biblical commentaries when distinguishing the activity of Christ as God from his activity as man. In fact, Leo's presentation of Christ as acting in the 'form of a servant' (*forma servi*) and in the 'form of God' (*forma Dei*) is equivalent to Cyril's description of Christ acting 'as man' (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος*) and 'as God' (*ὡς Θεός*). This striking rapprochement between the two Christologies provides important evidence that Leo and Cyril, despite differences in terminology, share a fundamentally common conception of Christ.

<sup>571</sup> For Leo's Christological vocabulary, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 537–9. He posits that it was Prosper of Aquitaine who, as editor of Leo's *Tome*, substituted the term 'nature' for 'substance' when identifying Christ's humanity in order to avoid misrepresentation in the Greek translation.

To avoid any misunderstanding, Leo insists that no sort of division ever arose between the divine and human aspects of Christ. Through the growth and changes of his body, 'the actions were of one person the whole time' (*unius personae fuerint totius temporis actiones*). With particular clarity we see here that in Leo's view there is only one agency in Christ: all actions, human and divine, are of one person, and that person is the Word Incarnate.<sup>572</sup> In order to preserve the full integrity of the humanity and divinity of Christ, however, Leo insists that the distinctive properties of each kind of action must not be confused.

Leo then returns to the language of the two forms of Christ in order to secure the truth of the *communicatio idiomatum*, as he had done in the *Tome*. He concludes that it does not matter by which substance (*substantia*) Christ is spoken of, 'since, the unity of his person inseparably remaining, he is at once both wholly Son of man according to the flesh and wholly Son of God according to his Godhead, which is one with the Father' (*Ep.* 124. 7, Feltoe, 94). Appealing to Phil. 2: 5–7; John 1: 1, 14; and 2 Cor. 8: 9, Leo concludes his clarification of the *Tome* by describing how the Word became poor so that the human race might be made rich by means of receiving redemption in him.

Leo's Christology can be summarized in terms of the primary conceptions and concerns that govern it. Like Cyril, he presents a narrative Christology ordered to soteriology, using as his key texts Phil. 2, John 1, and the Creed. It is the Word's assumption of flesh for the sake of human salvation that defines the context for Leo's Christology. Furthermore, the notion of mediation is at the centre of his Christology, and this is why He insists that both Nestorius and Eutyches must be rejected. The former denies the Godhead in the flesh, the latter denies the flesh in the Godhead. For Leo, in order for Christ to be the mediator between God and man, he must be fully God and fully man at once. He follows Augustine and the Western tradition in his use of terms to describe this duality in unity, but he also reflects Cyril's concern that it is the

<sup>572</sup> In *Serm.* 96 (against Eutyches), Leo states clearly that it is the eternal Word who is the single agent of both the human and divine activities in Christ: 'The Word of God the Father clearly expressed that human substance belonged to himself both in the power of the divinity and in the weakness of humanity, having from his human body bodily actions, from his divinity spiritual powers' (*Serm.* 96. 2, Freeland, 402). Cf. Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 209.

Word, fully human while remaining fully divine, who redeems us. As Cyril is particularly intent on defending the full divinity of Christ, so Leo is sensitive to the need to preserve the full humanity of Christ. Yet Leo's own clarification in *Ep.* 124 of his teaching on Christ as found in the *Tome* adequately puts to rest the suspicion that he is tacitly Nestorian. For both Leo and Cyril, it is essential for salvation that the one Incarnate Word be both fully human and fully divine.

With this framework for Leo's Christology in place, we can now proceed to a comparison of Leo and Cyril with respect to their understanding of salvation.

## The Divine Plan of Salvation

As Cyril unfolds the narrative of salvation from the event of the baptism of Jesus, so in a similar way Leo unfolds his account of this narrative from the feast of the Nativity of Jesus, which is for him the feast of the Incarnation itself. We possess ten sermons from Leo on the Nativity of Christ (*Serm.* 21–30), given from 440 to 444 and 450 to 454, all similar in structure and theme, but each possessing its own particular features.<sup>573</sup> I will examine excerpts from several of the sermons with a view to ascertaining how Leo uses the birth of Christ to display the Incarnation as the centrepiece of the narrative of salvation.

Leo's first sermon on the feast on the Nativity (*Serm.* 21) opens with a call to rejoice at the birth of 'Life': 'Our Saviour, dearly beloved, was born this day. Let us rejoice. No, there cannot rightly be any room for sorrow in a place where Life has been born. By dispelling fear of death, Life fills us with joy about the promised eternity' (*Serm.* 21. 1, Freeland, 77). Leo's use of the term 'Life' to describe Christ, though by no means as frequent as Cyril's, indicates that he will present our salvation in terms of new life and new birth modelled on Christ's own. Already in the first year of Leo's pontificate his doctrine of the Incarnation emerges clearly: the Word of God, the eternal Son of the Father, assumed our

<sup>573</sup> The question of whether and how Leo's Christology and soteriology underwent development from his earlier period to the post-Chalcedonian era is worthy of attention, but cannot be properly pursued in this brief discussion. In any event, it seems clear that his fundamental Christological and soteriological concerns are well in place, and the basic outlines of his thought laid down, before the outbreak of the Eutychian controversy (cf. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 530).

humanity in order to save us (John 1: 1, 14). Remaining what he was as God while taking on the form of a servant (Phil. 2: 6), he grafted together both natures—the substance of each being preserved—into the unity of his person (*Serm.* 21. 2). But Leo quickly moves to the reason for the Word's assumption of our nature: through Christ, truly human and truly divine, we are freed from sin, brought back to life, and become new creatures (Eph. 2: 4–5; 2 Cor. 5: 17). He speaks in closing:

Realize, O Christian, your dignity. Once made 'a partaker of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1: 4), do not return to your former baseness by a life unworthy [of that dignity]...Through the sacrament of baptism you were made 'a temple of the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 6: 19). Do not drive away such a dweller by your wicked actions and subject yourself again to servitude under the devil. (*Serm.* 21. 3, Freeland, 79)

Leo's first exposition of the feast of the Nativity yields a summary account of salvation through the Incarnation, and the appropriation of that salvation through baptism and the Spirit, summed up in terms of 2 Pet. 1: 4. This linking of baptism, the gift of the Spirit, and participation in the divine nature is parallel to Cyril's own manner of framing the new life in Christ.

In *Serm.* 22, Leo brings the Adam–Christ typology into play and constructs the soteriological narrative from Adam to Christ around the fulcrum of the Incarnation itself. He begins by narrating the Fall of Adam and moves directly to the foreshadowing of the divine rescue in God's promise concerning the woman's seed (Gen. 3: 15). His account then advances to the victory over the devil accomplished through the Incarnation of the Son, brought about by the unstained birth from the virgin Mary (*Serm.* 22. 1).<sup>574</sup> Victory by Christ in his assumed humanity is then applied to us, as the termination of our death and the origin of our life.

Purged from the ancient contagion, nature returns to its dignity, death is dispelled by death, birth restored by birth. All at once, redemption takes away slavery, regeneration changes the beginning (*originem*), and faith justifies the sinner. To you has power been given through the Incarnation of the Word, power to return to the Father, to attain

<sup>574</sup> The characteristic Western, especially Augustinian, notion of inherited sin is in evidence here, with Leo accentuating the virgin birth as essential for breaking the progress of sin from Adam. Due to his birth from Mary by the Spirit rather than by a human father, Christ's humanity is unstained by sin, though it is none the less our true humanity, subject to the conditions of our fallen nature (see *Serm.* 58. 4; 67. 5).



freedom from slavery, and be born again from the Spirit. (*Serm.* 22. 4, Freeland, 85)

In this brief sermon, the full scope of salvation from Adam's Fall to Christ's restoration and our appropriation of the new birth is telescoped through the event of the Incarnation itself.

The Adam–Christ paradigm, sketched in this sermon, is characteristic of the narrative of salvation in Leo more generally. In a Pascal sermon for Palm Sunday, Leo casts the redemption in terms of the two Adam–Christ texts, Rom. 5: 12 and 1 Cor. 15: 21, linking them to ‘the Saviour's birth from a virgin’.<sup>575</sup> In another description of the passion of Christ, Leo points, by means of typological imagery, to Christ's undoing of Adam's sin for the restoration of the whole human race:

He who fell because of a tree is raised up by the tree, and the food which occasioned sin is washed out by the taste of gall and vinegar. Before he was betrayed, the Lord had rightly said, ‘When I have been lifted up, I shall draw all men to myself’ (John 12: 32), that is, I will deal with the whole condition of humanity and will call back to integrity the nature lost long ago. In me will all weakness be abolished, in me will all wounds be healed.<sup>576</sup>

It is evident that Leo, like Cyril, views the narrative of salvation through the lens of the Adam–Christ paradigm, and further that he understands the redemption of the human race to have been accomplished in some sense in the Incarnate Word himself, representatively.<sup>577</sup>

The representative nature of Christ's birth, life, and death in Leo's thought receives further expansion in his later Christmas sermons. In *Serm.* 27. 2, Leo writes: ‘In being born as a true man while never ceasing to be true God, our Lord Jesus Christ made in himself the beginning (*in se fecit exordium*) of a new creature. In the manner of his coming forth, he gave to the human race a spiritual beginning (*principium*).’<sup>578</sup> And in language reminiscent of Cyril's teaching that Christ is both recipient and agent of salvation, Leo states in *Serm.* 28. 6: ‘In the nature of man, he [Christ] received

<sup>575</sup> *Serm.* 52. 1 (Freeland, 226).

<sup>576</sup> *Serm.* 57. 4 (Freeland, 246).

<sup>577</sup> Cf. de Soos, *Le Mystère liturgique*, 122–4.

<sup>578</sup> Freeland, 111–12. Cf. *Serm.* 66. 4 for a more general statement of the representative character of Christ's humanity through all the stages of his life.

from the Father what, in the nature of his divinity, he himself gave.<sup>579</sup>

A final noteworthy feature of Leo's exposition of the Feast of the Incarnation appears in *Sermons* 24 and 25, where he likens Christ's birth through the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary to our birth through the Spirit in the baptismal font. In *Serm.* 24. 3, aroused by the Manichean denial of Christ's true humanity, Leo vigorously upholds the Incarnation and asserts that in the One born from the Virgin 'we arrive at a spiritual beginning in rebirth. To every human being who is reborn, the water of baptism is an image (*instar*) of the Virgin's womb—as the same Holy Spirit fills the font who also filled the Virgin, so the mystical washing cancels in our case the sin which the holy conception lacked entirely in theirs' (Freeland, 95). Then in *Serm.* 25. 5 he says in a similar vein:

Consequently, the Lord Jesus...was made a man of our race, so that we might be able to become 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1: 4). He placed in the font of baptism that very origin (*originem*) which he had assumed in the Virgin's womb. He gave to the water what he had given to his Mother. For the same 'power of the Most High' and 'overshadowing' of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1: 35) that caused Mary to bear the Saviour makes the water regenerate the believer.<sup>580</sup>

The surprising feature of this exposition, one which has caught the eye of many commentators on Leo, is the direct correspondence he makes between the conception/birth of Christ by the Spirit through Mary and the birth of the Christian by the Spirit through the water of baptism. Some have concluded that by means of this parallel Leo is ascribing a salvific power to the Incarnation by itself, as a separate soteriological pole distinct from the passion of Christ, according to the tradition of so-called Greek theology.<sup>581</sup> Yet, it is evident from a panoramic view of Leo's teaching that the Incarnation is ordered to the passion, and that the two must be seen as part of one work of salvation. The ordering of the Incarnation to the passion is well expressed in *Serm.* 48. 1: 'Indeed, even the birth of the Lord from his Mother is credited to this mystery [the Paschal Feast], for there was no other reason for the Son of

<sup>579</sup> Freeland, 120.

<sup>580</sup> Ibid. 103. The link between Christ's birth through the agency of the Holy Spirit and our rebirth in baptism through the Spirit is also found in *Ep.* 31. 3 and *Serm.* 29. 1.

<sup>581</sup> See Jossua, *Le Salut*, 1–44, for a critical overview of this position from Harnack onwards. See also de Soos, *Le Mystère liturgique*, 110–15.

God to be born than that he could be fixed on a cross. Our mortal flesh was taken up in the womb of the Virgin, the ordering of his Passion was completed in our mortal flesh.<sup>582</sup> Moreover, the fact that Leo insists that the rite of baptism be reserved for the Paschal Feast (Easter or Pentecost), and that it not be held at Christmas or Epiphany, provides substantial confirmation that Leo took a synoptic view of the Incarnation–Passion, the former ordered to the latter.<sup>583</sup>

It is nevertheless instructive that the event of the Nativity is in one sense the occasion of our own rebirth and the pattern for it. Not only are we to see our own spiritual rebirth in Christ himself, but his birth provides both the power and the pattern for our individual new birth through baptism. And just as the Spirit is the agent in Christ's birth, so he is the agent in our rebirth. Leo handles the Nativity in a manner strikingly analogous to Cyril's treatment of the baptism of Jesus. The Nativity in Leo, like the baptism of Jesus in Cyril, is presented as a representative re-creation/rebirth for the whole human race accomplished first in Christ himself, and as the pattern for the individual's rebirth in baptism.<sup>584</sup>

Leo, like Cyril, also holds that the full restoration of our nature is accomplished only with the death, resurrection, and enthronement of Christ, as the following brief texts from his sermons on the Passion and Ascension make clear. On the feast of Palm Sunday, Leo announces that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor. 5: 19), and the Creator himself was bearing the humanity that was about to be restored (*reformandam*) to the image of its Maker.'<sup>585</sup> For Leo, not until Christ's death and resurrection are accomplished will the humanity he bears be fully restored. In a later sermon for the same feast, Leo distinguishes Christ's salvific death from all other human deaths.

Separate deaths indeed occur separately, nor can anyone pay the debt of another by his own end. Among the sons of men only one stands out, namely our Lord Jesus Christ—in whom all have been crucified, all died, all have been buried, and all even raised up. He himself said, 'When I have been lifted up, I shall draw all things to myself' (John 12: 32).<sup>586</sup>

<sup>582</sup> Freeland, 205.

<sup>583</sup> See *Ep.* 16. 1–4.

<sup>584</sup> Cf. de Soos, *Le Mystère liturgique*, 119.

<sup>585</sup> *Serm.* 54. 4 (Freeland, 234).

<sup>586</sup> *Serm.* 64. 3 (Freeland, 280, adjusted).

But it is especially in his two Sermons on the Ascension that Leo expounds the notion of a progressive restoration of human nature in Christ, completed only with the enthronement of Christ.

Since the Ascension of Christ is our elevation, and since, where the glory of the Head has preceded us, there hope for the body is also invited, let us exult, dearly beloved, with worthy joy and be glad with a holy thanksgiving. Today we are established not only as possessors of Paradise, but we have even penetrated the heights of heaven in Christ, prepared more fully for it through the indescribable grace of Christ which we had lost through the 'ill will of the devil' (Wis. 2: 24). Those whom the violent enemy threw down from the happiness of our first dwelling, the Son of God has placed, *incorporated within himself*, at the right hand of the Father.<sup>587</sup>

For Leo, the grace and status lost through Adam is fully restored, and even raised to greater heights, by the enthronement of Christ himself, in whom we are in some sense incorporated.

Leo, like Cyril, has been accused of—or commended for—importing a Platonic notion of universal humanity into his doctrine of the Incarnation.<sup>588</sup> But there appears to be little indication of a technical philosophical notion of a universal nature in Leo's Christ. On the contrary, a biblical grounding, drawn from the Adam–Christ paradigm and other New Testament texts (for example, Leo's use of Eph. 2: 15 in *Ep.* 124. 3), adequately accounts for the language of universal nature, and for the assertion that in some sense all of human nature was assumed in the Incarnation and redeemed by Christ in his death and resurrection. For Leo as for Cyril, this language functions to describe the universal efficacy of the assumption of our humanity by Christ, and its redemption from sin and death. Leo does not analyse the exact sense of this assumption of our human nature by Christ any more than Cyril does, but it only muddies the waters to read into Leo's thought a Platonic metaphysic with its attendant implications. Leo's interpretation of Christ as firstfruits functions identically to Cyril's account of Christ as firstfruits, and would seem to indicate

<sup>587</sup> *Serm.* 73. 4 (Freeland, 324–5, emphasis added).

<sup>588</sup> See e.g. René Dolle, *Léon le Grand: Sermons*, 2nd edn. (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1964), i. 211. Germain Hudon, 'Le Concept d'"assumptio" dans l'ecclésiologie de Léon le Grand', *SP* 18 (1985), 155–62, happily identifies a form of Platonic universalism in Leo which he puts to use in order to propose a 'pre-existent ecclesiological consubstantiality' (p. 159) among all human beings apart from baptism, due simply to the effect of the Incarnation.

that Leo intends no such Platonic understanding.<sup>589</sup> Christ in his capacity as Second Adam represents the whole of humanity for Leo, but there is a clear succession of time between the firstfruits and those who follow, and a meaningful and concrete distinction between head and members.

In summary, the divine plan of salvation in Leo shows remarkable points of similarity with Cyril's account. The Incarnation itself is the centrepiece of redemption, and the Adam–Christ paradigm is employed both to define the narrative frame of redemption (Adam and Christ as the two fundamental poles of that narrative), and to demonstrate the necessity that the Son of God be truly human like us. Moreover, Christ is portrayed as ‘Life itself’, the eternal Son of God become man, who accomplishes our redemption in himself representatively through a progressive restoration of our nature from his nativity to enthronement. The general lines of the two respective conceptions of salvation are quite coincident, and draw upon common biblical texts (John 1: 14; Phil. 2: 5–7) in order to explain the divine plan of salvation.

But it is precisely in the biblical grounding that we run up against the most obvious and potentially significant difference in the two accounts. Cyril unfolds the narrative of salvation from the baptism of Jesus; Leo does so from his Nativity. In both narratives, an event in Christ's life is tied to the Incarnation and is applied directly to our own reception of the Spirit in baptism, with similar consequences entailed (regeneration, the gift of the Spirit, the status of sonship, and ‘participation in the divine nature’). But Cyril's choice of the baptism of Jesus brings with it an exegetically grounded understanding of the gift, forfeiture, and reacquisition of the Spirit at the heart of redemption that does not appear in Leo's account. Leo interprets Gen. 2: 7 as the gift of a rational soul,<sup>590</sup> and ascribes to the baptism of Jesus a very limited place in the divine economy, as simply the expression of Christ's desire ‘to fulfil all righteousness’, and as a revelation of his divinity.<sup>591</sup>

<sup>589</sup> See especially *Serm.* 65. 4 for Leo's interpretation of Christ as the firstfruits.

<sup>590</sup> Leo makes no explicit comment on Gen. 2: 7, but in his allusions to this text (*Ep.* 28. 2; *Serm.* 12. 2; 64. 2) he identifies the inbreathing into Adam with a rational soul or the gift of life, not with the Holy Spirit.

<sup>591</sup> In *Ep.* 16, Leo rebukes the bishops of Sicily for performing baptisms during Epiphany, rather than properly during the Paschal season (Easter or Pentecost). He rejects the association of our baptism with Jesus's baptism by John (and so with the Feast of Epiphany), because the latter event is of a different order and does not share in the true generating gift of the Spirit (*Ep.* 16. 6). For Leo, Jesus's own baptism is to be contrasted with the baptism Jesus gives through the Spirit, which is properly revealed only on the Cross through the flow of blood and water.

Consequently, Christ is not portrayed in Leo as the one who representatively receives the indwelling of the Spirit for us. First indications would suggest that where Leo accents the role of the Spirit as agent in Christ's birth and our rebirth, Cyril emphasizes the remaining of the Spirit upon Christ, and so the indwelling of the Spirit in the believer. This tentative conclusion will be tested in the following section which investigates Leo's understanding of the means by which the gift of salvation is received.

## The Gift of Salvation

1. *Rebirth in baptism.* *Serm.* 63 on the passion, preached by Leo in Holy Week of 452, furnishes us with an especially concise account of how Leo understands the means by which salvation in Christ is appropriated to us. He begins by securing the truth of Christ's complete divinity and humanity (from John 1: 14 and 2 Cor. 5: 19). It was fitting that the rescue of the human race should come about through one truly human, but it was also necessary that our human weakness be enriched by his divine strength (*Serm.* 63. 1). Leo then turns to the unity between Head and members grounded in the assumption of human nature by the Son of God. This unity entails that Christ now dwells in his temple, the church, and that we be renewed in the image of the Son (Col. 3: 10), who is for us both 'mystery' (*sacramentum*) and 'example' (*exemplum*). We attain to Christ as *sacramentum* by being reborn, and to Christ as *exemplum* through imitation of him (*Serm.* 63. 3–4). These paired terms and their interrelation will be discussed in greater detail below; here our concern is with the first term, our incorporation into Christ as *sacramentum*.

Leo insists that our encounter with Christ's redemption is not so much through learning about past events, but through our experience of 'the power in his present works' (*in praesentium operum virtute*) (*Serm.* 63. 6).<sup>592</sup> This claim is directly followed by a reference to

<sup>592</sup> For Leo's approach to the effective power of the mystery of Christ in the liturgy, see T. W. Guzie, 'Exegetical and Sacramental Language in the Sermons of Leo the Great', *SP* 12 (1975), 208–13, and David R. Holeton, 'The Sacramental Language of S. Leo the Great: A Study of the Words 'Munus' and 'Oblata'', *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, 92 (1978), 115–65.

baptism: '[The Son of God] it is who, born from his Virgin Mother by the Holy Spirit, enriches his untainted Church with the same inspiration—until through the birth of baptism an innumerable throng of God's children have been born (John 1: 13)' (Freeland, 275). Leo then proceeds to explain the results of our baptism into Christ:

Even while we renounce the devil and believe in God, while we pass into new things from the old, while we put aside the image of this earthly man and take on the form of that heavenly one (1 Cor. 15: 49), a kind of death and a certain likeness of resurrection happens (Rom. 6: 5). Taken up by Christ and taking on Christ, then, we are not the same after the purification of Baptism as we were before it. Instead the body of the one reborn becomes the flesh of the Crucified (*sed corpus regenerati fiat caro Crucifixi*). (*Serm.* 63.6, Freeland, 276, adjusted)

Leo's description of baptism here, moving from the imagery of Christ's birth to his death, is replete with the language of rebirth, re-creation, and resurrection.<sup>593</sup> He links Paul's text on the second, heavenly Adam (1 Cor. 15: 49) to the baptism text in Rom. 6: 5, and applies this reality to our present state of post-baptismal existence. Leo depicts this change in striking terms, speaking of the body of the one reborn as becoming 'the flesh of the Crucified'. Should this last result be understood properly as a consequence of baptism? Given the description of the Eucharist which follows in the last section of the Sermon (*Serm.* 63.7), it is probable that Leo already has the Eucharist in view here. Following an emphatic insistence that this transformation is the work of divine agency, he writes:

When the yeast of the old evil has been thrown out (1 Cor. 5: 8), the new creature receives food and drink from the Lord himself. This partaking (*participatio*) in the body and blood of Christ means nothing else than that we should pass over (*transeamus*) into what we have taken in. Since we have died with him and are buried with him and are risen with him, let us bear him through all things both in spirit and in flesh (*et spiritu et carne*). (*Serm.* 63.7, Freeland, 277)

<sup>593</sup> In *Serm.* 60. 3, Leo depicts salvation in terms of re-creation by explicitly linking the original act of Creation with our re-creation in Christ: 'Now, during the feast predicted by all other feasts, a sacred month of new things has shone forth, so that in the month in which the world received its start (*exordium*), in the same month Christian creation (*christiana creatura*) had its beginning (*principium*)' (Freeland, 262, adjusted).

The lines of Leo's thought emerge with particular clarity here. We attain to salvation through the agency of Christ in baptism, and once reborn advance to a participation in his body and blood whereby we become that which we partake of. But as is typical with Leo, there is no expansion of this compressed account.

For comparison with Cyril, two issues need further investigation. First, how does Leo understand the role of the Spirit in baptism and in the divine economy more generally? The Spirit appears here, but there is no expansion on his role. Secondly, how does Leo understand the relation of baptism to the Eucharist in the transmission of divine life? Does he conceive of a dual means for receiving divine life—hinted at here in this text by the phrase *et spiritu et carne*—in any sense comparable to Cyril?

*2The Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation.* A survey of Leo's texts on baptism reveals a close correspondence between the new birth in baptism and the agency and indwelling of the Spirit.<sup>594</sup> Correlatively, a majority of passages that concern the Spirit make direct or indirect reference to new birth in baptism. As noted above, Leo frequently conceives of the Spirit as the agent of rebirth in baptism, analogous to the Spirit as the agent of Christ's birth from the womb of Mary.<sup>595</sup> He also speaks of the Spirit as the agent of our sanctification,<sup>596</sup> though he does so less commonly than Cyril. Perhaps Leo's strongest testimony to the Spirit as sanctifying agent in baptism appears in his rulings on the admission of those baptized by heretics. In his letter to Nicetas, he judges that the rite of baptism itself should not be repeated, but that the hands of the bishop should be imposed for the power and sanctification of the Spirit, which cannot, in Leo's judgement, be invoked by heretics.<sup>597</sup>

But with equal frequency Leo describes the activity of the Spirit in baptism in terms of indwelling, trading on the imagery drawn especially from 1 Cor. 3: 16 and 6: 19.<sup>598</sup>

<sup>594</sup> See e.g. *Ep.* 15. 9–10; 31. 3; 59. 4; 159. 7; 166. 2; 167. 18; *Serm.* 4. 1; 22. 5; 23. 5; 26. 2–3; 35. 2; 45. 1; 57. 5; 63. 6; 66. 2; 67. 3; 69. 4. The correlation between baptism and the Spirit is not universal in Leo, but even in a paschal sermon which closely links baptism to Christ's death and resurrection, Leo calls those who die and rise with Christ 'children of the Holy Spirit' (*natis de Spiritu sancto*) (*Serm.* 70. 4, Freeland, 308).

<sup>595</sup> *Ep.* 15. 9; 31. 3; *Serm.* 24. 3; 25. 5; 29. 1; 45. 1; 57. 5; 66. 2, 4.

<sup>596</sup> *Ep.* 159. 7; *Serm.* 41. 3; 75. 5.

<sup>597</sup> *Ep.* 159. 7. See also *Ep.* 166. 2, 167. 18 and *Serm.* 69. 5 for the invalidity of baptism by heretics due to their inability to communicate the gift and power of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>598</sup> *Serm.* 21. 3; 27. 6; 35. 2; 38. 3–4; 41. 1; 42. 6; 50. 2; 69. 5; 75. 5; 78. 3; 79. 3.



Consider, dearly beloved, and pay careful attention by the light of the Holy Spirit as to who it is who has taken us to himself and whom we have received in ourselves. As the Lord Jesus was made our flesh by being born, so we are made his body by being reborn. Consequently, we are members of Christ and a Temple of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 6: 15, 19). It is for this reason that the blessed Apostle says, 'Glorify God and bear him in your body' (1 Cor. 6: 20).<sup>599</sup>

In *Serm.* 38 for Epiphany, Leo, occupied with the revelation of the divinity of Christ and the need of our nature for his divine strength, assures his hearers that God indeed dwells within them as a source of help and power. By linking Luke 17: 21, 'The kingdom of God is within you,' with Rom. 8: 14, 'those who are led by the Spirit of God', Leo shows that he understands the assisting grace of God to arise principally from the indwelling Spirit.<sup>600</sup> In sum, Leo conceives of the Spirit as both the divine agent who effects our rebirth in baptism, and as the divine indweller who comes to live in the soul of the believer as the agent of ongoing sanctification. But he does not order these two roles of the Spirit as Cyril does, who makes the indwelling of the Spirit the ground for all divine working by the Spirit.

It remains to investigate Leo's understanding of the role of the Spirit in the divine economy more generally. His most comprehensive statement is found in his three Sermons for the Feast of Pentecost (*Serm.* 75–7). The trinitarian questions that govern his exposition prompt Leo to explain the role of the Spirit in the divine economy *vis-à-vis* the Father and the Son. In *Serm.* 75, Leo principally defends two conclusions: (1) the Spirit is truly divine and so the three divine persons are fully equal; (2) there is a continuity of the working of the Spirit from the Old Testament to the New. Concerning the latter conclusion, Leo is at pains to emphasize that the Spirit who descended at Pentecost is the very same one who hovered over the waters at Creation and established the first covenant on Sinai. He expands and clarifies this theme of the trans-testamental activity of the Spirit in *Serm.* 76. 3–4:

When on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit filled the disciples, it was not the beginning (*inchoatio*) of the gift but an addition (*adjectio*) to his generosity. The patriarchs, the prophets, the priests, and all the saints

<sup>599</sup> *Serm.* 23. 5 (Freeland, 91).

<sup>600</sup> *Serm.* 38. 4 (Freeland, 164–5).

who lived in former times were invigorated by the sanctifying of the same Spirit...The blessed apostles themselves did not lack the Holy Spirit before the Passion of the Lord, nor was the power of his strength absent from the Saviour's works. (Freeland, 336)

How, then, is the gift of the Spirit promised by Christ to the apostles and received at Pentecost to be distinguished from the working of the Spirit in the Old Testament? The difference, Leo explains, concerns only the abundance of the gift of the Spirit, which is given in the New Covenant to increase the capacity for understanding, to magnify the power to love, and to overcome fear (*Serm.* 76. 5). Leo develops this notion further in the third sermon for Pentecost (*Serm.* 77):

They hoped indeed, because the Lord Jesus had promised the Spirit would come, not that then for the first time he should begin to live in the saints, but that he might inflame even more fervently the hearts consecrated to himself and might flow over them more abundantly. He was increasing his gifts, not simply beginning them. Because he was richer in his generosity does not mean that he was a novice in giving. (Freeland, 341)

It would appear that for Leo, the gift of the Spirit in the New Covenant is not qualitatively different from the work of the Spirit before the resurrection (as it is for Cyril), but only quantitatively more abundant.

In his second sermon for Pentecost (*Serm.* 76), Leo records and rejects the position of the Manicheans who were claiming that Mani, their founder, was the incarnation of the Spirit himself, appearing only in the third century after Christ (*Serm.* 76. 6–7). It is possible that the perceived danger in the Manichean claim, arguing as it does for a novel appearance of the Spirit in Mani, at least conditions Leo's ordering of the economy of the Spirit, provoking him to emphasize the continuous activity of the one Spirit in both the Old and New Covenants.<sup>601</sup> At the close of the Sermon (*Serm.* 76. 8), Leo cites John 7: 39, 'The Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified,' but only to show how it

<sup>601</sup> Yves Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple*, trans. R. F. Trevett (London: Burns & Oates, 1962), 263–8, identifies a broad, far-reaching difference between an Eastern tradition (represented by Irenaeus, Chrysostom, and Cyril) that emphasizes the newness and distinctness of the gift of the Spirit in the New Covenant, and a Western tradition (characterized by Augustine and Leo) that stresses the continuity of grace from the Old to the New Covenant.

refutes the Manichean claim of a later incarnation in Mani. This biblical text does not have the force for Leo that it does for Cyril, as defining a qualitatively new kind of work of the Spirit made possible because of Christ's glorification through his death and resurrection.

*3The Eucharist and dual manner of indwelling.* References to the Eucharist in Leo are relatively few and largely undeveloped, yet they do give a fair indication of his eucharistic theology.<sup>602</sup> In a typological reading of the flight of Christ to Egypt, Leo calls Christ the 'true Joseph' who as the true Bread of Life from heaven satisfies a hunger far greater than that found in Egypt of old. This brief comment on John 6, which Leo connects with the Passover and our redemption, has echoes of Cyril's much more developed interpretation of the same text. Like Cyril, Leo assumes a straightforward identity between the bread and Christ, but shows no interest in describing the nature of the change implied in this identity. He identifies the Eucharist as 'the true flesh of Christ',<sup>603</sup> and highlights the role faith has in recognizing the Eucharist as truly the body and blood of Christ:

Since the Lord said, 'If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you' (John 6: 53), you ought to participate in the holy table in such a way that you do not doubt henceforth of the truth of the body and blood of Christ. Faith believes what the mouth is receiving. In vain do they respond 'Amen' who argue against what they receive.<sup>604</sup>

Leo's most significant statement on the Eucharist, apart from the text already examined in *Serm.* 63, appears in *Ep.* 59. 1–2. Leo is writing to the clergy and people of Constantinople in 449 to stand by their stricken patriarch, Flavian, following the so-called Robber Council. He groups the Eutychian party with the Manicheans in denying the true humanity of Christ, and considers their position tantamount to denying the Gospel and the Creed, and thus discrediting Christ's death and resurrection. But he also sees in their position a denial of the Eucharist:

<sup>602</sup> I have located fifteen references to the Eucharist in Leo's works (*Ep.* 9. 2; 59. 2; 121. 3; 155. 2; *Serm.* 5. 3; 33. 4; 42. 5; 45. 2; 46. 1; 48. 1; 50. 1; 58. 3; 59. 7; 63. 7; 91. 3), of which only six offer even a brief explanatory comment. De Soos, *Le Mystère liturgique*, 42–5, judges that Leo's relative silence with respect to the Eucharist may indicate simply an absence of controversy over the Eucharist in the Rome of Leo's day.

<sup>603</sup> *Serm.* 46. 1 (Freeland, 198).

<sup>604</sup> *Serm.* 91. 3 (Freeland, 384–5).

Even the tongues of infants do not keep silence upon the truth of Christ's body and blood at the rite of holy communion. For in that mystic distribution of spiritual nourishment, that which is given and taken is of such a kind that receiving the virtue of the celestial food we pass into the flesh of him, who became our flesh (*in carnem ipsius qui caro nostra factus est transeamus*).<sup>605</sup>

Like Cyril, Leo aligns the Eucharist with the Incarnation as a means by which we receive the heavenly property of Christ by being transformed into his own flesh. There is, however, a different emphasis in their respective accounts. Cyril certainly holds that we are united to Christ and become one body with him (*σύνσωμος*) in the Eucharist, but his primary interest is in the result of that union, namely, the reception of the divine life through the flesh that is life-giving. Leo plainly considers the Eucharist as heavenly nourishment for us, but his principal concern is that by partaking of the Eucharist we become his body, the church. This is not to deny that the Eucharist is for Leo also a source of divine life; but his emphasis is on a particular effect of the Eucharist, that we become the body of Christ by receiving the body of Christ.

There appear to be only indirect hints in Leo of the twofold manner of divine indwelling so prominently displayed in Cyril. Leo's terse expression from *Serm.* 63 cited above, 'both in spirit and in flesh' (*et spiritu et carne*), is best understood as referring to *our* spirit and flesh, though it may signal a twofold effect in us related to baptism and the Eucharist. There may also be an indication of a twofold indwelling in Leo's interpretation of John 19: 34, 'And at once there came out blood and water', coupled with 1 John 5: 5–6, 'And this is he who came by water and blood.'<sup>606</sup> Leo identifies the water coming from Christ's side with baptism (*Ep.* 16. 6; 28. 5; 59. 4), and he relates the Spirit in 1 John 5: 6 to sanctification by the Spirit (*Ep.* 28. 5). Furthermore, he identifies the blood with 'the blood of redemption' (*Ep.* 16. 6; 28. 5), but he does not explicitly connect this redemption with the Eucharist. A fleeting allusion in *Ep.* 28. 5, however, would seem to indicate that Leo intends this identification: 'Let him [Eutyches] understand from where the blood and water flowed, when the side of Christ was opened by

<sup>605</sup> *Ep.* 59. 2 (Feltot, 59).

<sup>606</sup> Leo refers to John 19: 34 three times (*Ep.* 16. 6; 28. 5; 59. 4), once in conjunction with 1 John 5: 5–6 (*Ep.* 28. 5).

the soldier's spear, so that the Church of God might be bedewed both by washing and drinking.<sup>607</sup> In any event, we have here at most an elusive reference to a twofold manner of indwelling, related to baptism and Eucharist and characterized by a distinction between the spiritual and material, between the divine and the human. Leo does not develop this idea, nor does it feature prominently in his account of the means by which we receive salvation. Given how sharply Leo distinguishes the divine and human natures of Christ, it is indeed ironic that it is Cyril who accents the distinction between the pneumatic and somatic means of indwelling and union, often linking this distinction explicitly to the divine and human elements in Christ.

In summary, Leo's account of the means by which the regeneration of Christ's own humanity is appropriated to us is similar in general outline to Cyril, but it possesses certain distinctive accents. Like Cyril, Leo conceives salvation primarily in terms of rebirth, regeneration, and re-creation, in his case with a strong emphasis on sanctification from the taint of Adam's sin. This emphasis on new creation is confirmed by his frequent use of 2 Cor. 5: 17.<sup>608</sup> Like Cyril, Leo prefers this text as a way to describe salvation in Christ. And like Cyril, Leo understands the Holy Spirit to be both the primary agent of this rebirth and the one who comes to dwell in the baptized. Alongside these notable similarities, however, distinctions and differences of emphasis emerge.

In the first instance, Leo does not order his statements regarding the agency of the Spirit in baptism and the indwelling of the Spirit that occurs in the event of baptism. Because Cyril reads Gen. 2: 7 and John 20: 22 as paradigmatic for our reception of the Spirit, he makes the sanctification and empowering of the Spirit dependent on the inbreathing of the Spirit. The accent and priority is on indwelling. In Leo, though the indwelling of the Spirit is clearly secured, the focus is on the event of rebirth and regeneration (and so on the activity of the Spirit in the event of baptism itself). It appears that the Spirit's indwelling is more a consequence of, and dependent on, a prior cleansing and regenerating of the human temple. Moreover, because Leo does not view the baptism of Jesus as the model for our own, the notion of

<sup>607</sup> Hunt, 102, adjusted.

<sup>608</sup> See Freeland, 433, for the citations of 2 Cor. 5: 17 in Leo's sermons.

Christ receiving the Spirit for us economically as man is lacking. In Leo's account Christ is simply the one who gives the Spirit.

Secondly, whereas Cyril underscores the newness of the gift of the Spirit through Christ and its discontinuity with the manner of the Spirit's presence in the Old Covenant, Leo emphasizes the continuity of the Spirit's action from creation to re-creation, allowing simply for a difference in degree of the gift of the Spirit in the New Covenant. We could easily exaggerate the distinction between the two accounts—the two authors do in fact speak in similar terms about the new creation in Christ through the Spirit. But we can conclude that Cyril lays greater stress on what is new in Christ and in the New Covenant, due specifically to the gift of the indwelling Spirit and the abiding presence of divine life in the believer.

Finally, Leo's handling of eucharistic participation displays at least a different emphasis concerning our participation in the divine life. For Leo, by partaking of Christ's true flesh we are united to his humanity and truly become his body. This union implies that we attain to a genuine share in Christ's divine power and life, for he is fully divine and human in one person. But Leo is concerned especially to show that we become what we partake of, namely his body, the church. His emphasis is more ecclesiological. While Cyril most certainly views the Eucharist as making us to be the body of Christ, he accents our participation, individually and corporately, in the divine life through Christ's life-giving flesh. His emphasis is more on divinization.

## The Reception of Salvation

1. *Divine grace, faith, and human freedom.* Leo's treatment of this area dictates that our examination of the human reception of salvation begin with the divine initiative of grace, and then proceed to a consideration of faith and human freedom. For all of Leo's involvement with the Pelagian controversy,<sup>609</sup> we possess in his corpus only one explicit refutation of Pelagian thought, a letter to the bishop of Aquileia concerning the readmission of those

<sup>609</sup> It was Leo who stiffened Pope Sixtus III's resistance to the rehabilitation of Julian of Eclanum in 436, and our Leo may be the 'acolyte Leo' who served as the messenger of Rome to Carthage in 418 in the early stages of the Pelagian controversy (Gore, *Leo the Great*, 16).

associated with Pelagian error. After citing Eph. 2: 8–10 against the Pelagian claim that grace is founded upon reward, Leo adds:

Hence, every bestowal of good works is of God's preparing, for no one is justified by his own excellence before he is by grace, which is the principle of justice for everyone, as well as the source of his good works and the starting point of his merits. But those heretics say that grace comes as a result of our natural efforts.<sup>610</sup>

For Leo the unmerited grace of God, which precedes all good works, is the principle of our justification and source of all virtue.<sup>611</sup>

With this principle firmly in hand, Leo demonstrates the essential link between faith and love, and thus the requirement of human co-operation with divine grace. The order of faith and love, and their necessary reciprocity, is evident in the following selection, preached during the annual collection of alms for the poor: "This virtue [charity/ almsgiving] causes all other virtues to be worth something. It gives life even to faith itself—"by which the just live" (Hab. 2: 4) and which is called "dead without works" (Jas. 2: 17)—by mingling with it. While faith provides the basis for works, the strength of faith comes out only in works."<sup>612</sup>

Leo confirms this relation between faith and love in the following selection from a sermon on the Lenten Fast. "Those who are not endowed with both virtues [faith and love] enjoy neither. Love is the power of faith; faith is the strength of love."<sup>613</sup> It is noteworthy that Leo describes the relation of faith and love not only in terms of a temporal and theological order, but also in terms of mingling and reciprocal strengthening. Faith is necessarily the ground of love, because divine grace is the source of all our goodness, but love in turn in some sense mixes with faith and strengthens it.

Leo also plainly understands there to be a certain necessary human co-operation with the grace of God, a co-operation that he finds attested in Phil. 2: 13, 'For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure':

If we are of one mind with him (willing what he wills, disapproving of what he disapproves), he himself will bring us to victory in all our battles. He who has given us the 'will' (Phil. 2: 13) will bestow also the ability, so

<sup>610</sup> *Eph.* 1 (Hunt, 21).

<sup>611</sup> Cf. *Serm.* 49, 3.

<sup>612</sup> *Serm.* 10, 3 (Freeland, 45).

<sup>613</sup> *Serm.* 45, 2 (Freeland, 195).

that we might be cooperators (*cooperatores*) with his works...<sup>614</sup> When we consider, dearly beloved, the ineffable generosity of God in his gifts to us, we should be cooperators (*cooperatores*) with the grace of God 'working in us' (Phil. 2: 13).<sup>615</sup>

By means of his grace, God not only invites human co-operation, but for Leo demands human co-operation for entrance into the kingdom. In a sermon for Epiphany, Leo again cites Phil. 2: 12–13 in full, and warns his hearers that if they become complacent in the works of charity, they might 'lose the assistance of grace and be left to the weakness of their nature'.<sup>616</sup> In *Serm.* 50. 1, he interprets the parable of the wedding banquet in Matt. 22: 1–14 as demonstrating both the gracious invitation of God to the unworthy, and the requirement on the part of the invited guests 'to prove themselves worthy of the honour of the sacred meal'.<sup>617</sup> If Leo is ever careful to insist on the absolute priority of God's grace and the necessity of his ongoing action within us, he is no less insistent on the requirement of our co-operation through love and good works, without which grace can be voided and the kingdom lost.<sup>618</sup>

The concern to establish free human self-determination, quite marked in Cyril, does not appear in Leo.<sup>619</sup> In the opening remarks of his refutation of the errors of the Priscillianists (*Ep.* 15), Leo rejects their appeal to astrological fatalism, a fatalism that necessarily renders null and void a criterion of good and bad in human action. Implicit here is a view of human responsibility for action, and therefore of free self-determination, but there is no positive development of human freedom as such. Like Cyril, Leo also rejects the claim that Judas and those who killed Christ were

<sup>614</sup> *Serm.* 26. 4 (Freeland, 108, adjusted).

<sup>615</sup> *Serm.* 35. 3 (Freeland, 152). See also *Serm.* 20. 2 (Freeland, 73), where Leo calls us 'companions' (*consortes*) with God in producing growth in virtue.

<sup>616</sup> *Serm.* 38. 3 (Freeland, 164).

<sup>617</sup> Freeland, 214.

<sup>618</sup> See also *Serm.* 90. 2–3 for the complementarity of divine action and human response. P. Hervé de l'Incarnation, 'La grâce dans l'œuvre de S. Léon le Grand', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 22 (1955), 196, acknowledges the necessary complementarity of grace and human action implied in the term, *cooperator*, but claims that this is not an equal collaboration; for Leo it is grace that raises up human co-operation.

<sup>619</sup> In his treatment of Leo's ethics, Jalland, *The Life and Times of St. Leo the Great*, 429–30, notes the dearth of material on human freedom in Leo, but concludes: 'Yet in spite of the fact that [Leo] has so little to say on the subject of human freedom, he insists that grace remains inoperative without human co-operation' (p. 474).



somehow determined by the will of God or fated by prophetic utterance.<sup>620</sup> God's foreknowledge does not determine the acts he foresees; Judas could have responded differently to the mercy of Christ. Again, we see here a certain implicit recognition of human self-determination, but Leo is not concerned to establish it positively as a factor in its own right. Rather, free human choice—even in the case of Judas—is bounded by divine action, and is always presented as a response to his initiative.

If we compare Leo's account of the reception of salvation with that of Cyril, we observe two differences, at least in emphasis. First, Leo takes great care to frame any discussion of human action within the bounds of the prevenient grace of God. He is more insistent and careful here than Cyril, though not materially different. Secondly, Leo displays no concern to uphold human free self-determination in its own right, though again his implicit views appear to be consistent with Cyril's explicit claims. Yet the two accounts, given these differences, show notable similarities concerning the relation of faith with love/works, and the necessity for human co-operation with the work of God in salvation.

*2Christ as sacramentum and exemplum.* In our study of Cyril, we observed a twofold kinship with Christ that functions in the following manner. Our moral conformity to Christ through imitation is grounded in Christ's ontological assumption of, and re-creation of, our nature in himself, a re-creation that is then appropriated to us in a twofold manner through baptism and the Eucharist. Leo captures this twofold kinship even more neatly through the paired terms, *sacramentum* and *exemplum*.<sup>621</sup> The use of these terms in *Serm.* 63, where Christ as *sacramentum* is received through baptism and the Eucharist, has already been noted. Here I will examine Leo's use of this terminology more closely, giving special attention to his understanding of Christ as *exemplum*.

In *Serm.* 67 on the passion, Leo describes the divine purpose in salvation in terms of the formula of exchange. The Son of God

<sup>620</sup> *Serm.* 62. 4; 67. 2.

<sup>621</sup> Leo's concept of *sacramentum* and *exemplum* has received sustained attention in the literature. See especially de Soos, *Le Mystère liturgique*, 78–98; Hudon, *La Perfection chrétienne*, 141–247; Guzie, 'Exegetical and Sacramental Language', 208–13; and Holeyton, 'The Sacramental Language of S. Leo the Great', 115–31. Hudon, 141–86, helpfully shows that the term *sacramentum* in Leo can be applied to various levels: (1) to Christ himself as Saviour; (2) to the events by which Christ redeemed us; and (3) to the liturgical rites by which Christ and his salvation are effectively appropriated to us.

became the Son of man in order to suffer in the flesh for our salvation, and he assumed all our human weakness and infirmity, sin excepted, so that we might receive his divine power:

That way, he might bring his own [nature] to us and heal ours in himself (*in se*). A double remedy (*duplex remedium*) has been prepared for us miserable people by the Almighty Physician, one of which is in the mystery (*in sacramento*), the other in his example (*in exemplo*). Through the one, divine grace is conferred; by virtue of the other, human response is required. As God is the author of justification, so human beings are debtors of devotion. (*Serm.* 67. 5, Freeland, 294)<sup>622</sup>

The redemption achieved by Christ, here depicted representatively as Christ healing our nature in himself, provides at once a double remedy: the actual conferring of the grace of salvation, and the example for how those regenerated are meant to live. In consequence of this dual remedy, Leo tells us, both boasting and idleness are excluded. Boasting is excluded because we have received salvation freely; idleness, because we are enjoined now to imitate Christ in his obedience. He sums up this double truth by stating that ‘we cannot come to Christ except by Christ’, showing that our imitation of him is necessarily founded on our redemption in him (*Serm.* 67. 6, Freeland, 295).

A specification of this principle is found in Leo's exposition of Christ's cry of dereliction on the cross (Matt. 27: 46). In the act of transforming all the members of his body in himself (*in se*), Christ cries out in the voice of all the redeemed, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ For Leo, however, this cry is properly not a complaint (*querela*), but a teaching (*doctrina*). The Son cannot be abandoned, Leo assures us, by one from whom he cannot be separated. Rather, the Son asks on our behalf as sharing in our weakness and frailty. With a retrospective glance to Gethsemane, Leo identifies Christ's petition, that ‘this cup pass from me’, as expressive of the fear residing in our flesh, and then identifies Christ's immediate resolve to do the will of the Father as the healing of that fear (*Serm.* 67. 7). As Leo specifies more clearly in further descriptions of Christ's suffering, the human condition assumed by the Son (frailty, weakness of will, fear) is overcome and healed *within* Christ himself by the exercise of his divine will

<sup>622</sup> For Christ as *sacramentum* and *exemplum* in Leo, see also *Serm.* 21. 2; 25. 6; 35. 3; 39. 3; 72. 1.

and power.<sup>623</sup> Leo is none the less insistent on the real and full human condition assumed by the Son:

Nor, because all within him was full of mysteries, full of miracles, does this mean therefore that he wept with false tears, or ate food with false hunger, or slept with pretended sleep. He was despised in our lowliness, saddened in our sorrow, and crucified in our pain. For this did his mercy undergo the sufferings of our mortality, that he might save it. For this did his strength accept [these sufferings], that he might overcome them.<sup>624</sup>

Consequently, Christ in his healed and regenerated humanity becomes in Leo's view the model for our own renewed humanity. Just as in Christ the frailty of his own assumed human nature was continually strengthened and healed by the divine power in him, so our humanity, now regenerated, is constantly strengthened from within by the power of Christ, enabling us to imitate him and to grow into the image of God.<sup>625</sup>

It is in his sermons for the major fasts of the liturgical year that we find Leo's clearest explanation for how our attaining to Christ as *exemplum* through imitation results in our growth into the image of God. In *Serm.* 43, on the Lenten fast, Leo calls our attention to the putting off of the old self (Col. 3: 8–9) and the day-by-day renewal of a holy way of life (1 Cor. 4: 16). This twofold biblical exhortation, Leo reminds us, is founded on the prior fact of the Spirit's dwelling within us (1 Cor. 3: 16; 2 Cor. 6: 16), which makes such a response possible and requires that we honour the temple of God's dwelling through vigilant piety (*Serm.* 43. 1). Here we have in outline Leo's *sacramentum–exemplum* schema as the doctrinal foundation for ongoing sanctification.

Following a reminder that all human obedience is owing to the grace of God freely given (*Serm.* 43. 1), Leo warns his hearers against any form of presumption, recalling the weakness of human nature and the need to heal its recurrent bruises (*Serm.* 43. 2). The forty-day fast of Lent is for Leo not only a season of preparation for those seeking baptism, but also an occasion for Christians who are already reborn in baptism to defend their sanctification and to guard what they have received (*Serm.* 43. 3). The remainder of the sermon consists in a call for ongoing sanctification, dominated by metaphors of cleansing and polishing the

<sup>623</sup> *Serm.* 54. 4–5; 56. 2–3.

<sup>624</sup> *Serm.* 58. 4 (Freeland, 252).

<sup>625</sup> For Christ as our moral exemplar, see also *Serm.* 40. 3; 72. 4; 85. 1.

image of God within us (*Serm.* 43. 3–4). In this text, ongoing sanctification is viewed in terms of the restoration of the image already given through rebirth in the Spirit.

But in *Serm.* 92, for the Autumn fast, we see a different orientation to sanctification. Here rebirth in baptism is just a beginning to be built upon through our imitation of Christ. Leo's exposition centres around the twofold command to love God and neighbour (*Serm.* 92. 1). The gospel teaching on charity is not a rejection of the law, but rather its perfection, arousing us to a greater righteousness than even that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5: 20).

What is so just and what so worthy as that the creature made in the image and likeness of God should imitate its Creator? He has determined the restoration and sanctification of believers by the forgiveness of sins, so that, when the severity of vengeance is withdrawn and all punishment ceases, the guilty might be returned to innocence and the end of wrongdoing might become *the beginning of virtue (origo virtutum)*. (92. 1, Freeland, 386, emphasis added)

The link between imitation of God's love and growth into the image of God would appear to be a hallmark of Leo's doctrine of sanctification. Yet he ensures that even this love, which is our performance, is enabled by the grace of God and is the means by which God refashions us to his own image:

It is by loving that God re-fashions us to his image. That he might find in us the image of his goodness, he gives us the very means by which we can perform the works that we do—by lighting the lamps of our minds and inflaming us with the fire of his love, so that we might love not only him but also whatever he loves.<sup>626</sup>

For Leo, therefore, we attain to Christ as *exemplum* by imitating him in his love, and so are reformed progressively into the image of the one we imitate through the indwelling power of God in us.<sup>627</sup>

Leo's account of the human reception of salvation is quite clearly shaped by the issues of the Pelagian controversy, and

<sup>626</sup> *Serm.* 12. 1 (Freeland, 50). See also *Serm.* 95. 7.

<sup>627</sup> *Serm.* 53. 3. Jalland, *The Life and Times of St. Leo the Great*, 427–8, summarizes Leo's teaching on salvation thus: 'The final stage is *resemblance to God*. This is the chief end and perfection of virtue'. Hudon, *La Perfection chrétienne*, sums up Leo's doctrine of Christian perfection as 'transformation into the image of God' through regeneration in baptism and ethical imitation of Christ (p. 137), and states that by our imitation 'the Christian is divinized with the Lord' (p. 199).

consequently displays certain Augustinian characteristics.<sup>628</sup> First, Leo repeatedly insists, against any doctrine of mercy granted according to foreseen merits, that salvation in Christ is unmerited. In this he is at some variance with Cyril, who tends to account for God's election based on foreseen merits,<sup>629</sup> but in the end both authors ascribe priority to the grace of God and exclude any possibility of boasting in one's works. Secondly, against Pelagianism Leo wants to ensure that all progress in sanctification is accredited to God's action in us, even if the response of love is properly our act. In this he is at one with Cyril's teaching that all growth into the image of God is founded upon the indwelling of God's life in us. Finally, the accent on charity—a typical Augustinian trait—is the hallmark of Leo's doctrine of ongoing sanctification. Charity as the sum of all virtue is present in Cyril as well, but has greater prominence in Leo.

The distinctive feature of Leo's account, however, is the broad-ranging use he makes of Christ as *sacramentum* and *exemplum*, parallel in function to what I have identified in Cyril as a twofold kinship with Christ. Yet Leo may surpass Cyril here, at least in clarity of formulation if not also in breadth of application. By conceptualizing Christ and our share in him in terms of *sacramentum* and *exemplum*, Leo provides us with a Christologically centred doctrine of sanctification and divinization that integrally links together the person of Christ himself, his saving work, the celebration of the sacraments in the church, and our ethical imitation of Christ in charity.

## Partakers of the Divine Nature

It remains for us to enquire about the ontological implications of Leo's account. What does it mean for him to say that we have become 'partakers of the divine nature'? Leo cites 2 Pet. 1: 4 only twice in his extant works, but its use in context indicates that Leo

<sup>628</sup> Hervé, 'La Grâce dans l'œuvre de S. Léon le Grand', 212, dubs Leo 'an optimistic Augustinian' because he perceives in Leo an Augustinian view of grace coupled with a clear assertion of the universal offer of salvation.

<sup>629</sup> Weigl, *Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyrill*, 306–10, observes that Cyril does not address the question of whether divine election is based on foreseen merits, but judges that Cyril tends toward this conclusion. Guidici, 'La dottrina della grazia', 23–7, concludes that in this respect Cyril follows Origen rather than Augustine in adopting a *post-praevisa merita* account of divine election.

interprets this text in a way similar to Cyril.<sup>630</sup> It describes a new state of relationship with God brought about through baptism into the Incarnate Christ through the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this section is to investigate how Leo understands the change (*commutatio*) effected in our nature through Christ's redemption of it, and how this understanding compares with Cyril's view described above.

The language of participation is somewhat less frequent in Leo than in Cyril, but none the less plays an important role in his depiction of salvation through Christ. Like Cyril, he employs a set of related terms as synonyms (as nouns, *communio*, *communicatio*, *participatio*, and *consors*; as verbs *communicare* and *participare*), all of which are also found in the Vulgate as Latin equivalents for the corresponding Greek biblical words examined in Chapter 4. Leo employs the concept of participation in at least three senses. First, he speaks of a participation of individuals in a common human nature.<sup>631</sup> Secondly, like Cyril and following the usage in Heb. 2: 14, he speaks of the Incarnation as the Son's participation in human nature, by which he means his full assumption of our nature, body and soul.<sup>632</sup> But his most common use concerns the ontological or dynamic participation of created things in God.

Leo's critique of the Priscillianists in *Ep.* 15. 5 furnishes us with his clearest statement of this third use. Rejecting the notion that the human soul is part of the divinity, he asserts that nothing created can ever be so sublime such as to be God in its very nature. The Triune God is, Leo insists, complete in himself, while everything else has been created from nothing (*ex nihilo*). Human beings are simply partakers (*participes*) of qualities such as truth, wisdom, and justice, while in God these qualities are identical with his essence. God alone is exempt from the need of participation (*participationis*), because there is nothing lacking or changeable in God, whose very 'property' (*proprium*) is 'to be' (*esse*) (Feltoe, 22). Participation in this sense denotes a distinction between God who possesses (and so is) a quality in its fullness, and created beings who share in that quality partially through a participatory relationship to God.<sup>633</sup> Here

<sup>630</sup> *Serm.* 21. 3; 25. 5.

<sup>631</sup> *Serm.* 41. 3; 89. 5.

<sup>632</sup> *Serm.* 38. 2; 60. 2; 66. 4.

<sup>633</sup> This principle is evident in Leo's description of how Peter shares in the governance of Christ's church. Leo portrays Christ speaking to Peter: 'You are also rock because you are made firm in my strength. What belongs properly to my own power you share with me by participation (*participatione*)' (*Serm.* 83. 1, Freeland, 357).

in brief is the same concept of participation we found in Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Cyril. Leo's use of it, as we shall see, is primarily employed to describe our dynamic participation in the divine nature through the Incarnation of the Son.

Leo's description of the glorification of Christ's own humanity, first in the transfiguration, and then in the resurrection, provides a window onto his understanding of the nature of our redemption. We have already seen how Leo's narrative of salvation is completed in the resurrection and enthronement of Christ. In his sermons on the transfiguration and resurrection, Leo reveals with greater clarity the nature of our redeemed humanity as manifested in Christ's own glorification.

We possess just one sermon from Leo on the transfiguration (*Serm.* 51), based on the account in Matt. 17. He alerts us at the start that the twofold human and divine reality in the one Christ is to be the subject of his comments. The point of the transfiguration, Leo tells us, was to strengthen the vigour of the faith recently confessed by Peter (Matt. 16), and to fortify the disciples to persevere in the face of the upcoming harshness of the Cross. But a second, more distant purpose was also in view:

But with no less foresight the hope of the early Church was made firm, so that it might know with what sort of exchange (*commutatione*) the whole body of Christ was to be given, and that the members might promise to themselves a sharing (*consortium*) in the honour of the one who had shone as their Head. (*Serm.* 51. 3, Freeland, 220)

The biblical citations that follow (Matt. 13: 43; Rom. 8: 18; Col. 3: 3–4) certify that Leo has the final resurrection in mind here. The transfiguration, then, is for Leo a revelation of the transformation that will occur for all at the resurrection when the whole body of Christ will experience the same glorification witnessed here. And importantly for Leo, what is revealed here is the divine power of the Son shining in his humanity. For Leo, Christ's promise that some would not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom (Matt. 16: 28) is fulfilled on the Mount of Transfiguration in the vision of his glorified humanity.<sup>634</sup>

<sup>634</sup> Cyril's exposition of the transfiguration follows similar lines to what we see here in Leo. See Cyril's *Homily on the Transfiguration* (*Hom. Diver.* ix, PG 77, 1009b–1016b), which is nearly identical to his *Hom.* 51, *In Luc.* 9: 27–56 (Smith, 226–8). See also *In Matt.* 16: 27–8 ; 17: 6 (Reuss, 217–19). For Cyril's theology of the transfiguration, see John A. McGuckin, 'The Patristic Exegesis of the Transfiguration', *SP* 18 (1985), 335–9; and Christopher N. Veniamin, 'The Transformation of Christ in Greek Patristic Literature', D.Phil. thesis (Oxford University, 1992), 118–36.

Leo's two sermons on the resurrection (*Serm.* 71, 72) furnish further clarification on the glorified Christ as the pattern for the nature of our redemption. Leo's chief concern throughout the first sermon is that his hearers may be found to be partakers (*consortes*) of Christ's resurrection, moving from death to life even now while in the body (*Serm.* 71. 1). Towards this end, Leo recounts the story of Christ's assumption of our nature, using the First–Second Adam paradigm from 1 Cor. 15: 47–9 to define the change (*commutatione*) from the earthly state to the heavenly one. For Leo, the Son assumed not only the substance (*substantiam*), but even the condition (*conditionem*) of our sinful nature. The divinity (*deitas*), which did not withdraw from either the soul or body in Christ's death, 'joined by its power what it had divided by its power' (*Serm.* 71. 2; Freeland, 312).

Leo views the resurrection appearances as witnessing primarily to the divine and human natures which remain inseparable in the resurrected Christ. Building on Paul's assertion in 2 Cor. 5: 16, that we no longer regard Christ from a human point of view, Leo explains the nature of the resurrection:

Our Lord's resurrection did not put an end to his flesh, but changed it. No, the substance (*substantia*) was not destroyed by an increase in power. Its state (*qualitas*) changed, but the nature (*natura*) did not give out. His body which could be crucified—became impassible. His body—which could be killed—became immortal. What could be wounded became incorruptible...Consequently, it both remains the same with respect to its essence (*per essentiam*) and does not remain the same with respect to its glory (*per gloriam*). (*Serm.* 71. 4, Freeland, 313)

The change in human nature effected in the resurrection of Christ is not one of nature or essence, but one of quality, of an increase in glory. And Leo plainly states that Christ's resurrection is the beginning of our own resurrection and the pattern of our hope, prompting us to rejoice in 'the exaltation of our nature' (*naturae provectione*). And notably, in consequence of this full glorification of our nature in Christ, we are meant to live now as new creations (2 Cor. 5: 17), in imitation of the resurrection begun in Christ.



In his second sermon on the resurrection, Leo describes the change in our nature in more explicitly participationist terms:

Yet the merciful God wanted to help the creature made in his own image (Gen. 1: 27) through his only Son Jesus Christ—in such a way that the restoration (*reparatio*) of its nature should not be outside of that nature, and that the second condition (*conditio*) should advance beyond the dignity of its original state...It was a great thing to have received a form (*formam*) from Christ (*a Christo*), but greater still to have its substance (*substantiam*) in Christ (*in Christo*)...As we must not doubt our participation (*consortio*) in his glory, so we must not doubt his participation (*communione*) in our nature. (*Serm.* 72. 2, Freeland, 316–17, adjusted)

For Leo, the restoration of our nature through the one who assumed our nature is in fact an advance in glory for that nature, because now its substance is in Christ and so participates to a greater degree in divine glory. The formula of exchange in the final sentence plays on an equivocal sense of *consortio/communione*, terms that normally function as synonyms in Leo. Christ participates in our nature by actually assuming that nature in himself; we participate in his glory, not by assuming the divine nature, but by being assumed into Christ's glorified humanity, thus receiving the advance of glory that pertains to his humanity. At the close of the sermon, Leo explains that the exaltation of Christ in Phil. 2: 9 has reference to the 'exaltation of his assumed manhood in him', which Christ prepares also for us, so that we might have 'participation (*participationem*) in this ineffable gift' (*Serm.* 72. 6, Freeland, 320, adjusted).<sup>635</sup>

In outline, Leo's account of our participation in the divine nature is quite similar to Cyril's. The Incarnate Christ as the mediator of the human and divine, and so the ground of the human share in divine glory, is neatly captured in the following texts:

I have united you to myself, and I have become the Son of Man, so that you can be the sons of God. Granted that I am one in both, nevertheless, where I am conformed to you, I am less than the Father; but in that I am not divided from the Father, I am also greater than myself. And so, let the nature that is less than the Father go to the Father, and let the flesh be where the Word always is.<sup>636</sup>

<sup>635</sup> See also *Ep.* 35. 2, *Serm.* 64. 3; 66. 4 for our share in the glorified humanity of Christ through participation.

<sup>636</sup> *Serm.* 77. 5 (Freeland, 344, adjusted).

He united humanity to himself in such a way that he remained God, unchangeable. He imparted divinity to human beings in such a way that he did not destroy, but enriched them, by glorification (*glorificatione*).<sup>637</sup>

Like Cyril, Leo describes salvation in terms of participation in Christ; and like Cyril, Leo conceives of this participation in divinity, not in terms of the destruction or surpassing, but of the exaltation and glorification of our humanity. Yet in Leo there is no indication of what I have identified in Cyril as a twofold relationship of Christ's humanity to ours, whereby in one sense Christ as man serves as the pattern for our divinization, and in another sense his humanity attains to qualities that exceed our own. In Leo, Christ's humanity is presented simply as the pattern for ours. Perhaps by making such a neat distinction between the two natures in Christ, Leo is less inclined to speak of Christ's humanity taking on divine-like qualities in itself.

## Conclusions

We are now in a position to address the two questions with which we began the comparison between Cyril and Leo. First, to what extent do their narratives of salvation coincide? Secondly, is Leo justified in his claim that in his teaching on the Incarnation he is saying the same thing as Cyril? In answer to the first question, notwithstanding certain differences in emphasis, in formulation, and in the biblical foundation for the narrative of salvation, the similarities between the two respective accounts of salvation are striking and extensive. Cyril and Leo both present a narrative soteriology centred on the Incarnation in which the eternal Son of God accomplishes our redemption in himself representatively through a progressive restoration of our nature. Both authors describe a twofold kinship with Christ in which our participation in Christ through baptism and the Eucharist grounds an ethical kinship with Christ through our ongoing imitation of him. And both depict the final goal of salvation

<sup>637</sup> *Serm.* 91. 2 (Freeland, 384). M. J. Nicolas, 'La Doctrine christologique de saint Léon le Grand', *Revue Thomiste*, 51 (1951), 654, concludes that for Leo, reparation of sin is only a condition of a salvation that consists 'essentially in the divinization of man by God'.

in terms of an elevation and glorification of our nature through participation in the divine nature. The soteriologies of Cyril and Leo are remarkably coincident. Given this similarity, Leo's soteriology may be characterized in terms of 'divinization', but this must be done instructively and with care, given that he makes no use of the standard terminology of divinization (*deificari*, *deificatus*) in his writings.<sup>638</sup> It is ironic that this Latin Father, frequently identified as following in the Greek tradition of 'salvation as divinization', never employs the characteristic vocabulary.

What of Leo's claim that he has taught the same truth about Christ as Cyril? Their respective Christologies are plainly not identical either in terminology or in conception. But are they compatible and even complementary? Can we confirm Leo in his claim to teach the same truth as Cyril concerning Christ, even if in somewhat different terms? The striking similarity between their accounts of salvation already presents weighty indirect evidence for the compatibility of their accounts of Christ, given that soteriology and Christology are closely intertwined in both authors. Seen through the lens of his soteriology, Leo's claim to teach only what Cyril has taught concerning Christ seems a fair and accurate conclusion.

A mutual agreement on certain key features of Christology, despite differences in terminology and conception, provides more direct evidence in support of Leo's claim. Leo conceives of the Incarnate Word as one person in two perfect and complete natures. His tendency is to describe the one Christ in terms of his complete humanity and complete divinity. Cyril conceives of the Incarnation as the divine Word becoming man, and his emphasis is on the one reality, the one nature, of the Word become flesh. But they are in full agreement that Christ is one person, and that this person is the eternal Word himself now made flesh. And they are in full agreement that the Word made flesh is at once both complete in his humanity and complete in his divinity. They agree concerning the *communicatio idiomatum*, and I have attempted to show that Leo's description of the two forms (*forma*) of Christ is equivalent to Cyril's representation of Christ acting 'as God' and 'as man'.

On the evidence of both soteriology and Christology, I propose that Leo's claim to teach the same truth as Cyril concerning Christ can be substantially sustained.<sup>639</sup>

<sup>638</sup> A computer search on *PG* 54 (Leo's sermons and letters) and *CSEL* 138, 138A (Leo's sermons) yields no positive results for terms in the *deificare* word group.

<sup>639</sup> For the fundamental agreement between the Christologies of Cyril and Leo, see Galtier, 'S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie et S. Leon le Grand à Chalcédoine'.

## Application to Perceived East–West Differences

In a brief attempt to apply these findings, I offer here a preliminary sketch of how the comparison of Cyril with the Western Fathers, Leo and Augustine, might inform and even adjust commonly perceived East–West differences in two specific cases that pertain to our topic: (1) salvation as divinization; and (2) the role of the Holy Spirit in the economy of redemption.

### Salvation as Divinization

In contemporary theological discourse the Eastern understanding of salvation is commonly depicted in terms of divinization (or deification) and set in contrast to a Western view of salvation that is said to be concerned more with redemption from sin, and especially with penal substitution theories of atonement. The Eastern view is often characterized in terms of a physical theory of salvation that is grounded in the Incarnation and focused on the overcoming of death. The Western view is normally portrayed in terms of a juridical theory of atonement rooted in Christ's sacrificial atonement for sin on the Cross. Gustaf Aulén rejects the physicalist reading of the Greek Fathers, yet he none the less demarcates a Latin theory of atonement which he finds rooted in the Western Fathers and fully grown in Anselm.<sup>640</sup> Gerald Bonner cites the Orthodox theologian, Vladimir Lossky, as arguing that, 'while the Eastern Fathers teach deification, Augustine and the Latins have seen man's final perfection in redemption through justification by faith, or in a rationalistic understanding of the Beatific Vision'.<sup>641</sup> Jouko Martikainen, reflecting on the Lutheran–Orthodox dialogues (1970–4) from a Reformation perspective, states: 'Without any hesitation we can claim that in the Eastern tradition deification is the most central concept for expressing salvation...The Lutheran tradition, on the contrary, employs personalistic concepts and considers that justification by grace alone is most central in salvation.'<sup>642</sup> Often lacking in these

<sup>640</sup> *Christus Victor*, trans. A. G. Herbert (London: SPCK, 1970), 16–35, 81–100.

<sup>641</sup> 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 370.

<sup>642</sup> 'Man's Salvation: Deification or Justification?', *Sobornost*, 7 (1976), 181, 189. See also Yves Congar, 'La Déification dans la tradition spirituelle de l'Orient', *La Vie spirituelle*, 43 (1935), suppl., 99–107, for a rather sharp distinction between Eastern and Western conceptions of salvation.

broad brush-stroke descriptions is any real acknowledgement of distinctions *within* the Western tradition, for example, distinctions between early and late medieval theology, or between Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed theology.

Do we find evidence for this kind of distinction in Cyril, Leo, or Augustine? All three share in broad outline a common soteriology that can rightly be termed, 'salvation as divinization', if divinization is given its properly comprehensive sense (though this approach is perhaps less central in Augustine, as we have seen). They share a narrative of salvation which is grounded in the Incarnation and expressed most adequately through various formulae of exchange, according to which the Son of God assumed human nature so that the human race might participate in his divine life and glory.<sup>643</sup> Yet their shared notion of divinization must be seen to include the whole sweep of Christ's death, resurrection, and enthronement, in which Christ's sacrifice for sin is integral and essential. In none of these authors can a division between a physicalist-Incarnationist approach and a juridical-redemption based approach be sustained. The typical manner of characterizing the East–West difference finds little foothold here.

It may nevertheless be admitted that within a common conception of salvation each author displays characteristic elements of his theological heritage. Cyril shows marks of his Eastern heritage, accenting the language of divine life and Christ's victory over death. Leo and Augustine manifest a concern for purification from Adam's sin and place great emphasis on the ethical imitation of Christ. Within a common conception of salvation, then, certain characteristic East–West marks can be identified, which give to each account its particular quality. But Martikainen's conclusion, that 'justification and deification are not opposites, but they are not complementary to each other either',<sup>644</sup> however applicable it may be for the contemporary Orthodox–Lutheran dialogue, cannot be applied to Cyril, Leo, or Augustine, for each of whom these two elements are inseparable. The differences that have developed between the East and the West, and are most sharply in evidence between present-day Eastern Orthodox and certain

<sup>643</sup> Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 369, observes that the declaration that the Son became man that we might become gods 'teaches deification without actually employing the word'.

<sup>644</sup> Martikainen, 'Man's Salvation', 191.

Reformation churches, require a more careful and nuanced handling than they typically receive. And in terms of the patristic heritage, the differences appear to be ones in emphasis, not sharp distinctions in kind.<sup>645</sup>

## The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Economy of Redemption

The Western Christian tradition is often critiqued for having a deficient pneumatology. This position has been argued most forcibly by Vladimir Lossky, who contends that the Western trinitarian doctrine of the *Filioque* produced a subordination of the Spirit to the Son in the immanent Trinity, resulting in the narrowing and depersonalizing of the Spirit's role in the economy. Though tracing the root of the problem to Augustine's doctrine of the *Filioque*,<sup>646</sup> he considers Anselm's theory of substitutionary atonement as marking the culmination of a theory of redemption that allows no practical space for the work of the Spirit.

If the thought of Anselm could stop at the redeeming work of Christ, isolating it from the rest of Christian teaching, constricting the horizons of tradition, it was precisely because in his time the West had already lost the true idea of the Person of the Holy Spirit, relegating Him to a secondary position by making him into a kind of lieutenant or deputy of the Son.<sup>647</sup>

Though Lossky is perhaps the most outspoken proponent of this view and is responsible for its wide dissemination, others from the Western tradition have granted some measure of accuracy to one or other aspect of his wide-ranging critique, often with greater nuance. Thomas Marsh faults the Augustinian notion of the activity of the persons of the Trinity *ad extra* as leaving no room

<sup>645</sup> Kallistos Ware, 'Salvation and Theosis in Orthodox Theology', in W. Schneemelcher (ed.), *Luther et la Réforme allemande dans une perspective oecuménique* (Geneva: Éditions du Centre Orthodoxe, 1983), 167–84, presents a more nuanced account of 'salvation as divinization' in Orthodoxy and accents affinities with Western views. Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 370, warns against the 'temptation to make generalized contrasts between the Greek East and the Latin West', and suggests that 'the resemblances between the two traditions, on this issue at least [i.e. deification], are greater than the differences'.

<sup>646</sup> Lewis Ayres, 'Augustine's Trinitarian Theology', in R. Dodaro and G. Lawless (eds.), *Augustine and his Critics* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 72–3 n. 7, suggests that Augustine's pneumatology does in fact satisfy Lossky's own understanding of the relationship between person and nature in the Trinity.

<sup>647</sup> *In the Image and Likeness of God* (London: Mowbray, 1975), 103.

for the action of the Spirit in the economy as witnessed to in the Scriptural testimony.<sup>648</sup> Alasdair Heron allows that the Western view may have led to the activity of the Spirit being overshadowed by Christ and so swallowed up by the activity of the church.<sup>649</sup> Yves Congar acknowledges that 'the Holy Spirit has sometimes been forgotten' in the Western tradition, with the Eucharist, the Virgin Mary, or the church to some extent taking over the place of the Spirit.<sup>650</sup>

Do we find a diminished and depersonalized pneumatology in Leo or Augustine? Looking first to Lossky's critique of Western trinitarian theology, we discover in both a straightforward confession of the *Filioque*,<sup>651</sup> and additionally a certain form of economic appropriation to the persons of the Trinity.<sup>652</sup> Yet Leo plainly also teaches a distinction of roles in the one divine work in the economy. In *Serm.* 77 he writes: 'Although the person of the one sent is one, of the one sending is another, of the one promising is another, at the same time there is made clear for us both unity and Trinity...The mercy of the Trinity divided (*divisit*) for itself the work of our restoration so that the Father was appeased, the Son was the appeaser, and the Holy Spirit enkindled the process.'<sup>653</sup> His prime concern is to ensure that no work is ascribed to the agency of one divine person as separate from the others.

Concerning the role of the Spirit in the divine economy, we noted that Augustine's theology of the Spirit appears thin at points, but this initial impression is offset by a deeper recognition of the central role of the Spirit as the link between the New Covenant in Christ and the divine gift of love that is the prime mark of the New Covenant. For Augustine, the Spirit is the

<sup>648</sup> *The Triune God* (Dublin: Columba, 1994), 136, 152.

<sup>649</sup> *The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit in the Bible, in the History of Christian Thought and in Recent Theology* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1983), 94–7.

<sup>650</sup> *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 159–64.

<sup>651</sup> For the *Filioque* in Leo, see *Serm.* 75. 3; 76. 2.

<sup>652</sup> Marsh, *The Triune God*, 134–5, describes Augustine's principle of economic appropriation as predicating to the three persons equally (and so to God absolutely) what Scripture and faith assign to just one of the persons. In this view all *opera divina ad extra* are the work of the three persons united in essence. For appropriation in Leo, see *Serm.* 76. 2.

<sup>653</sup> *Serm.* 77. 2, 3 (Freeland, 342). For a similar account in Cyril of unity and distinction in the economic activity of the Trinity, see 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 Weinandy and Keating (eds.), *The Theology of Cyril of Alexandria* 108–9.

precondition for all good works and the source of our participation in the divine life. Likewise, we observed in Leo's sermons for Pentecost a wide-ranging role for the Spirit in the divine economy, from the work of Creation, to the giving of the Law and inspiration of the prophets, and finally to the Incarnation of Christ and regeneration of the believer in baptism. The work of the Spirit, both in the act of regeneration by which we become partakers of the divine nature, and in the ongoing work of sanctification, are important and central in Leo's account of salvation. The respective pneumatologies of Augustine and Leo offer little purchase for the charge of a diminished and depersonalized pneumatology that Lossky levels at the Western tradition.<sup>654</sup> Still, Cyril's narrative of the Spirit in the divine economy is more far-reaching. His handling of the baptism of Jesus as the occasion of the return of the Spirit to the human race unveils a broad, overarching narrative of the gift, forfeiture, and reacquisition of the Spirit, from Adam to Christ and even into the age to come. And his particular understanding of the Spirit as defining the watershed between the Old and New Covenant through a qualitatively different and superior mode of indwelling captures with remarkable clarity the New Testament's own portrayal of the new creation in Christ.

<sup>654</sup> Lossky's own proposal of 'a double dispensation' of the Word and the Spirit, whereby Christ has the function of uniting humanity on the level of nature, and the Spirit occupies the role of granting to each human person the divine life individually as persons, suffers from grave difficulties (*The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge: Clarke, 1991), 167–70). Further, it is difficult to see how his proposal could be supported by reference to Cyril (whom he cites frequently). Cyril formulates the respective activities of Christ and the Spirit in terms of the closest possible union, and he repeatedly describes the work of the Spirit as the regeneration of our *nature* (see e. g. *In Joel* 2: 28–9 ; Pusey, *In XII Proph.*, i. 337). For the unity of the work of the Son and Spirit in Cyril, see S. Lyonnet, 'S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie et 2 Cor. 3: 17', *Biblica*, 32 (1951), 25–31.



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