

**Commentary  
on the  
Writings of  
Cyprian of  
Carthage**

**Born 200 A.D. - died 258 A.D.**

**by William A. Smee**

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## Introduction

Cyprian was born close to when Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons, France, died in 202 A.D. The writings of Irenaeus and Cyprian give us a telescopic view of the thinking of the early Church. It is helpful to look into the writings of Cyprian to see how the Church progressed in its teaching as it compares with the themes in the Old and New Testaments. The Church in Cyprian's time had undergone several great persecutions. After the apostles who started the Church had all died, there were none but the bishops to settle doctrinal issues. Traditions began to develop which were thought to be based on the teaching of the apostles. Because the early Church did not have all of the writings of the apostles gathered together in one volume, it was difficult to understand the one Scripture in the context of all of the Scriptures. Cyprian will also refer to some of the apocryphal books in his writing to prove his point. Understanding his thinking will help us in the Church today to let go of our past struggles with tradition, and to continue to grow in grace and knowledge to the full measure of the stature of Christ.

Now the Church in the time of his writing was a little over 200 years old. We will begin by looking at an introductory summary in the **ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V**. Then after that we will take quotes of paragraphs in Cyprian's writings from this volume so that the reader will understand the context of the quote. Then after each quote we will show a **Comment**. The pages of the quotes, both in the hard volume and in the pdf, will be noted. You can view the pdf of **ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V** online at <https://ccel.org/fathers>.

The following quote of the introductory summary is somewhat long, but a good summary of Cyprian's writings.

### **Introductory Notice to Cyprian. (Excerpt)**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 264-266, col. 1, Page 663-665 (pdf)**

Little is known of the early history of Thascius Cyprian (born probably about 200 a.d.) until the period of his intimacy with the Carthaginian presbyter Cæcilius, which led to his conversion a.d. 246. That he was born of respectable parentage, and highly educated for the profession of a rhetorician, is all that can be said with any degree of certainty. At his baptism he assumed the name of his friend Cæcilius, and devoted himself, with all the energies of an ardent and vigorous mind, to the study and practice of Christianity.

His ordination and his elevation to the episcopate rapidly followed his conversion. With some resistance on his own part, and not without great objections on the part of older presbyters, who saw themselves superseded by his promotion, the popular urgency constrained him to accept the office of Bishop of Carthage (a.d. 248), which he held until his martyrdom (a.d. 258).

The writings of Cyprian, apart from their intrinsic worth, have a very considerable historical interest and value, as illustrating the social and religious feelings and usages that then prevailed among the members of the Christian community. Nothing can enable us more vividly to realize the intense convictions—the high-strained enthusiasm—which formed the common

level of the Christian experience, than does the indignation with which the prelate denounces the evasions of those who dared not confess, or the lapses of those who shrank from martyrdom. Living in the atmosphere of persecution, and often in the immediate presence of a lingering death, the professors of Christianity were nerved up to a wonderful contempt of suffering and of worldly enjoyment, and saw every event that occurred around them in the glow of their excited imagination; so that many circumstances were sincerely believed and honestly recorded, which will not be for a moment received as true by the calm and critical reader. The account given by Cyprian in his treatise on the Lapsed may serve as an illustration. Of this Dean Milman observes: "In what a high-wrought state of enthusiasm must men have been, who could relate and believe such statements as miraculous!" (Milman's *History of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 190, note *b*. See note, p. 266.)

Before being advanced to the episcopate, Cyprian had written his Epistle to Donatus shortly after his baptism (a.d. 246); his treatise, or fragment of a treatise, on the Vanity of Idols; and his three books of Testimonies against the Jews. In the following translation the order of Migne has been adopted, which places the letter to Donatus, as seems most natural, first among the Epistles, instead of with the Treatises.

The breaking out of the Decian persecution (a.d. 250) induced Cyprian to retire into concealment for a time; and his retreat gave occasion to a sharp attack upon his conduct, in a letter from the Roman to the Carthaginian clergy. During this year he wrote many letters from his place of concealment to the clergy and others at Rome and at Carthage, controlling, warning, directing, and exhorting, and in every way maintaining his episcopal superintendence in his absence, in all matters connected with the well-being of the Church.

The first 39 of the epistles, excepting the one to Donatus, were probably written during the period of Cyprian's retirement. He appears to have returned to his public duties early in June, 251. Then follow many letters between himself and Cornelius bishop of Rome, and others, on subjects connected with the schisms of Novatian, Novatus, and Felicissimus, and with the condition of those who had been perverted by them. The question proposed in Epistle 52 was settled in the Council that was held in May, 252; and the reference to that anticipated decision limits the date of the letter to about April in the same year. In the 53d Epistle, Cyprian is alluding to the impending persecution of Gallus, under which Cornelius was banished in July, 252. The 56th Epistle was a letter of congratulation to Cornelius on his banishment; and therefore it must have been written before September 14th in that year, the date of the death of Cornelius. Lucius, his successor, was also banished, and was congratulated on his return by Cyprian in Epistle 57, which therefore must have been written about the end of November, 252. The 59th Epistle is referred by Bishop Pearson to the beginning of the year 253.

There seems nothing to suggest the date of Epistles 60 and 61, except the probability that they were written during a time of peace; and for this reason they are referred to the beginning of Cyprian's episcopate, before the outbreak of the Decian persecution, a.d. 249. It is usual to assign Epistle 64 to the same year, or at least to a very early period of Cyprian's official life; but it seems scarcely likely that his episcopal counsel should have been sought by a brother bishop in a matter of practice, until he had had some experience; and as it was probably written at a time of peace, when discipline had become relaxed, the date 253 seems preferable. The 68th Epistle is easily dated by the reference, on page 246, to an episcopate of six years' duration; and

it must therefore have been written in a.d. 254. On the 14th September, Cyprian was banished to Curubis by the Emperor Valerian. From his place of exile he wrote Epistle 76, which was replied to in Epistles 77, 78, and 79. Doubts are entertained as to the date of Epistle 80, whether it should be referred to a.d.250 or 257. Pamelius prefers the latter date, on the ground that the Rogatianus to whom it is inscribed was one who survived the Decian persecution, and a younger man than the one who, as he supposes, was declared to have suffered martyrdom at the date of this Epistle. This, however, seems very unsatisfactory; and the weight of authority is in favour of the earlier date. The remaining Epistles are easily limited by their contents to the period immediately preceding Cyprian's martyrdom.

For the sake of uniformity, it has been thought well to adhere to the arrangement of Migne, in the order of the Epistles as well as in their divisions. For the convenience of reference, however, the number of each Epistle in the Oxford edition is appended in a note. For a similar reason, the general form of Migne's text has been used in the following translation; but the use of other texts and of preceding translations has not been rejected in the endeavour to approximate to the sense of the author. Moreover, such various readings as might suggest different shades of meaning in doubtful passages have been given.

The Translator has only to add, that, as a rule, an exact rendering has been sought after, sometimes in preference to a version in fluent English. But, except in cases where the corruption or obscurity of the text seems insurmountable, the meaning of the writer is believed to be given fairly and intelligibly. The style of Cyprian, like that of his master Tertullian, is marked much more by vehemence than perspicuity, and it is often no easy matter to give exact expression in another language to the idea contained in the original text. Cyprian's Life, as written by his own deacon Pontius, is subjoined.

**Comment:** Carthage is on the North African coast in Tunisia, about 100 miles west of Sicily, Italy. Carthage was the capital city of Ancient Carthage, on the eastern side of the Lake of Tunis in what is now Tunisia. Carthage was one of the most important trading hubs of the Ancient Mediterranean and one of the most affluent cities of the classical world.

So Cyprian was converted in a.d. 246 after "the period of his intimacy with the Carthaginian presbyter Cæcilius". Then in a.d. 248, "His ordination and his elevation to the episcopate rapidly followed his conversion". The "office of Bishop of Carthage" in a.d. 248 is what "he held until his martyrdom" in a.d. 258. The writings of Cyprian do illustrate very well the "social and religious feelings and usages that then prevailed among the members of the Christian community".

This was the time of Decius (249-251), leader of the first Empire-wide persecution, and the persecution of Valerian (253-260), who blamed Christians for the Empire's woes.

Now since "Cyprian had written his epistle to Donatus shortly after his baptism, in a.d. 246, and before his ordination to the episcopate, there was not a lot of time for him to have studied the Scriptures. Cyprian must have been very dependent on the thinking of the Carthaginian presbyter, Caecilius, who lead him in his conversion.

Tertullian lived between a.d. 155 to .a.d. 220. "Tertullian was a prolific early Christian author from Carthage in the Roman province of Africa. He was the first Christian author to produce an extensive corpus of Latin Christian literature. He was an early Christian apologist

and a polemicist against heresy, including contemporary Christian Gnosticism.”

**<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tertullian>**

Now it is interesting to note where the word “bishop” came from. The Old English word *bisceop*, from which we get our modern English word *bishop*, comes to us from the Latin word *episcopus*. Like many other Latin words connected with religion and the church, this was borrowed from Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written. We will see that the term “bishop” in the Greek means “overseer”. We will also see that the apostle Paul equated all bishops with elders.

So when we read above that the “older presbyters, who saw themselves superseded by his promotion”, and had great “objections” to his ordination, it is evident that a hierarchy of clergy was forming in the Church. As we progress in Cyprian’s writings, we will see what made up this hierarchy of clergy.

But first, we will look at a eulogy of “Cyprian’s Life, as written by his own deacon Pontius”.

## The Eulogy of Pontius

### The Eulogy of Pontius, paragraphs 5-9

**The Life and Passion of Cyprian, Bishop and Martyr. By Pontius the Deacon.  
To Moyses and Maximus and the Rest of the Confessors.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 269-270, col. 1, Page 669-671 (pdf)**

5. It would be tedious to go through individual circumstances, it would be laborious to enumerate all his doings. **For the proof of his good works I think that this one thing is enough, that by the judgment of God and the favour of the people, he was chosen to the office of the priesthood and the degree of the episcopate while still a neophyte, and, as it was considered, a novice.** Although still in the early days of his faith, and in the untaught season of his spiritual life, a generous disposition so shone forth in him, that although not yet resplendent with the glitter of office, but only of hope, he gave promise of entire trustworthiness for the priesthood that was coming upon him. Moreover, I will not pass over that remarkable fact, of the way in which, when the entire people by God's inspiration leapt forward in his love and honour, he humbly withdrew, giving place to men of older standing, and thinking himself unworthy of a claim to so great honour, so that he thus became more worthy. For he is made more worthy who dispenses with what he deserves. And with this excitement were the eager people at that time inflamed, desiring with a spiritual longing, as the event proved, not only a bishop,—for in him whom then with a latent foreboding of divinity they were in such wise demanding, they were seeking not only a priest,—but moreover a future martyr. A crowded fraternity was besieging the doors of the house, and throughout all the avenues of access an anxious love was circulating. Possibly that apostolic experience might then have happened to him, as he desired, of being let down through a window, had he also been equal to the apostle in the honour of ordination. It was plain to be seen that all the rest were expecting his coming with an anxious spirit of suspense, and received him when he came with excessive joy. I speak unwillingly, but I must needs speak. Some resisted him, even that he might overcome them; yet with what gentleness, how patiently, how benevolently he gave them indulgence! how mercifully he forgave them, reckoning them afterwards, to the astonishment of many, among his closest and, most intimate friends! For who would not be amazed at the forgetfulness of a mind so retentive?

6. Henceforth who is sufficient to relate the manner in which he bore himself?—what pity was his? what vigour? how great his mercy? how great his strictness? So much sanctity and grace beamed from his face that it confounded the minds of the beholders. His countenance was grave and joyous. Neither was his severity gloomy, nor his affability excessive, but a mingled tempering of both; so that it might be doubted whether he most deserved to be revered or to be loved, except that he deserved both to be revered and to be loved. And his dress was not out of harmony with his countenance, being itself also subdued to a fitting mean. The pride of the world did not inflame him, nor yet did an excessively affected penury make him sordid, because this latter kind of attire arises no less from boastfulness, than does such an ambitious frugality from ostentation. But what did he as bishop in respect of the poor, whom as a catechumen he had loved? Let the priests of piety consider, or those whom the teaching of their very rank has



trained to the duty of good works, or those whom the common obligation of the Sacrament has bound to the duty of manifesting love. **Cyprian the bishop's *cathedra* received such as he had been before,—it did not make him so.**

7. And therefore for such merits he at once obtained the glory of proscription also. For nothing else was proper than that he who in the secret recesses of his conscience was rich in the full honour of religion and faith, should moreover be renowned in the publicly diffused report of the Gentiles. He might, indeed, at that time, in accordance with the rapidity wherewith he always attained everything, have hastened to the crown of martyrdom appointed for him, especially when with repeated calls he was frequently demanded for the lions, had it not been needful for him to pass through all the grades of glory, and thus to arrive at the highest, and had not the impending desolation needed the aid of so fertile a mind. For conceive of him as being at that time taken away by the dignity of martyrdom. Who was there to show the advantage of grace, advancing by faith? Who was there to restrain virgins to the fitting discipline of modesty and a dress worthy of holiness, as if with a kind of bridle of the lessons of the Lord? Who was there to teach penitence to the lapsed, truth to heretics, unity to schismatics, peacefulness and the law of evangelical prayer to the sons of God? By whom were the blaspheming Gentiles to be overcome by retorting upon themselves the accusations which they heap upon us? By whom were Christians of too tender an affection, or, what is of more importance, of a too feeble faith in respect of the loss of their friends, to be consoled with the hope of futurity? Whence should we so learn mercy? Whence patience? Who was there to restrain the ill blood arising from the envenomed malignity of envy, with the sweetness of a wholesome remedy? Who was there to raise up such great martyrs by the exhortation of his divine discourse? Who was there, in short, to animate so many confessors sealed with a second inscription on their distinguished brows, and reserved alive for an example of martyrdom, kindling their ardour with a heavenly trumpet? Fortunately, fortunately it occurred then, and truly by the Spirit's direction, that the man who was needed for so many and so excellent purposes was withheld from the consummation of martyrdom. Do you wish to be assured that the cause of his withdrawal was not fear? to allege nothing else, he did suffer subsequently, and this suffering he assuredly would have evaded as usual, if he had evaded it before. It was indeed that fear—and rightly so—that fear which would dread to offend the Lord—that fear which prefers to obey God's commands rather than to be crowned in disobedience. For a mind dedicated in all things to God, and thus enslaved to the divine admonitions, believed that even in suffering itself it would sin, unless it had obeyed the Lord, who then bade *him seek* the place of concealment.

8. Moreover, I think that something may here be said about the benefit of the delay, although I have already touched slightly on the matter. By what appears subsequently to have occurred, it follows that we may prove that that withdrawal was not conceived by human pusillanimity, but, as indeed is the case, was truly divine. **The unusual and violent rage of a cruel persecution had laid waste God's people; and since the artful enemy could not deceive all by one fraud, wherever the incautious soldier laid bare his side, there in various manifestations of rage he had destroyed individuals with different kinds of overthrow.** There needed some one who could, when men were wounded and hurt by the various arts of the attacking enemy, use the remedy of the celestial medicine according to the nature of the wound, either for cutting or for cherishing them. *Thus* was preserved a man of an

intelligence, besides other excellences, also spiritually trained, who between the resounding waves of the opposing schisms could steer the middle course of the Church in a steady path. Are not such plans, I ask, divine? Could this have been done without God? Let them consider who think that such things as these can happen by chance. To them the Church replies with clear voice, saying, "I do not allow and do not believe that such needful then are reserved without the decree of God."

9. Still, if it seem well, let me glance at the rest. Afterwards there broke out a dreadful plague, and excessive destruction of a hateful disease invaded every house in succession of the trembling populace, carrying off day by day with abrupt attack numberless people, every one from his own house. All were shuddering, fleeing, shunning the contagion, impiously exposing their own friends, as if with the exclusion of the person who was sure to die of the plague, one could exclude death itself also. There lay about the meanwhile, over the whole city, no longer bodies, but the carcasses of many, and, by the contemplation of a lot which in their turn would be theirs, demanded the pity of the passersby for themselves. No one regarded anything besides his cruel gains. No one trembled at the remembrance of a similar event. **No one did to another what he himself wished to experience. In these circumstances, it would be a wrong to pass over what the pontiff of Christ did, who excelled the pontiffs of the world as much in kindly affection as he did in truth of religion.** On the people assembled together in one place he first of all urged the benefits of mercy, teaching by examples from divine lessons, how greatly the duties of benevolence avail to deserve well of God. Then afterwards he subjoined, that there was nothing wonderful in our cherishing our own people only with the needed attentions of love, but that he might become perfect who would do something more than the publican or the heathen, who, overcoming evil with good, and practicing a clemency which was like the divine clemency, loved even his enemies, who would pray for the salvation of those that persecute him, as the Lord admonishes and exhorts. God continually makes His sun to rise, and from time to time gives showers to nourish the seed, exhibiting all these kindnesses not only to His people, but to aliens also. And if a man professes to be a son of God, why does not he imitate the example of his Father? "It becomes us," said he, "to answer to our birth; and it is not fitting that those who are evidently born of God should be degenerate, but rather that the propagation of a good Father should be proved in His offspring by the emulation of His goodness."

**Comment:** Pontius, the deacon of Cyprian, has high praise for his bishop, Cyprian. He praises Cyprian for being a son of God who "proved" to be "His offspring by the emulation of His goodness". That is, Cyprian imitated "the example of his Father".

In paragraph 5, Cyprian was "**chosen to the office of the priesthood and the degree of the episcopate while still a neophyte, and, as it was considered, a novice.**" So all that he knew was what the Carthaginian presbyter Cæcilus had taught him. Cyprian did not have time to study the Scriptures on his own. What we will see in his writings will give us a telescopic view of the thinking of the Church in his time.

In paragraph 6, we read that "**Cyprian the bishop's *cathedra* received such as he had been before,—it did not make him so.**"

The "**bishop's *cathedra***" is described by a Roman Catholic website:

“When you visit a cathedral church where a bishop regularly celebrates Mass, one of the primary features is a special chair. This chair is called a *cathedra* (hence the name “cathedral”) and is only used by the bishop during liturgical ceremonies.

Why is that?

The *cathedra* comes from an ancient tradition in many cultures of a leader or judge ruling from a chair. Teachers would often teach from a chair while their pupils stood and listened. In fact, the term *cathedra* is sometimes defined as the “professor’s chair.” Additionally, chairs were not mass produced as they are today, so possessing a chair was a sign of power. Additionally, in the Roman Empire there existed a “curule chair,” which was used solely by magistrates and officials. Since the Catholic Church was born within the Roman Empire, many of the same traditions were shared by the Church hierarchy.

While chairs no longer have that same significance in our modern culture, the *cathedra* of the bishop still retains spiritual symbolism tied to the office of the bishop.

Pope Benedict XVI explained the symbolism in a homily given on the feast of the Chair of St. Peter.

*“Cathedra” literally means the established seat of the Bishop, placed in the mother church of a diocese which for this reason is known as a “cathedral”; it is the symbol of the Bishop’s authority and in particular, of his “magisterium,” that is, the evangelical teaching which, as a successor of the Apostles, he is called to safeguard and to transmit to the Christian Community. When a Bishop takes possession of the particular Church that has been entrusted to him, wearing his miter and holding the pastoral staff, he sits on the cathedra. From this seat, as teacher and pastor, he will guide the journey of the faithful in faith, hope and charity.*

The chair reminds the bishop of his duties to his flock, and its size (since it is usually larger than other sanctuary furnishings) denotes the immense weight that is placed on his shoulders as chief shepherd of the local area. It’s a special honor, one that comes with great responsibility.” <https://aleteia.org/2019/02/22/why-do-bishops-have-a-special-chair/>

It is important to remember what was stated in the quote above, that, “Since the Catholic Church was born within the Roman Empire, many of the same traditions were shared by the Church hierarchy.” The “*magisterium*” of the bishop, which Pope Benedict XVI defines as “*the evangelical teaching which, as a successor of the Apostles, he is called to safeguard and to transmit to the Christian Community*”, is nowhere mentioned in the Scriptures. But it is symbolic of his ruling over the laity.

Then continuing in paragraph 8, we read that “**The unusual and violent rage of a cruel persecution had laid waste God’s people;**” This no doubt affected the spiritual growth of the Church. The early church suffered under great persecutions very early on under Claudius (41–54), Nero (54–68), Domitian (81–96), Trajan (98–117), Marcus Aurelius (161–180), Septimius Severus (193–211), and under Decius (249–251) and Valerian (253–260) in the time of Cyprian.

Then in paragraph 9, it is interesting that the deacon Pontius calls Cyprian “**the pontiff of Christ**” who “**excelled the pontiffs of the world**”.

“A pontiff (from Latin *pontifex*) was, in Roman antiquity, a member of the most illustrious of the colleges of priests of the Roman religion, the College of Pontiffs. The term “pontiff” was later applied to any high or chief priest and, in Roman Catholic ecclesiastical

usage, to bishops, especially the Pope, who is sometimes referred to as the Roman Pontiff or the Supreme Pontiff.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontiff>

This is a tradition that the Catholic Church has shared which was prominent in Roman Antiquity. This sharing by the Church of this tradition along with the sharing of the cathedra and the acceptance of a priestly system of ministry show how the Church was going down a path of blending with the world that exceeded the Scriptures.

One reason why the Church accepted a priestly system of ministry very early on is that, in the time of Cyprian, and in the early church, the book of Hebrews was not generally accepted as part of the canon of Scripture. It was not generally accepted until a.d. 367 when Athanasius of Alexandria defined the New Testament canon to include all 27 books in the New Testament that we have today. However by that time, the “sacerdotal order”, as Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, France in a.d. 177-202, called it, had taken firm root in the Church. But there is no Biblical basis for this priestly system.

In Hebrews, we read that Jesus was made a high priest after the order of Melchisedec in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):17** Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

The “veil” in verse 19 refers to the veil in the tabernacle that separated the holy place from the most holy where the ark of the testimony was, as we read in **Exodus 26 (KJV):33** And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.

The “most holy” was where the high priest went once a year on the feast of the atonement, as we read **Leviticus 16 (KJV):2** And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

And in **Leviticus 16 (KJV):17** And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

And in **Leviticus 16 (KJV):33** And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. 34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the Lord commanded Moses.

This was the day of atonement that we read of in **Leviticus 23 (KJV):27** Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.

The tabernacle was a “worldly sanctuary”, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):1** Then

verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

The “holiest of all” in the “worldly sanctuary” is a type of heaven itself, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):** 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

This is where “the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec”, as we read in Hebrews 6:20 above.

Now this Melchisedec in Hebrews 6:20 had no recorded lineage, as we continue to read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):** 1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

And so this Melchisedec is a type of Jesus, as we continue to read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):** 11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

So the priesthood of Aaron has been changed to the order of Melchisedec. Jesus is “another priest” who is made “after the power of an endless life”.

Jesus has therefore an unchangeable priesthood, as we continue to read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):** 18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And

they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

So Jesus in verse 25, “is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”.

Now Peter says that all believers now make up a royal priesthood, as we read in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):5** Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

And in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):9** But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

In the Church there is no sacerdotal order of priests separate from ordinary believers. Such a priestly order exceeds what is written in the Scriptures. But in the time of Cyprian, it had been accepted as what had been handed down to the Church by the apostles. What really had happened was that the Church had unknowingly blended with the world.

Also the address of a bishop as “**the pontiff of Christ**” clearly has no basis in the Scriptures. A bishop is simply an elder. Paul called for the elders of the church in Ephesus to meet with him, as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):16** For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. 17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

And in his address to these elders, he calls them overseers, as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):27** For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The word “overseers” in the Greek is **ἐπίσκοπος** (pronounced ep-is'-kop-os); from G1909 and G4649 (in the sense of G1983); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church (literally or figuratively):—bishop, overseer. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G1985**

Comparing Cyprian, who was a bishop, to the “**the pontiffs of the world**” is simply not a valid comparison, as we read in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):1** The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The word “elders” in verse 1 in the Greek is **πρεσβύτερος** (pronounced pres-boo'-ter-os); comparative of **πρέσβυς** (pronounced présbys) (elderly); older; as noun, a senior; specially, an Israelite Sanhedrist (also figuratively, member of the celestial council) or Christian "presbyter":—elder(-est), old. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G4245**

The elder was a presbyter, and the same was a bishop, or overseer as we read in Acts 20:28. And so we have the presbytery mentioned in **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Peter considered himself “also an elder” in 1 Peter 5:1. Elders were not to be “lords over God’s heritage”, but to be “examples to the flock” in 1 Peter 5:3. The term "**pontiff**" was applied to any high or chief priest in the College of Priests in the pagan religion of the Romans before Christ. Clearly this term does not belong to the elders in the Church of Christians.

### **The Eulogy of Pontius, paragraph 11**

**The Life and Passion of Cyprian, Bishop and Martyr. By Pontius the Deacon. To Moyses and Maximus and the Rest of the Confessors.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 271, col. 1, Page 672-673 (pdf)**

11. Banishment followed these actions, so good and so benevolent. For impiety always makes this return, that it repays the better with the worse. **And what God’s priest replied to the interrogation of the proconsul, there are Acts which relate.** In the meantime, he is excluded from the city who had done some good for the city’s safety; he who had striven that the eyes of the living should not suffer the horrors of the infernal abode; he, I say, who, vigilant in the watches of benevolence, had provided—oh wickedness! with unacknowledged goodness—that when all were forsaking the desolate appearance of the city, a destitute state and a deserted country should not perceive its many exiles. But let the world look to this, which accounts banishment a penalty. To them, their country is too dear, and they have the same name as their parents; but we abhor even our parents themselves if they would persuade us against God. To them, it is a severe punishment to live outside their own city; to the Christian, the whole of this world is one home. Wherefore, though he were banished into a hidden and secret place, yet, associated with the affairs of his God, he cannot regard it as an exile. In addition, while honestly serving God, he is a stranger even in his own city. For while the continency of the Holy Spirit restrains him from carnal desires, he lays aside the conversation of the former man, and even among his fellow-citizens, or, I might almost say, among the parents themselves of his earthly life, he is a stranger. Besides, although this might otherwise appear to be a punishment, yet in causes and sentences of this kind, which we suffer for the trial of the proof of our virtue, it is not a punishment, because it is a glory. But, indeed, suppose banishment not to be a punishment to us, yet the witness of their own conscience may still attribute the last and worst wickedness to those who can lay upon the innocent what they think to be a punishment. I will not now describe a charming place; and, for the present, I pass over the addition of all possible delights. Let us conceive of the place, filthy in situation, squalid in appearance, having no wholesome water, no pleasantness of verdure, no neighbouring shore, but vast wooded rocks between the inhospitable jaws of a totally deserted solitude, far removed in the pathless regions

of the world. **Such a place might have borne the name of exile, if Cyprian, the priest of God, had come thither; although to him, if the ministrations of men had been wanting, either birds, as in the case of Elias, or angels, as in that of Daniel, would have ministered. Away, away with the belief that anything would be wanting to the least of us, so long as he stands for the confession of the name. So far was God's pontiff, who had always been urgent in merciful works, from needing the assistance of all these things.**

**Comment:** Cyprian apparently fled the city of Carthage to the city of Curubis, now the city of Korba, Tunisia, in order to avoid the persecution for at least a year before his martyrdom. As a bishop he was a target of the persecution. He was supported by friends during this time.

Now Pontius, his deacon, refers to **“what God's priest replied to the interrogation of the proconsul”** which he says **“there are Acts which relate”**. So Pontius is saying that the interrogation that Cyprian encountered was like that which Paul encountered in the book of Acts. The “interrogation of the proconsul” could refer to when Paul was in custody, and appeared before King Agrippa in Acts 26, or Festus in Acts 25, or the governor, Felix, in Acts 24.

It was the understanding of the Church in Cyprian's time that the apostles were priests, as Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons, France, wrote between a.d. 77 and a.d. 102 in **Against Heresies, Book 4, Chapter VIII**, “And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually.”

Pontius calls Cyprian **“the priest of God”**. He esteemed him very highly as he compares him to Elias (Elijah). And Pontius calls him **“God's pontiff”**. These are terms borrowed from the pagan Romans.

Now remember that a **“pontiff** (from Latin *pontifex*) was, in Roman antiquity, a member of the most illustrious of the colleges of priests of the Roman religion, the College of Pontiffs. The term "pontiff" was later applied to any high or chief priest and, in Roman Catholic ecclesiastical usage, to bishops, especially the Pope, who is sometimes referred to as the Roman Pontiff or the Supreme Pontiff.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontiff>

Now about a year before Cyprian's own martyrdom, he had a vision in which he asked for one more day to finish his work. Let us continue to read about Cyprian's vision of his martyrdom in the testimony of his deacon, Pontius.

## **The Eulogy of Pontius, paragraph 12**

**The Life and Passion of Cyprian, Bishop and Martyr. By Pontius the Deacon. To Moyses and Maximus and the Rest of the Confessors.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 271-272, col. 2, Page 673-674 (pdf)**

12. And now let us return with thankfulness to what I had suggested in the second place, that for the soul of such a man there was divinely provided a sunny and suitable spot, a dwelling, secret as he wished, and all that has before been promised to be added to those who seek the kingdom and righteousness of God. And, not to mention the number of the brethren who visited him, and then the kindness of the citizens themselves, which supplied to him everything whereof he appeared to be deprived, I will not pass over God's wonderful visitation,



whereby He wished His priest in exile to be so certain of his passion that was to follow, that in his full confidence of the threatening martyrdom, Curubis possessed not only an exile, but a martyr too. For on that day whereon we first abode in the place of banishment (for the condescension of his love had chosen me among his household companions to a voluntary exile: would that he could also have chosen me to share his passion!), (**Note:** Pontius is said to have followed his beloved bishop, a.d. 258, dying a martyr.) “there appeared to me,” said he, “ere yet I was sunk in the repose of slumber, a young man of unusual stature, who, as it were, led me to the prætorium, where I seemed to myself to be led before the tribunal of the proconsul, then sitting. When he looked upon me, he began at once to note down a sentence on his tablet, which I knew not, for he had asked nothing of me with the accustomed interrogation. But the youth, who was standing at his back, very anxiously read what had been noted down. And because he could not then declare it in words, he showed me by an intelligible sign what was contained in the writing of that tablet. For, with hand expanded and flattened like a blade, he imitated the stroke of the accustomed punishment, and expressed what he wished to be understood as clearly as by speech,—I understood the future sentence of my passion. I began to ask and to beg immediately that a delay of at least one day should be accorded me, until I should have arranged my property in some reasonable order. And when I had urgently repeated my entreaty, he began again to note down, I know not what, on his tablet. But I perceived from the calmness of his countenance that the judge’s mind was moved by my petition, as being a just one. Moreover, that youth, who already had disclosed to me the intelligence of my passion by gesture rather than by words, hastened to signify repeatedly by secret signal that the delay was granted which had been asked for until the morrow, twisting his fingers one behind the other. And I, although the sentence had not been read, although I rejoiced with very glad heart with joy at the delay accorded, yet trembled so with fear of the uncertainty of the interpretation, that the remains of fear still set my exulting heart beating with excessive agitation.”

**Comment:** Cyprian was a staunch believer in standing up for the Gospel, even to martyrdom. His writing contains many exhortations to not deny the Lord, even if it means martyrdom, and he held many accountable for denying the Lord. The Lord then warned him of his own martyrdom in the vision he had, as Pontius records above. And so we then read of Cyprian’s martyrdom, as we continue to read in the testimony of Pontius, his deacon.

### **The Eulogy of Pontius, paragraph 13-19**

**The Life and Passion of Cyprian, Bishop and Martyr. By Pontius the Deacon.**

**To Moyses and Maximus and the Rest of the Confessors.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 272-274, col. 2, Page 673-678 (pdf)**

13. What could be more plain than this revelation? What could be more blessed than this condescension? Everything was foretold to him beforehand which subsequently followed. Nothing was diminished of the words of God, nothing was mutilated of so sacred a promise. Carefully consider each particular in accordance with its announcement. He asks for delay till the morrow, when the sentence of his passion was under deliberation, begging that he might arrange his affairs on the day which he had thus obtained. This one day signified a year, which

he was about to pass in the world after his vision. For, to speak more plainly, after the year was expired, he was crowned, on that day on which, at the commencement of the year, the fact had been announced to him. For although we do not read of the day of the Lord as a year in sacred Scripture, yet we regard that space of time as due in making promise of future things. Whence is it of no consequence if, in this case, under the ordinary expression of a day, it is only a year that in this place is implied, because that which is the greater ought to be fuller in meaning. Moreover, that it was explained rather by signs than by speech, was because the utterance of speech was reserved for the manifestation of the time itself. For anything is usually set forth in words, whenever what is set forth is accomplished. For, indeed, no one knew why this had been shown to him, until afterwards, when, on the very day on which he had seen it, he was crowned. Nevertheless, in the meantime, his impending suffering was certainly known by all, but the exact day of his passion was not spoken of by any of the same, just as if they were ignorant of it. And, indeed, I find something similar in the Scriptures. For Zacharias the priest, because he did not believe the promise of a son, made to him by the angel, became dumb; so that he asked for tablets by a sign, being about to write his son's name rather than utter it. With reason, also in case, where God's messenger declared the impending passion of His priest rather by signs, he both admonished his faith and fortified His priest. Moreover, the ground of asking for delay arose out of his wish to arrange his affairs and settle his will. Yet what affairs or what will had he to arrange, except ecclesiastical concerns? And thus that last delay was received, in order that whatever had to be disposed of by his final decision concerning the care of cherishing the poor might be arranged. And I think that for no other reason, and indeed for this reason only, indulgence was granted to him even by those very persons who had ejected and were about to slay him, that, being at hand, he might relieve the poor also who were before him with the final or, to speak more accurately, with the entire outlay of his last stewardship. And therefore, having so benevolently ordered matters, and so arranged them according to his will, the morrow drew near.

14. Now also a messenger came to him from the city from Xistus, the good and peacemaking priest, and on that account most blessed martyr. The coming executioner was instantly looked for who should strike through that devoted neck of the most sacred victim; and thus, in the daily expectation of dying, every day was to him as if the crown might be attributed to each. In the meantime, there assembled to him many eminent people, and people of most illustrious rank and family, and noble with the world's distinctions, who, on account of ancient friendship with him, repeatedly urged his withdrawal; and, that their urgency might not be in some sort hollow, they also offered places to which he might retire. But he had now set the world aside, having his mind suspended upon heaven, and did not consent to their tempting persuasions. He would perhaps even then have done what was asked for by so many and faithful friends, if it had been bidden him by divine command. But that lofty glory of so great a man must not be passed over without announcement, that now, when the world was swelling, and of its trust in its princes breathing out hatred of the name, he was instructing God's servants, as opportunity was given, in the exhortations of the Lord, and was animating them to tread under foot the sufferings of this present time by the contemplation of a glory to come hereafter. Indeed, such was his love of sacred discourse, that he wished that his prayers in regard to his suffering might be so answered, that he would be put to death in the very act of

speaking about God.

15. And these were the daily acts of a priest destined for a pleasing sacrifice to God, when, behold, at the bidding of the proconsul, the officer with his soldiers on a sudden came unexpectedly on him,—or rather, to speak more truly, thought that he had come unexpectedly on him, at his gardens,—at his gardens, I say, which at the beginning of his faith he had sold, and which, being restored by God's mercy, he would assuredly have sold again for the use of the poor, if he had not wished to avoid ill-will from the persecutors. But when could a mind ever prepared be taken unawares, as if by an unforeseen attack? Therefore now he went forward, certain that what had been long delayed would be settled. He went forward with a lofty and elevated mien, manifesting cheerfulness in his look and courage in his heart. But being delayed to the morrow, he returned from the prætorium to the officer's house, when on a sudden a scattered rumour prevailed throughout all Carthage, that now Thascius was brought forward, whom there was nobody who did not know as well for his illustrious fame in the honourable opinion of all, as on account of the recollection of his most renowned work. On all sides all men were flocking together to a spectacle, to us glorious from the devotion of faith, and to be mourned over even by the Gentiles. A gentle custody, however, had him in charge when taken and placed for one night in the officer's house; so that we, his associates and friends, were as usual in his company. The whole people in the meantime, in anxiety that nothing should be done throughout the night without their knowledge, kept watch before the officer's door. The goodness of God granted him at that time, so truly worthy of it, that even God's people should watch on the passion of the priest. Yet, perhaps, some one may ask what was the reason of his returning from the prætorium to the officer. And some think that this arose from the fact, that for his own part the proconsul was then unwilling. Far be it from me to complain, in matters divinely ordered, of slothfulness or aversion in the proconsul. Far be it from me to admit such an evil into the consciousness of a religious mind, as that the fancy of man should decide the fate of so blessed a martyr. But the morrow, which a year before the divine condescension had foretold, required to be literally the morrow.

16. At last that other day dawned—that destined, that promised, that divine day—which, if even the tyrant himself had wished to put off, he would not have had any power to do so; the day rejoicing at the consciousness of the future martyr; and, the clouds being scattered throughout the circuit of the world, the day shone upon them with a brilliant sun. **He went out from the house of the officer, though he was the officer of Christ and God, and was walled in on all sides by the ranks of a mingled multitude.** And such a numberless army hung upon his company, as if they had come with an assembled troop to assault death itself. Now, as he went, he had to pass by the racecourse. And rightly, and as if it had been contrived on purpose, he had to pass by the place of a corresponding struggle, who, having finished his contest, was running to the crown of righteousness. But when he had come to the prætorium, as the proconsul had not yet come forth, a place of retirement was accorded him. There, as he sat moistened after his long journey with excessive perspiration (the seat was by chance covered with linen, so that even in the very moment of his passion he might enjoy the honour of the episcopate), one of the officers ("Tesserarius"), who had formerly been a Christian, offered him his clothes, as if he might wish to change his moistened garments for drier ones; and he doubtless coveted nothing further in respect of his proffered kindness than to possess the now

blood-stained sweat of the martyr going to God. He made reply to him, and said, “We apply medicines to annoyances which probably today will no longer exist.” Is it any wonder that he despised suffering in body who had despised death in soul? Why should we say more? He was suddenly announced to the proconsul; he is brought forward; he is placed before him; he is interrogated as to his name. He answers who he is, and nothing more.

17. And thus, therefore, the judge reads from his tablet the sentence which lately in the vision he had not read,—a spiritual sentence, not rashly to be spoken,—a sentence worthy of such a bishop and such a witness; a glorious sentence, wherein he was called a standard-bearer of the sect, and an enemy of the gods, and one who was to be an example to his people; and that with his blood discipline would begin to be established. Nothing could be more complete, nothing more true, than this sentence. For all the things which were said, although said by a heathen, are divine. Nor is it indeed to be wondered at, since priests are accustomed to prophesy of the passion. **He had been a standard-bearer, who was accustomed to teach concerning the bearing of Christ’s standard; he had been an enemy of the gods, who commanded the idols to be destroyed. Moreover, he gave example to his friends, since, when many were about to follow in a similar manner, he was the first in the province to consecrate the first-fruits of martyrdom.** And by his blood discipline began to be established; but it was the discipline of martyrs, who, emulating their teacher, in the imitation of a glory like his own, themselves also gave a confirmation to discipline by the very blood of their own example.

18. And when he left the doors of the prætorium, a crowd of soldiery accompanied him; and that nothing might be wanting in his passion, centurions and tribunes guarded his side. Now the place itself where he was about to suffer is level, so that it affords a noble spectacle, with its trees thickly planted on all sides. But as, by the extent of the space beyond, the view was not attainable to the confused crowd, persons who favoured him had climbed up into the branches of the trees, that there might not even be wanting to him (what happened in the case of Zacchæus), that he was gazed upon from the trees. And now, having with his own hands bound his eyes, he tried to hasten the slowness of the executioner, whose office was *to wield* the sword, and who with difficulty clasped the blade in his failing right hand with trembling fingers, until the mature hour of glorification strengthened the hand of the centurion with power granted from above to accomplish the death of the excellent man, and at length supplied him with the permitted strength. O blessed people of the Church, who as well in sight as in feeling, and, what is more, in outspoken words, suffered with such a bishop as theirs; and, as they had ever heard him in his own discourses, were crowned by God the Judge! For although that which the general wish desired could not occur, viz., that the entire congregation should suffer at once in the fellowship of a like glory, yet whoever under the eyes of Christ beholding, and in the hearing of the priest, eagerly desired to suffer, by the sufficient testimony of that desire did in some sort send a missive to God, as his ambassador.

19. His passion being thus accomplished, it resulted that Cyprian, who had been an example to all good men, was also the first who in Africa imbued his priestly crown *with blood of martyrdom*, because he was the first who began to be such after the apostles. For from the time at which the episcopal order is enumerated at Carthage, not one is ever recorded, even of good men and priests, to have come to suffering. Although devotion surrendered to God is always in consecrated men reckoned instead of martyrdom; yet Cyprian attained even to the

perfect crown by the consummation of the Lord; so that in that very city in which he had in such wise lived, and in which he had been the first to do many noble deeds, he also was the first to decorate the insignia of his heavenly priesthood with glorious gore. What shall I do now? Between joy at his passion, and grief at still remaining, my mind is divided in different directions, and twofold affections are burdening a heart too limited for them. Shall I grieve that I was not his associate? But yet I must triumph in his victory. Shall I triumph at his victory? Still I grieve that I am not his companion. Yet still to you I must in simplicity confess, what you also are aware of, that it was my intention to be his companion. Much and excessively I exult at his glory; but still more do I grieve that I remained behind.

**Comment:** And so Cyprian was a martyr who bore **“Christ’s standard”**, and who “had been an enemy of the gods”, and who “commanded the idols to be destroyed”, as in paragraph 17. There is no doubt that Cyprian was a brother believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. But Cyprian was also a son of the Church in his time. He was a priest, and an **“officer of Christ and God”** as Pontius has said above in paragraph 16. He was also **“God’s pontiff”** to quote Pontius, his deacon, again in paragraph 11. These terms point to a blending with the world in the Church in his time. This is not to take anything away from the martyrdom of Cyprian. He is with the Lord now, and he will be rewarded accordingly at the judgment seat of Christ. But Cyprian was a member of the Church in his time. Now we will read segments of Cyprian’s writings which will tell us more about the thinking of the Church in the time of Cyprian.

## Cyprian's Writings

Epistle XXIV, To Moyses and Maximus, paragraph 2

Epistle XXIV.

To Moyses and Maximus and the Rest of the Confessors.

ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 302, col. 1, Page 738-739 (pdf)

1. Cyprian to Moyses and Maximus, the presbyters, and to the other confessors, his very beloved brethren, greeting. I had already known from rumour, most brave and blessed brethren, the glory of your faith and virtue, rejoicing greatly and abundantly congratulating you, that the highest condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ should have prepared you for the crown by confession of His name. For you, who have become chiefs and leaders in the battle of our day, have set forward the standard of the celestial warfare; you have made a beginning of the spiritual contest which God has purposed to be now waged by your valour; you, with unshaken strength and unyielding firmness, have broken the first onset of the rising war. Thence have arisen happy openings of the fight; thence have begun good auspices of victory. It happened that here martyrdoms were consummated by tortures. **But he who, preceding in the struggle, has been made an example of virtue to the brethren, is on common ground with the martyrs in honour. Hence you have delivered to us garlands woven by your hand, and have pledged your brethren from the cup of salvation.**

2. To these glorious beginnings of confession and the omens of a victorious warfare, has been added the maintenance of discipline, which I observed from the vigour of your letter that you lately sent to your colleagues joined with you to the Lord in confession, with anxious admonition, that the sacred precepts of the Gospel and the commandments of life once delivered to us should be kept with firm and rigid observance. Behold another lofty degree of your glory; behold, with confession, a double title to deserving well of God,—to stand with a firm step, and to drive away in this struggle, by the strength of your faith, those who endeavour to make a breach in the Gospel, and bring impious hands to the work of undermining the Lord's precepts:—to have before afforded the indications of courage, and now to afford lessons of life. The Lord, when, after His resurrection, He sent forth His apostles, charges them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:18-20) And the Apostle John, remembering this charge, subsequently lays it down in his epistle: "Hereby," says he, "we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith he knoweth Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3-4) **You prompt the keeping of these precepts; you observe the divine and heavenly commands. This is to be a confessor of the Lord; this is to be a martyr of Christ,—to keep the firmness of one's profession inviolate among all evils, and secure.** For to wish to become a martyr for the Lord, and to try to overthrow the Lord's precepts; to use against Him the condescension that He has granted you;—to become, as it were, a rebel with arms that you have received from Him;—this is to wish to confess Christ, and to deny Christ's Gospel. I rejoice, therefore, on your behalf, most brave and faithful brethren; and as much as I congratulate the martyrs there

honoured for the glory of their strength, so much do I also equally congratulate you for the crown of the Lord's discipline. The Lord has shed forth His condescension in manifold kinds of liberality. He has distributed the praises of good soldiers and their spiritual glories in plentiful variety. We also are sharers in your honour; we count your glory our glory, whose times have been brightened by such a felicity, that it should be the fortune of our day to see the proved servants of God and Christ's soldiers crowned. I bid you, most brave and blessed brethren, ever heartily farewell; and remember me.

**Comment:** Cyprian is writing to Moyses and Maximus who were presbyters in the church at Carthage when Cyprian was bishop.

In paragraph 1, note that Cyprian said, **“But he who, preceding in the struggle, has been made an example of virtue to the brethren, is on common ground with the martyrs in honour. Hence you have delivered to us garlands woven by your hand, and have pledged your brethren from the cup of salvation.”**

Cyprian had a twofold usage of the word “martyr” in his writing. Moyses and Maximus were confessors of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so they had **“been made an example of virtue to the brethren”**, and were **“on common ground with the martyrs in honour”**.

Then in paragraph 2, Cyprian refers to **Matthew 28 (KJV):18** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

And to **1 John 2 (KJV):3** And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

And Cyprian then said, **“You prompt the keeping of these precepts; you observe the divine and heavenly commands. This is to be a confessor of the Lord; this is to be a martyr of Christ,—to keep the firmness of one's profession inviolate among all evils, and secure.”**

In one sense, he used the word **“martyr”** to mean a person who is **“a confessor of the Lord”**, who lived according to the Lord's commands, and kept **“the firmness of one's profession inviolate among all evils, and secure”**, and died to this world. In another sense, he used it to mean one who gave up his life when he refused to deny Christ, and the emperor had him killed. So a martyr could become a martyr in the thinking of Cyprian. And Peter wrote in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):24** Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

## **Epistle XXVI, to the Lapsed, paragraph 1**

### **Epistle XXVI.**

#### **Cyprian to the Lapsed.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 305, col. 1, Page 745 (pdf)**

**1. Our Lord, whose precepts and admonitions we ought to observe, describing the honour of a bishop and the order of His Church, speaks in the Gospel, and says to Peter:**

**“I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:18-19)** Thence, through the changes of times and successions, the ordering of bishops and the plan of the Church flow onwards; so that the Church is founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers. Since this, then, is founded on the divine law, I marvel that some, with daring temerity, have chosen to write to me as if they wrote in the name of the Church; when the Church is established in the bishop and the clergy, and all who stand *fast in the faith*. For far be it from the mercy of God and His uncontrolled might to suffer the number of the lapsed to be called the Church; since it is written, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” (Matthew 22:32) For we indeed desire that all may be made alive; and we pray that, by our supplications and groans, they may be restored to their original state. But if certain lapsed ones claim to be the Church, and if the Church be among them and in them, what is left but for us to ask of these very persons that they would deign to admit us into the Church? Therefore it behooves them to be submissive and quiet and modest, as those who ought to appease God, in remembrance of their sin, and not to write letters in the name of the Church, when they should rather be aware that they are writing to the Church.

**Comment:** In paragraph 1, Cyprian says, **“Our Lord, whose precepts and admonitions we ought to observe, describing the honour of a bishop and the order of His Church, speaks in the Gospel, and says to Peter: “I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:18-19)”**

He refers in context to **Matthew 16 (KJV):**13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Cyprian continues, and says, **“Thence, through the changes of times and successions, the ordering of bishops and the plan of the Church flow onwards; so that the Church is founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers.”**

We are getting a picture of the Church as Cyprian understood it in his time. As Cyprian saw it, the apostles passed their ministry on to the bishops. So to Cyprian, the bishops are now



in the place of the apostles, and are now governing the Church. And he quotes Matthew 16:18-19 as proof of this.

But it is good to look at these verses in context. The whole context of these verses is about who Jesus is, and not who men say that He is. Simon Peter answers correctly that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God”, in verse 16. Then in verse 17, Jesus tells him that, “flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven”. Peter received a revelation from the Father about who Jesus is, that is, that He is “the Christ, the Son of the living God”.

Then in verse 18 Jesus says, “thou art Peter”. The word “Peter” in the Greek is **Πέτρος** (pronounced pétros), apparently a primary word; a (piece of) rock (larger than G3037); **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G4074.**

And **Πέτρος** (pronounced pétros) is larger than G3037 which is **λίθος** (pronounced leethos), apparently a primary word; a stone (literally or figuratively):—(mill-, stumbling-)stone. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G3037.**

So Peter is a “piece of rock”. Then Jesus says, “and upon this rock I will build my church”. The Greek word for “rock” that Jesus now used is **πέτρα** (pronounced pétra), feminine of the same as **G4074**; a (mass of) rock (literally or figuratively):—rock. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G4073.**

The “mass of rock” Jesus was referring to is what Peter had testified, that is, that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God”. This is the rock that Jesus is building His church upon. Jesus is the foundation as Paul taught in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now again, Cyprian then says, “**Thence, through the changes of times and successions, the ordering of bishops and the plan of the Church flow onwards; so that the Church is founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers.**” In Cyprian’s thinking, since Jesus said that He would build His church on Peter, and since there were no more apostles in the time of Cyprian, that meant that the apostles had passed their authority to the bishops of the churches who were founded by an apostle, and who could validate their succession of a bishop from that apostle. These churches were then thought to be part of the one Catholic Church in Cyprian’s time.

Now Cyprian also speaks of the bishops as “**rulers**” who control “**every act of the Church**”. We read of elders ruling well in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):17** Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. **18** For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

And an elder was an overseer, or bishop, as we read again in **Acts 20 (KJV):16** For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. **17** And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

And in his address to these elders, he calls them overseers, as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):27** For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. **28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The word translated “overseers” in the Greek is **ἐπίσκοπος** (pronounced ep-is'-kop-os); from G1909 and G4649 (in the sense of G1983); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church (literally or figuratively):—bishop, overseer.

**Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1985**

This Greek word is derived from two Greek words, **ἐπί** (pronounced ep-ee'); a primary preposition; properly, meaning superimposition (of time, place, order, etc.), as a relation of distribution (with the genitive case), i.e. over, upon, etc.; of rest (with the dative case) at, on, etc.; of direction (with the accusative case) towards, upon, etc.:—about (the times), above, after, against, among, as long as (touching), at, beside, × have charge of, (be-, (where-))fore, in (a place, as much as, the time of, -to), (because) of, (up-)on (behalf of), over, (by, for) the space of, through(-out), (un-)to(-ward), with. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1909.**

And it is derived from **σκοπός** (pronounced skop-os'); from **σκέπτομαι** (pronounced sképtomai) (to peer about ("skeptical")); perhaps akin to G4626 through the idea of concealment; compare G4629); a watch (sentry or scout), i.e. (by implication) a goal:—mark. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4649.**

So it means “to look over or upon”, “to oversee”. There are five instances of this Greek word **ἐπίσκοπος** (pronounced ep-is'-kop-os) in the New Testament. It is translated once as “overseer” in Acts 20:28. It is also translated four times as “bishop”. Two times are found in **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):1** This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a **bishop**, he desireth a good work. 2 A **bishop** then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Then once in **Philippians 1 (KJV):1** Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the **bishops** and deacons:

Then once in **Titus 1 (KJV):7** For a **bishop** must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

And once in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):25** For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and **Bishop** of your souls.

A bishop, or elder, is not to be a lord over God’s heritage, as we read in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):1** The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The word in Greek translated “lords” in verse 3 is **κατακυριεύω** (pronounced kat-ak-oo-ree-yoo'-o); from G2596 and G2961; to lord against, i.e. control, subjugate:—exercise dominion over (lordship), be lord over, overcome. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1909.**

This Greek word is derived from **κατά** (pronounced kat-ah'); a primary particle; (prepositionally) down (in place or time), in varied relations (according to the case (genitive, dative or accusative) with which it is joined):—about, according as (to), after, against, (when they were) × alone, among, and, ×apart, (even, like) as (concerning, pertaining to touching), × aside, at, before, beyond, by, to the charge of, (charita-)bly, concerning, + covered, (dai-)ly,

down, every, (+ far more) exceeding, × more excellent, for, from ... to, godly, in(-asmuch, divers, every, -to, respect of), ... by, after the manner of, + by any means, beyond (out of) measure, X mightily, more, × natural, of (up-)on (X part), out (of every), over against, (+ your) × own, + particularly, so, through(-oughout, -oughout every), thus, (un-)to(-gether, -ward), × uttermost, where(-by), with. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2596.**

And from **κυριεύω** (pronounced ko-ree-yoo'-o); from **G2962**; to rule:—have dominion over, lord, be lord of, exercise lordship over. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2961.**

And this Greek word is derived from **κύριος** (pronounced koo'-ree-os); from **κῦρος** (pronounced kȳros) (supremacy); supreme in authority, i.e. (as noun) controller; by implication, Master (as a respectful title):—God, Lord, master, Sir. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2962.** This Greek word is translated as **Lord** 667 times in the New Testament.

Elders or bishops are overseers who are to be examples to the flock over which they watch. They are not to be “lords over God's heritage”. They must always keep in mind who is the chief Shepherd and Bishop, or overseer, of all souls.

But in the time of Cyprian, a hierarchy in the Church was developing. Bishops were now not just elders, but higher than elders. And in paragraph 6 of the Eulogy of Pontius we read of the Cathedra, or chair of the bishop. This was borrowed from “an ancient tradition in many cultures of a leader or judge ruling from a chair”, as we read in the **Comment** on paragraph 6 under **The Eulogy of Pontius, paragraphs 5-9.** And the church where the Cathedra was placed was called the Cathedral. The bishops in Cyprian's time were exercising lordship over God's people.

## **Epistle XXIX, to Cyprian, paragraphs 1-3**

### **Epistle XXIX.**

#### **The Presbyters and Deacons Abiding at Rome, to Cyprian.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 307-308, col. 2, Page 750-752 (pdf)**

1. **The presbyters and deacons abiding at Rome, to Father Cyprian, greeting.** When, beloved brother, we carefully read your letter which you had sent by Fortunatus the sub-deacon, we were smitten with a double sorrow, and disordered with a twofold grief, that there was not any rest given to you in such necessities of the persecution, and that the unreasonable petulance of the lapsed brethren was declared to be carried even to a dangerous boldness of expression. But although those things which we have spoken of severely afflicted us and our spirit, yet your rigour and the severity that you have used, according to the proper discipline, moderates the so heavy load of our grief, in that you rightly restrain the wickedness of some, and, by your exhortation to repentance, show the legitimate way of salvation. That they should have wished to hurry to such an extreme as this, we are indeed considerably surprised; as that with such urgency, and at so unseasonable and bitter a time, being in so great and excessive a sin, they should not so much ask for, as claim, peace for themselves; nay, should say that they already have it in heaven. If they have it, why do they ask for what they possess? But if, by the very fact that they are asking for it, it is proved that they have it not, wherefore do they not accept the

judgment of those from whom they have thought fit to ask for the peace, which they certainly have not got? But if they think that they have from any other source the prerogative of communion, let them try to compare it with the Gospel, that so at length it may abundantly avail them, if it is not out of harmony with the Gospel law. But on what principle can that give Gospel communion which seems to be established contrary to Gospel truth? For since every prerogative contemplates the privilege of association, precisely on the assumption of its not being out of harmony with the will of Him with whom it seeks to be associated; then, because this is alien from His will with whom it seeks to be associated, it must of necessity lose the indulgence and privilege of the association.

2. Let them, then, see what it is they are trying to do in this matter. For if they say that the setting the martyrs at variance with the Gospel, will be in danger on both sides. For, on the one hand, the majesty of the Gospel will already appear shattered and cast down, if it can be overcome by the novelty of another decree; and, on the other, the glorious crown of confession will be taken from the heads of the martyrs, if they be not found to have attained it by the observation of that Gospel whence they become martyrs; so that, reasonably, no one should be more careful to determine nothing contrary to the Gospel, than he who strives to receive the name of martyr from the Gospel. We should like, besides, to be informed of this: **if martyrs become martyrs for no other reason than that by not sacrificing they may keep the peace of the Church even to the shedding of their own blood, lest, overcome by the suffering of the torture, by losing peace, they might lose salvation;** on what principle do they think that the salvation, which if they had sacrificed they thought that they should not have, was to be given to those who are said to have sacrificed; although they ought to maintain that law in others, which they themselves appear to have held before their own eyes? In which thing we observe that they have put forward against their own cause the very thing which they thought made for them. For if the martyrs thought that peace was to be granted to them, why did not they themselves grant it? Why did they think that, as they themselves say, they were to be referred to the bishops? For he who orders a thing to be done, can assuredly do that which he orders to be done. But, as we understand, nay, as the case itself speaks and proclaims, the most holy martyrs thought that a proper measure of modesty and of truth must be observed on both sides. For as they were urged by many, in remitting them to the bishop they conceived that they would consult their own modesty so as to be no further disquieted; and in themselves not holding communion with them, they judged that the purity of the Gospel law ought to be maintained unimpaired.

3. But of your charity, brother, never desist from soothing the spirits of the lapsed and affording to the erring the medicine of truth, although the temper of the sick is wont to reject the kind offices of those who would heal them. This wound of the lapsed is as yet fresh, and the sore is still rising into a tumour; and therefore we are certain, that when, in the course of more protracted time, that urgency of theirs shall have worn out, they will love that very delay which refers them to a faithful medicine; if only there be not those who arm them for their own danger, and, instructing them perversely, demand on their behalf, instead of the salutary remedies of delay, the fatal poisons of a premature communion. For we do not believe, that without the instigation of certain persons they would all have dared so petulantly to claim peace for themselves. We know the faith of the Carthaginian church, we know her training, we know

her humility; whence also we have marvelled that we should observe certain things somewhat rudely suggested against you by letter, although we have often become aware of your mutual love and charity, in many illustrations of reciprocal affection of one another. It is time, therefore, that they should repent of their fault, that they should prove their grief for their lapse, that they should show modesty, that they should manifest humility, that they should exhibit some shame, that, by their submission, they should appeal to God's clemency for themselves, and by due honour for God's priest should draw forth upon themselves the divine mercy. How vastly better would have been the letters of these men themselves, if the prayers of those who stood fast had been aided by their own humility! since that which is asked for is more easily obtained, when he for whom it is asked is worthy, that what is asked should be obtained.

**Comment:** In paragraph 1 we read, “**The presbyters and deacons abiding at Rome, to Father Cyprian, greeting.**” They address Cyprian as “Father”.

But Jesus taught as in **Matthew 23 (KJV):8** But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. 11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

The presbyters and deacons continue, and say, “When, beloved brother, we carefully read your letter which you had sent by Fortunatus the sub-deacon, we were smitten with a double sorrow, and disordered with a twofold grief, that there was not any rest given to you in such necessities of the persecution, and that the unreasonable petulance of the lapsed brethren was declared to be carried even to a dangerous boldness of expression. But although those things which we have spoken of severely afflicted us and our spirit, yet your rigour and the severity that you have used, according to the proper discipline, moderates the so heavy load of our grief, in that you rightly restrain the wickedness of some, and, by your exhortation to repentance, show the legitimate way of salvation. That they should have wished to hurry to such an extreme as this, we are indeed considerably surprised; as that with such urgency, and at so unseasonable and bitter a time, being in so great and excessive a sin, they should not so much ask for, as claim, peace for themselves; nay, should say that they already have it in heaven. If they have it, why do they ask for what they possess? But if, by the very fact that they are asking for it, it is proved that they have it not, wherefore do they not accept the judgment of those from whom they have thought fit to ask for the peace, which they certainly have not got? But if they think that they have from any other source the prerogative of communion, let them try to compare it with the Gospel, that so at length it may abundantly avail them, if it is not out of harmony with the Gospel law.”

Here the presbyters and deacons refer to the “Gospel law”, as if the Gospel were the only source of reference to an explanation of the Biblical theme of salvation. But there is no such “law” in the Gospels. And Jesus taught in **John 16 (KJV):12** I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The words in the epistles of the New Testament are also the words of Jesus, and there is much on the Biblical theme of salvation in them. For instance, we read as in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

In Cyprian's time, when they read these verses, they thought that they referred to the grace received at baptism. They did not understand that the faith by which we are saved by grace is the "gift of God". Then when we believe because of this gift of faith, we pass from death to life, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Cyprian and the early Church did not understand that the life we receive is eternal life in our spirit when our spirit is born from above by the Holy Spirit.

The presbyters and deacons continue, and say, "But on what principle can that give Gospel communion which seems to be established contrary to Gospel truth? For since every prerogative contemplates the privilege of association, precisely on the assumption of its not being out of harmony with the will of Him with whom it seeks to be associated; then, because this is alien from His will with whom it seeks to be associated, it must of necessity lose the indulgence and privilege of the association."

They at Rome are speaking of what they believed to be the loss of salvation for the "lapsed brethren" who had acted "contrary to Gospel truth". They are referring to **Matthew 10 (KJV):32** Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

But we must take all of the words of Jesus in context. In the Gospel of John we read as in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Jesus gives "power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name", who "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

If we have been born of God, He may deny us rewards, but He will not deny us His salvation. But we must examine ourselves, and make sure Christ is in us, as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

If we have been born of God, confession is always available to us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In the case of denial, we must remember Peter, as we read in **Matthew 26 (KJV):33** Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. 34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

And then we read in **Matthew 26 (KJV):69** Now Peter sat without in the palace: and

a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. 70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. 71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. 72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. 73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee. 74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

And then we read in **John 21 (KJV):**15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Peter denied the Lord, and yet the Lord forgave him and stood by him. We must understand all Scripture in context. We must rightly divide the word of God in order to find the truth. We cannot take one Scripture out of the context of the rest of the Scriptures.

The presbyters and deacons continue in paragraph 2, and say, “Let them, then, see what it is they are trying to do in this matter. For if they say that the setting the martyrs at variance with the Gospel, will be in danger on both sides. For, on the one hand, the majesty of the Gospel will already appear shattered and cast down, if it can be overcome by the novelty of another decree; and, on the other, the glorious crown of confession will be taken from the heads of the martyrs, if they be not found to have attained it by the observation of that Gospel whence they become martyrs; so that, reasonably, no one should be more careful to determine nothing contrary to the Gospel, than he who strives to receive the name of martyr from the Gospel.”

Again, the presbyters and deacons are trying to make the Gospels the sole source of revelation. This is keeping them from understanding the Gospels in context with the rest of Scripture.

The presbyters and deacons continue, and say, “We should like, besides, to be informed of this: **if martyrs become martyrs for no other reason than that by not sacrificing they may keep the peace of the Church even to the shedding of their own blood, lest, overcome by the suffering of the torture, by losing peace, they might lose salvation;**”

The “lapsed” were arguing that, if they yielded as “martyrs”, and were “**overcome by the suffering of the torture**”, and so “**by losing peace, they might lose salvation,**” then they should not become martyrs. So this was their reason for denying the Lord.

The “lapsed” argument is not valid. But the thought of losing one’s salvation was pervasive in the early Church.

The presbyters and deacons continue, and say, “on what principle do they think that the salvation, which if they had sacrificed they thought that they should not have, was to be given to those who are said to have sacrificed; although they ought to maintain that law in others, which they themselves appear to have held before their own eyes? In which thing we observe that they have put forward against their own cause the very thing which they thought made for them. For if the martyrs thought that peace was to be granted to them, why did not they themselves grant it? Why did they think that, as they themselves say, they were to be referred to the bishops? For he who orders a thing to be done, can assuredly do that which he orders to be done. But, as we understand, nay, as the case itself speaks and proclaims, the most holy martyrs thought that a proper measure of modesty and of truth must be observed on both sides. For as they were urged by many, in remitting them to the bishop they conceived that they would consult their own modesty so as to be no further disquieted; and in themselves not holding communion with them, they judged that the purity of the Gospel law ought to be maintained unimpaired.”

Again the presbyters and deacons mention the “Gospel law”. The understanding of the Church in Cyprian’s time was that the Gospels had precedence, that is, priority of importance, over the epistles in the teaching of the Church.

But we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

And in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

We must rightly divide the Scripture. That is, we must consider the context before we formulate a teaching.

Cyprian continues in paragraph 3, and says, “But of your charity, brother, never desist from soothing the spirits of the lapsed and affording to the erring the medicine of truth, although the temper of the sick is wont to reject the kind offices of those who would heal them. This wound of the lapsed is as yet fresh, and the sore is still rising into a tumour; and therefore we are certain, that when, in the course of more protracted time, that urgency of theirs shall have worn out, they will love that very delay which refers them to a faithful medicine; if only there be not those who arm them for their own danger, and, instructing them perversely, demand on their behalf, instead of the salutary remedies of delay, the fatal poisons of a premature communion. For we do not believe, that without the instigation of certain persons they would all have dared so petulantly to claim peace for themselves. We know the faith of the Carthaginian church, we know her training, we know her humility; whence also we have marveled that we should observe certain things somewhat rudely suggested against you by letter, although we have often become aware of your mutual love and charity, in many illustrations of reciprocal affection of one another. **It is time, therefore, that they should repent of their fault, that they should prove their grief for their lapse, that they should show modesty, that they should manifest humility, that they should exhibit some shame, that, by their submission, they should appeal to God’s clemency for themselves, and by due honour for God’s priest should draw forth upon themselves the divine mercy.** How vastly better would have been the letters of these men themselves, if the prayers of those who



stood fast had been aided by their own humility! since that which is asked for is more easily obtained, when he for whom it is asked is worthy, that what is asked should be obtained.

The **“Presbyters and Deacons Abiding at Rome”** were encouraging Cyprian to hold the lapsed brethren accountable. The lapsed **“should repent of their fault, that they should prove their grief for their lapse,”** and **“that, by their submission, they should appeal to God’s clemency for themselves, and by due honour for God’s priest should draw forth upon themselves the divine mercy.”**

The Presbyters and Deacons at Rome are right when they say that the lapsed **“should repent of their fault”**, and **“that they should prove their grief for their lapse,”** and **“that, by their submission, they should appeal to God’s clemency for themselves”**. But when they say, **“by due honour for God’s priest should draw forth upon themselves the divine mercy”**, this makes the priest a mediator between God and the one who lapsed. But there is no need for any believer in Jesus Christ to go through another man to get to God.

There is only one mediator between God and man, as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

The believer himself or herself is able to come boldly before the throne of grace, as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Making the believer to go to a priest to obtain mercy is making a distance between the believer and God. But when we rightly divide the word of God, this distance goes away, and he or she can go directly to God and obtain forgiveness and mercy.

Jesus taught a parable in **John 10 (KJV):1** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

But the disciples did not understand the parable, so Jesus then explains in **John 10 (KJV):7** Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Jesus is saying that He is the door of the sheep in verse 7 and 9, and that He is the good shepherd in verse 11. So in verse 3, He calls His sheep by name, and leads them. And in verse 14, He knows His sheep, and His sheep know Him, and the sheep follow Him in verse 4 because they know His voice. This is a description of the personal relationship that Jesus wants with every believer.

#### **Epistle XXX, to Cyprian, paragraph 4**

#### **Epistle XXX.**

#### **The Roman Clergy to Cyprian.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 309-310, col. 1, Page 755 (pdf)**

4. Nevertheless, you have letters agreeing with our letters from the confessors, whom the dignity of their confession has still shut up here in prison, and whom, for the Gospel contest, their faith has once already crowned in a glorious confession; letters wherein they have maintained the severity of the Gospel discipline, and have revoked the unlawful petitions, so that they might not be a disgrace to the Church. Unless they had done this, the ruins of Gospel discipline would not easily be restored, especially since it was to none so fitting to maintain the tenor of evangelical vigour unimpaired, and its dignity, as to those who had given themselves up to be tortured and cut to pieces by raging men on behalf of the Gospel, that they might not deservedly forfeit the honour of martyrdom, if, on the occasion of martyrdom, they had wished to be betrayers of the Gospel. **For he who does not guard what he has, in that condition whereon he possesses it, by violating the condition whereon he possesses it, loses what he possessed.**

**Comment:** This is a clear testimony of the belief in the early Church that one could lose their salvation. There are reasons why the early Church struggled in their understanding of the Scriptures. Let us read more of Cyprian's writing before proving from the Scriptures that one cannot lose their salvation once one has been born again of the Spirit of God.

#### **Epistle LI, To Antonianus, paragraph 1**

#### **Epistle LI.**

#### **To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 327, col. 1, Page 798 (pdf)**

1. **Cyprian to Antonianus his brother, greeting. I received your first letters, dearest brother, firmly maintaining the concord of the priestly college, and adhering to the Catholic Church, in which you intimated that you did not hold communion with Novatian, but followed my advice, and held one common agreement with Cornelius our co-bishop.** You wrote, moreover, for me to transmit a copy of those same letters to Cornelius our colleague, so that he might lay aside all anxiety, and know at once that you held communion with him, that is, with the Catholic Church.

**Comment:** Cyprian refers to “**maintaining the concord of the priestly college**”. The priesthood very early on in Church history began to take over the ministry in the early Church. The “**priestly college**” was a term that was borrowed from Roman religion. It was the understanding in the Gentile mindset that a priest was the minister of religion. When the Gentiles opened up the Old Testament, they read of the priests ministering in the temple. Cyprian makes many references to this. In his thinking, the apostles were priests who took over for the Old Testament priesthood.

In Cyprian’s thinking, Cornelius who was the bishop of Rome, was their co-bishop. However, Cyprian will also acknowledge the “**throne of Peter**” at Rome in a later Epistle, as we shall see.

#### **Epistle LI, To Antonianus, paragraph 4**

#### **Epistle LI.**

#### **To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 328, col. 1, Page 799 (pdf)**

**4. For when the battle was still going on, and the struggle of a glorious contest was raging in the persecution, the courage of the soldiers had to be excited with every exhortation, and with full urgency, and especially the minds of the lapsed had to be roused with the trumpet call, as it were, of my voice, that they might pursue the way of repentance, not only with prayers and lamentations; but, since an opportunity was given of repeating the struggle and of regaining salvation, that they might be reproved by my voice, and stimulated rather to the ardour of confession and the glory of martyrdom.**

Finally, when the presbyters and deacons had written to me about some persons, that they were without moderation and were eagerly pressing forward to receive communion; replying to them in my letter which is still in existence, then I added also this: “If these are so excessively eager, they have what they require in their own power, the time itself providing for them more than they ask: the battle is still being carried on, and the struggle is daily celebrated: if they truly and substantially repent of what they have done, and the ardour of their faith prevails, he who cannot be delayed may be crowned.” But I put off deciding what was to be arranged about the case of the lapsed, so that when quiet and tranquility should be granted, and the divine indulgence should allow the bishops to assemble into one place, then the advice gathered from the comparison of all opinions being communicated and weighed, we might determine what was necessary to be done. But if any one, before our council, and before the opinion decided upon by the advice of all, should rashly wish to communicate with the lapsed, he himself should be withheld from communion.

**Comment:** Cyprian mentions that, “**an opportunity was given of repeating the struggle and of regaining salvation**” to the lapsed. So in his thinking, salvation could be lost and regained. The understanding in the early Church of what happens when one believes had not been attained yet. Let us look at what the Scripture says about what happens when one believes in Jesus Christ.

Jesus taught as in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my

word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

So once one believes, they pass “from death unto life”. And Jesus explained to Nicodemus the new birth in **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

In verses 3 and 7, the word “again” in the Greek is **ἄνωθεν** (pronounced an'-o-then); from G507; from above; by analogy, from the first; by implication, anew:—from above, again, from the beginning (very first), the top. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G509**

In verse 4, Nicodemus doesn't understand how a man may “be born when he is old”. Jesus then explains in verse 5 that unless “a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”. The early Church interpreted this to mean that one was regenerated or born again by water baptism. However Jesus then continues to explain in verse 6 that, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” The first birth is of the flesh, that is, being born of water. The second birth is of the Spirit.

So when one is born again, that is, born from above, the Spirit of God gives eternal life to our spirit which is dead in trespasses and sins until we come to Christ, as Paul explains in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the boundless riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

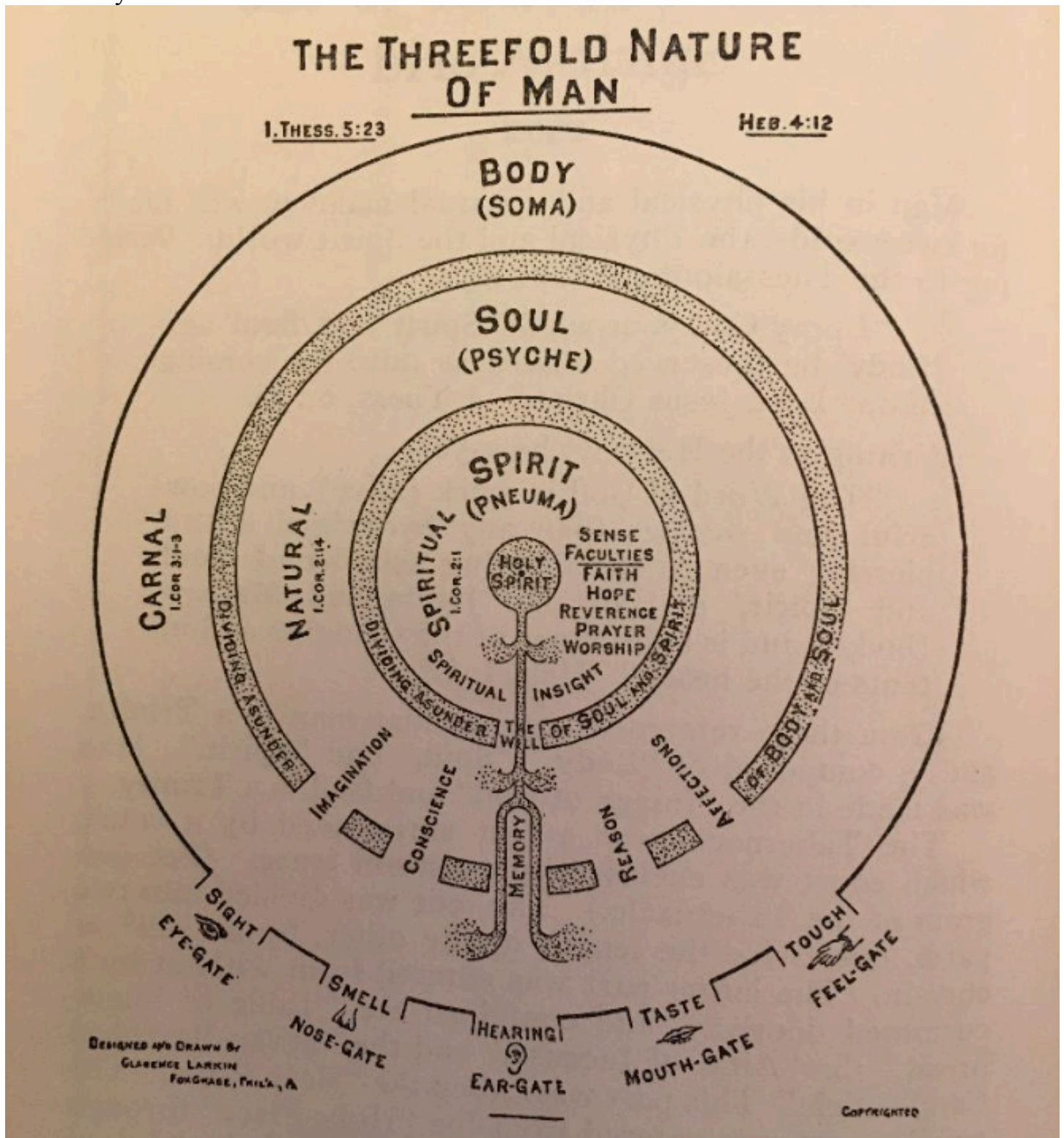
The fact that we have a spirit of our own is revealed in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And then in **1 Thessalonian 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But before we believe in Jesus Christ, our spirit is dead to God in offenses and sins. The early Church thought that when one was born again, they received the Spirit in their soul. The soul was understood to be another word for spirit. The early Church was still a babe in their spiritual understanding. They did not realize that there is a difference between soul and spirit, as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than

any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The word of God is compared here to a sharp “twoedged sword” that is able to divide “asunder of soul and spirit” and “joints and marrow”, and which can discern “the thoughts and intents of the heart”. This may be pictured by a chart from Clarence Larkin, a Baptist minister in the early 1900’s.



The flesh has five senses which are gateways to the physical world. The soul has mind, will, conscience, heart, and emotions or feelings, which are all gateways to relationship in this world. Our spirit is where we have relationship with God. Before accepting Christ, we were just a natural man, as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Before we accepted Christ, we had no relationship with God, being dead in trespasses and sins. We had no understanding of spiritual things. But when we were born again by the Spirit of God, that gateway was opened. This gateway was opened up by God, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Once one believes in Jesus Christ, they have eternal life, as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Though we have eternal life in our spirit, our soul still has all of the baggage of our past life on this earth. All of the hurt feelings, and the old ways of thinking will be cleansed as we walk in the light of His word, as in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

And as we are cleansed we will grow in grace and knowledge, as we read in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

We are encouraged to produce fruit after we are saved. And we will be rewarded accordingly, as Paul taught in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

If we do not produce fruit after we are saved, we will still be saved yet so as by the fire of our bad choices in this life. But Paul encourages us to prove ourselves, as in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

We are not to take our salvation lightly. We must continue to walk by faith, as Paul taught in **Colossians 2 (KJV):6** As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

We received Christ Jesus by faith. We must continue to walk in Him by faith. Now Cyprian also mentions the “the presbyters and deacons” who had written to him. In the Church in Cyprian’s time, “the presbyters and deacons” were lower than the bishops.

**Epistle LI, To Antonianus, paragraph 8**

**Epistle LI.**

8. I come now, dearest brother, to the character of Cornelius our colleague, that with us you may more justly know Cornelius, not from the lies of malignants and detractors, but from the judgment of the Lord God, who made him a bishop, and from the testimony of his fellow-bishops, the whole number of whom has agreed with an absolute unanimity throughout the whole world. For,—a thing which with laudable announcement commends our dearest Cornelius to God and Christ, and to His Church, and also to all his fellow-priests,—he was not one who on a sudden attained to the episcopate; but, promoted through all the ecclesiastical offices, and having often deserved well of the Lord in divine administrations, he ascended by all the grades of religious service to the lofty summit of the Priesthood. Then, moreover, he did not either ask for the episcopate itself, nor did he wish it; nor, as others do when the swelling of their arrogance and pride inflates them, did he seize upon it; but quiet otherwise, and meek and such as those are accustomed to be who are chosen of God to this office, having regard to the modesty of his virgin continency, and the humility of his inborn and guarded veneration, he did not, as some do, use force to be made a bishop, but he himself suffered compulsion, so as to be forced to receive the episcopal office. And he was made bishop by very many of our colleagues who were then present in the city of Rome, who sent to us letters concerning his ordination, honourable and laudatory, and remarkable for their testimony in announcement of him. Moreover, Cornelius was made bishop by the judgment of God and of His Christ, by the testimony of almost all the clergy, by the suffrage of the people who were then present, and by the assembly of ancient priests and good men, when no one had been made so before him, **when the place of Fabian, that is, when the place of Peter and the degree of the sacerdotal throne was vacant;** which being occupied by the will of God, and established by the consent of all of us, whosoever now wishes to become a bishop, must needs be made from without; **and he cannot have the ordination of the Church who does not hold the unity of the Church.** Whoever he may be, although greatly boasting about himself, and claiming very much for himself, he is profane, he is an alien, he is without. And as after the first there cannot be a second, whosoever is made after one who ought to be alone, is not second to him, but is in fact none at all.

**Comment:** Cyprian commends Cornelius, who was made bishop of Rome “**from the judgment of the Lord God, who made him a bishop, and from the testimony of his fellow-bishops, the whole number of whom has agreed with an absolute unanimity throughout the whole world.**”

Cyprian assumes there was “**an absolute unanimity throughout the whole world**” about the ordination of Cornelius.

And Cyprian says of Cornelius that, “**he was not one who on a sudden attained to the episcopate; but, promoted through all the ecclesiastical offices, and having often deserved well of the Lord in divine administrations, he ascended by all the grades of religious service to the lofty summit of the Priesthood.**”

In the Scriptures, there are two offices mentioned in the local church, which are bishops

and deacons. Bishops are mentioned in **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):1** This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

The word “bishop” in the Greek is **ἐπισκοπή** (pronounced ep-is-kop-ay’); from G1980; inspection (for relief); by implication, superintendence; specially, the Christian "episcopate":—the office of a "bishop", bishoprick, visitation. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1984**

And this Greek word is derived from **ἐπισκέπτομαι** (pronounced ep-ee-skep'-tom-ah-ee); middle voice from G1909 and the base of G4649; to inspect, i.e. (by implication) to select; by extension, to go to see, relieve:—look out, visit. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1980**

And this Greek word is derived from two Greek words, first from **ἐπί** (pronounced ep-ee’); a primary preposition; properly, meaning superimposition (of time, place, order, etc.), as a relation of distribution (with the genitive case), i.e. over, upon, etc.; of rest (with the dative case) at, on, etc.; of direction (with the accusative case) towards, upon, etc.:—about (the times), above, after, against, among, as long as (touching), at, beside, ×have charge of, (be-, (where-))fore, in (a place, as much as, the time of, -to), (because) of, (up-)on (behalf of), over, (by, for) the space of, through(-out), (un-)to(-ward), with. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1909**

And second from **σκοπός** (pronounced skop-os’); from **σκέπτομαι** sképtomai (to peer about ("skeptical")); perhaps akin to G4626 through the idea of concealment; compare G4629); a watch (sentry or scout), i.e. (by implication) a goal:—mark. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4649**

So a bishop is one who watches over, that is, an overseer. Now bishops were elders as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):17** And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

And in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The word translated “overseers” in Acts 20:28 is the same Greek word translated “bishop” in 1 Timothy 3:1. Then deacons are mentioned in **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):8** Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. 11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the



office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The word “deacons” in the Greek is **διάκονος** (pronounced dee-ak'-on-os); probably from an obsolete **διάκω** (pronounced diákō) (to run on errands; compare G1377); an attendant, i.e. (genitive case) a waiter (at table or in other menial duties); specially, a Christian teacher and pastor (technically, a deacon or deaconess):—deacon, minister, servant.

Deacons were helpers to the elders and pastors. Elders are also mentioned in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):17** Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

The word “elders” in the Greek is **πρεσβύτερος** (pronounced pres-boo'-ter-os); comparative of **πρέσβυς** (pronounced présbys) (elderly); older; as noun, a senior; specially, an Israelite Sanhedrist (also figuratively, member of the celestial council) or Christian "presbyter":—elder(-est), old.

The presbytery is the group of elders in a local church. When he was in a local church, the apostle Peter was an elder, as we read in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):1** The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

Now in the body of Christ, that is, the whole Church, there are also ministries mentioned in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

And these ministries are gifts, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

These ministry gifts are for the “edifying of the body of Christ”, in verse 12, until “we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”, in verse 13.

There is no mention of “**the lofty summit of the Priesthood**”, or other “**ecclesiastical offices**” in the Scriptures. All believers in Jesus Christ are “set” by God as members “in particular” in His body, the Church, and so we have a particular function to perform as God has gifted us, as in 1 Corinthians 12:27-28. And it is “according to the effectual working in the measure of every part”, that we make “increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love”, as in Ephesians 4:16 above.

Now Cyprian then mentions Fabian, the previous bishop of Rome, who had died. And Cyprian says, “Moreover, Cornelius was made bishop by the judgment of God and of His

Christ, by the testimony of almost all the clergy, by the suffrage of the people who were then present, and by the assembly of ancient priests and good men, when no one had been made so before him, **when the place of Fabian, that is, when the place of Peter and the degree of the sacerdotal throne was vacant;**”

Cyprian is acknowledging Peter as the apostle who established the church in Rome. However, there is no evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. But Paul was known to have been in Rome, as we read in **Acts 28 (KJV):12** And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome. 15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. 16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. 17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. 18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. 19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. 20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. 21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against. 23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

And Paul was in Rome for two years, as we read in **Acts 28 (KJV):28** Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. 30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

There is no historical evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. Peter went and preached to Jews in Babylon, as we read in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):12** By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. 13 The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

The Gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter, as the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul, as we read in **Galatians 2 (KJV):7** But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mightily in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas,

and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

This is why Peter went to Babylon to preach Christ to the Jews who were still there from the captivity, which began when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem in a.d. 586.

But when Cyprian speaks of “**the lofty summit of the Priesthood**”, and “**the place of Peter and the degree of the sacerdotal throne**”, the place of the bishop had become something that it was never intended to be according to Scripture.

Cyprian also says, “**and he cannot have the ordination of the Church who does not hold the unity of the Church**”. The Church in Cyprian’s time was becoming a human institution with its own laws. There was a blending with the world. There was a reliance on legal precepts, which they assumed were derived from the word of God, and had been passed down through the traditions of the apostles. But the traditions the Church assumed were passed down through the apostles were actually traditions that had formed in the Church over the course of time amidst the persecutions of the Church.

The Church in Cyprian’s time did not understand that they were saved by grace, and that they had been justified, and that the righteousness of God had been put down to their account by God, as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we also have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we celebrate in hope of the glory of God.

And so we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. **21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; **22** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

When God justifies the believer, His righteousness is put down to our account. And so we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? **32** He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? **33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. **34** Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. **35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **36** As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. **37** Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. **38** For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, **39** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Church in Cyprian’s time did not understand their standing in grace.

**Epistle LI, To Antonianus, paragraph 11**

**Epistle LI.**

## To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian.

ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 330, col. 1, Page 802-803 (pdf)

11. For with respect to Trophimus also, of whom you wished tidings to be written to you, the case is not as the report and the falsehood of malignant people had conveyed it to you. For, as our predecessors often did, our dearest brother, in bringing together the brethren, yielded to necessity; and since a very large part of the people had withdrawn with Trophimus, now when Trophimus returned to the Church, and atoned for, and with the **penitence** of prayer confessed his former error, and with perfect humility and satisfaction recalled the brotherhood whom he had lately taken away, his prayers were heard; and not only Trophimus, but a very great number of brethren who had been with Trophimus, were admitted into the Church of the Lord, who would not all have returned to the Church unless they had come in Trophimus' company. **Therefore the matter being considered there with several colleagues, Trophimus was received, for whom the return of the brethren and salvation restored to many made atonement.** Yet Trophimus was admitted in such a manner as only to communicate as a layman, not, according to the information given to you by the letters of the malignants, in such a way as to assume the place of a priest.

**Comment:** Cyprian wrote in Latin, so everywhere the word “repent” or “repentance” is read, the word in Latin for repent is **paenitemini** and for repentance is **paenitentiam**.

So instead of “repent” we read “Do penance” in **Matthew 4 (Douay Rheims Version):17** From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The word in Latin for repentance is **paenitentiam**, and so we read in **2 Corinthians 7 (Douay Rheims Version):10** For the sorrow that is according to God worketh penance, steadfast unto salvation: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

In the English translation of Cyprian's writings in **ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V**, these Latin words are most often translated as repent and repentance although there is a note stating that they are the Latin words for penance.

The word “repent” in Matthew 4:17 in the Greek is **μετανοέω** (pronounced met-an-o-eh'-o); from G3326 and G3539; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction):—repent. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3340**

To repent is to have a change of mind about our sin. The word “repent” is also found in the Old Testament, for example in **Ezekiel 14 (KJV):6** Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

In the Hebrew, the word “repent” is **שׁוּב** (pronounced shoob); a primitive root; to turn back (hence, away) transitively or intransitively, literally or figuratively (not necessarily with the idea of return to the starting point); generally to retreat; often adverbial, again:—((break, build, circumcise, dig, do anything, do evil, feed, lay down, lie down, lodge, make, rejoice, send, take, weep)) × again, (cause to) answer (again), × in any case (wise), × at all, averse, bring (again, back, home again), call (to mind), carry again (back), cease, × certainly, come again (back), ×consider, continually, convert, deliver (again), deny, draw back, fetch home

again, × fro, get (oneself) (back) again, × give (again), go again (back, home), (go) out, hinder, let, (see) more, × needs, be past, × pay, pervert, pull in again, put (again, up again), recall, recompense, recover, refresh, relieve, render (again), requite, rescue, restore, retrieve, (cause to, make to) return, reverse, reward, say nay, send back, set again, slide back, still, × surely, take back (off), (cause to, make to) turn (again, self again, away, back, back again, backward, from, off), withdraw. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H7725**

The primary meaning in Hebrew is “to turn back, or away”. In English, the word “penance” is defined as “an act of self-abasement, mortification (see MORTIFICATION sense 3), or devotion performed to show sorrow or repentance for sin”, or “: something (such as a hardship or penalty) resembling an act of penance (as in compensating for an offense)”.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/penance>

The reason “penance” was translated from the Latin Vulgate to the Douay Rheims Version instead of “repentance” is because penance reflected the understanding of the Roman Catholic Church in a.d.1582 when the New Testament was first published in the Douay Rheims Version. Penance involves “compensating for an offense”, that is, a sin, but repentance involves having a change of mind about our sin, and turning from sin to the Lord. The blood of Jesus is the compensation God demands for sin, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Penance was the understanding for the most part of Cyprian and the Catholic Church in his time. But this is not the meaning of “repentance” in the Greek. Cyprian will quote many verses from the Old Testament to show that alms purge away sins. But when we look at the Hebrew we will see that it only covered sins. In the New Testament, it is the blood of Jesus that has removed our sins as far as the east is from the west, as we read in **Psalms 103 (KJV):12** As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Now Cyprian continues, and says, **“Therefore the matter being considered there with several colleagues, Trophimus was received, for whom the return of the brethren and salvation restored to many made atonement.”**

To Cyprian, salvation could be lost and restored if “atonement” was made, or enough penance was done. But this was a misunderstanding of the word “repentance”.

## **Epistle LI, To Antonianus, paragraph 24**

### **Epistle LI.**

#### **To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 333, col. 2, Page 809-810 (pdf)**

24. In reference, however, to the character of Novatian, dearest brother, of whom you desired that intelligence should be written you what heresy he had introduced; know that, in the first place, we ought not even to be inquisitive as to what he teaches, so long as he teaches out of the pale of *unity*. **Whoever he may be, and whatever he may be, he who is not in the**

**Church of Christ is not a Christian. Although he may boast himself, and announce his philosophy or eloquence with lofty words, yet he who has not maintained brotherly love or ecclesiastical unity has lost even what he previously had been.** Unless he seems to you to be a bishop, who—when a bishop has been made in the Church by sixteen co-bishops—strives by bribery to be made an adulterous and extraneous bishop by the hands of deserters; and although there is one Church, divided by Christ throughout the whole world into many members, and also one episcopate diffused through a harmonious multitude of many bishops; in spite of God’s tradition, in spite of the combined and everywhere compacted unity of the Catholic Church, is endeavouring to make a human church, and is sending his new apostles through very many cities, that he may establish some new foundations of his own appointment. And although there have already been ordained in each city, and through all the provinces, bishops old in years, sound in faith, proved in trial, proscribed in persecution, (this one) dares to create over these other and false bishops: as if he could either wander over the whole world with the persistence of his new endeavour, or break asunder the structure of the ecclesiastical body, by the propagation of his own discord, not knowing that schismatics are always fervid at the beginning, but that they cannot increase nor add to what they have unlawfully begun, but that they immediately fail together with their evil emulation. But he could not hold the episcopate, even if he had before been made bishop, since he has cut himself off from the body of his fellow-bishops, and from the unity of the Church; since the apostle admonishes that we should mutually sustain one another, and not withdraw from the unity which God has appointed, and says, “Bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:2-3) He then who neither maintains the unity of the Spirit nor the bond of peace, and separates himself from the band of the Church, and from the assembly of priests, can neither have the power nor the honour of a bishop, since he has refused to maintain either the unity or the peace of the episcopate.

**Comment:** Cyprian says, “Whoever he may be, and whatever he may be, he who is not in the Church of Christ is not a Christian.”

And he then explains, “Although he may boast himself, and announce his philosophy or eloquence with lofty words, yet he who has not maintained brotherly love or ecclesiastical unity has lost even what he previously had been.”

Cyprian then refers in context to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):** 1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

The word “Endeavouring” in verse 3 in the Greek is **σπουδάζω** (pronounced spoo-dad'-zo); from G4710; to use speed, i.e. to make effort, be prompt or earnest:—do (give) diligence, be diligent (forward), endeavour, labour, study. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G4704**

This is not a condition for salvation. Nothing is said in these verses about losing what someone “previously had been.” Cyprian and the early Church were making believers live under what they assumed was the “Gospel law” rather than the grace of the Gospel.

In assuming what they thought was apostolic authority for the bishop, the early Church exceeded what is written in the Scriptures. The Church is the body of Christ, as we read in context in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):**18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

And we are members of His body, as we read in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):**29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

And Christ is the head of the body, the Church, as we read again in context in **Colossians 1 (KJV):**15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

And when we believe in Jesus Christ and we have been born again, we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many.

Our individuality in the body of Christ relates to our function, as we continue to read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

Now we are “the body of Christ, and members in particular”, as we continue in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or

one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

In verse 28 we read that, “God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” That is, God has set or placed us in a particular place in His body to perform a particular function. Some are set in the body as apostles. Some are set in the body as prophets. Some are set in the body as teachers, and so forth. All the members do not have the same function, but all the members “should have the same care one for another” as in verse 25 above. It is God who has “set” the members in the body of Christ “as it hath pleased him” in verse 18.

And so we read in **Romans 12 (KJV)**:4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

The word “office” in verse 4 in the Greek is **πρᾶξις** (pronounced prax'-is); from G4238; practice, i.e. (concretely) an act; by extension, a function:—deed, office, work. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G4234**

In 1 Corinthians 12, the Church is compared to our body, which has hands, feet, eyes, and ears. Our body has many members which have different functions. All of the members are necessary in order for the body to function as a whole. This is the picture of the body of Christ in the word of God. There is no clergy-laity system in the body of Christ. All the members have a function which are needed in the body in order for the body to function as a whole according to the word of God. This was not understood by the early Church.

The unity in the body of Christ is maintained by surrender to the Spirit of God, and not by surrender to the “college of priests” or to the bishops. We are not to be dependent on man, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV)**:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. 28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

The body of Christ is a spiritual body. Each member in the body of Christ is to pay attention to the Holy Spirit in order to abide in Him so that we will “not be ashamed before him at his coming”. But maintaining the unity of the Spirit is not a condition for salvation as Cyprian and the early Church assumed.

We must keep looking to Jesus, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV)**:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight,



and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

### **Epistle LI, To Antonianus, paragraphs 28-29**

#### **Epistle LI.**

#### **To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 335, col. 1-2, Page 811-812 (pdf)**

28. And oh, mockery of a deceived fraternity! Oh, vain deception of miserable and senseless mourners! **Oh, ineffectual and profitless tradition of heretical institution! to exhort to the repentance of atonement, and to take away the healing from the atonement; to say to our brethren, “Mourn and shed tears, and groan day and night, and labour largely and frequently for the washing away and cleansing of your sin; but, after all these things, you shall die without the pale of the Church.** Whatsoever things are necessary to peace, you shall do, but none of that peace which you seek shall you receive!” Who would not perish at once? Who would not fall away, from very desperation? Who would not turn away his mind from all design of lamentation? Do you think that the husbandman could labour if you should say, “Till the field with all the skill of husbandry, diligently persevere in its cultivation; but you shall reap no harvest, you shall press no vintage, you shall receive no fruits of your olive-yard, you shall gather no apples from the trees;” or if, urging upon any one the possession and use of ships, you were to say, “Purchase, my brother, material from excellent woods; inweave your keel with the strongest and chosen oak; labour on the rudder, the ropes, the sails, that the ship may be constructed and fitted; but when you have done this, you shall never behold the result from its doings and its voyages?”

29. This is to shut up and to cut off the way of grief and of repentance; so that while in all Scripture the Lord God soothes those who return to Him and repent, repentance itself is taken away by our hardness and cruelty, which intercepts the fruits of repentance. **But if we find that none ought to be restrained from repenting, and that peace may be granted by His priests to those who entreat and beseech the Lord’s mercy, inasmuch as He is merciful and loving, the groaning of those who mourn is to be admitted, and the fruit of repentance is not to be denied to those who grieve.** And because in the place of the departed there is no confession, neither can confession be made there, they who have repented from their whole heart, and have asked for it, ought to be received within the Church, and to be kept in it for the Lord, who will of a surety judge, when He comes to His Church, those whom He shall find within it. **But apostates and deserters, or adversaries and enemies, and those who lay waste the Church of Christ, cannot, even if outside the Church they have been slain for His name, according to the apostle, be admitted to the peace of the Church, since they have neither kept the unity of the spirit nor of the Church.**

**Comment:** It is helpful to know a little history about Novatian.

The Britannica says, “**Novatian**, Latin **Novatianus**, (born c. 200, Rome [Italy]—

died c. 258), the second antipope in papal history, in 251. He was the first Roman theologian to write in Latin and inspired the Novatian Schism—a break from the Christian church by rigorists who condemned apostasy. (His name was certainly Novatianus—not Novatus, as given by the Greeks.)

Novatian was ordained at Rome and about 250 became a leader of the Roman clergy, in whose name he wrote two letters to St. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, concerning the *lapsi*—i.e., those early Christians who renounced their faith during the persecutions. He had shared with Cyprian a moderate attitude toward apostates, but, when St. Cornelius was elected pope in 251, Novatian became the champion of rigorism. By then he had a high reputation as a learned theologian. While a majority favoured Cornelius as pope, a minority declared itself for Novatian, and he set himself up as antipope. His rigorist doctrine was uncompromising, and, by denying the administration of penance, he refused to admit the *lapsi* into the church. Novatian and his followers were excommunicated at a synod convened by Cornelius in 251.

Although Cyprian and Cornelius joined forces against the Novatianists, the schism developed into a sect that spread across the empire and lasted for several centuries. Despite opposition, Novatian managed to build his own church with his own bishops throughout Christendom. During the persecution of Christians from 251 to 253, he fled Rome. The assertion of the church historian Socrates (died c. 445) that Novatian was martyred about 258 under the Roman emperor Valerian appears confirmed by the inscription “Novatiano...martyri” found in a cemetery near San Lorenzo, Rome, in 1932.”

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Novatian>

Novatian was clearly in error when he, “by denying the administration of penance, he refused to admit the *lapsi* into the church”. By doing this, he would not allow the repentance of the “*lapsi*”, and their returning to the Lord.

Cyprian is willing to receive the lapsed if they repent, that is, do penance, as he says, **“But if we find that none ought to be restrained from repenting, and that peace may be granted by His priests to those who entreat and beseech the Lord’s mercy, inasmuch as He is merciful and loving, the groaning of those who mourn is to be admitted, and the fruit of repentance is not to be denied to those who grieve.”**

However, Cyprian says that **“peace may be granted by His priests to those who entreat and beseech the Lord’s mercy”**. This makes a distance between God and the believer that is not Scriptural. Because of God’s justification, the believer has peace with God, as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

If a believer sins, they must confess their sin, and God is faithful to forgive us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And Cyprian says that to repent **“without the pale of the Church”** was to no avail with the Lord, or so the Church in Cyprian’s time thought. Even if one was **“slain for His name”**, it would not be acceptable to the Lord if they were **“outside the Church”**, that is, if they were **“without the pale of the Church”**. But Jesus said in **Matthew 18 (KJV):20** For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

And Jesus taught in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

And Paul taught in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And we are to keep the unity of the Spirit as Paul taught in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):1** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

But keeping the unity of the Spirit is not a condition of salvation. It is something we are to endeavor to keep. The word “Endeavouring” in the Greek is **σπουδάζω** (pronounced spoo-dad'-zo; from G4710; to use speed, i.e. to make effort, be prompt or earnest:—do (give) diligence, be diligent (forward), endeavour, labour, study. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G4704.**

And Paul taught as in **Romans 14 (KJV):1** Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Novatian was clearly teaching heresy, but to judge him to be one who has lost salvation is also heresy. There are reasons to judge believers, as Paul also taught in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):11** But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

So there are reasons not to have fellowship with believers who sin as in verse 11, but we are not to judge whether they are saved or not.

Now Paul also taught as in **Titus 3 (KJV):11** A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

The word “heretick” in the Greek is **αἰρετικός** (pronounced hahee-ret-ee-kos'); from the same as G140; a schismatic:—heretic (the Greek word itself). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G141**

So we don't have fellowship with heretics either. But we don't judge a believer based on whether he agrees with the doctrine of a church or not. We judge heretics based on what they teach, and whether it is in agreement with the word of God, rightly divided.

### **Epistle LIV, To Cornelius, paragraphs 3-4**

#### **Epistle LIV.**

#### **To Cornelius, Concerning Fortunatus and Felicissimus, or Against the Heretics.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 339-340, col. 1-2, Page 821-822 (pdf)**

3. But, dearest brother, ecclesiastical discipline is not on that account to be forsaken, nor priestly censure to be relaxed, because we are disturbed with reproaches or are shaken with terrors; since Holy Scripture meets and warns us, saying, "But he who presumes and is haughty, the man who boasts of himself, who hath enlarged his soul as hell, shall accomplish nothing." (Habakkuk 2:5) And again: "And fear not the words of a sinful man, for his glory shall be dung and worms. Today he is lifted up, and tomorrow he shall not be found, because he is turned into his earth, and his thought shall perish." (1 Maccabees 2:62-63) And again: "I have seen the wicked exalted, and raised above the cedars of Libanus: I went by, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, and his place was not found." (Psalm 37:35-36) Exaltation, and puffing up, and arrogant and haughty boastfulness, spring not from the teaching of Christ who teaches humility, but from the spirit of Antichrist, whom the Lord rebukes by His prophet, saying, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will place my throne above the stars of God: I will sit on a lofty mountain, above the lofty mountains to the north: I will ascend above the clouds; I will be like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:13-14) And he added, saying, "Yet thou shalt descend into hell, to the foundations of the earth; and they that see thee shall wonder at thee." (Isaiah 14:15-16) Whence also divine Scripture threatens a like punishment to such in another place, and says, "For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is injurious and proud, and upon every one that is lifted up, and lofty." (Isaiah 2:12) By his mouth, therefore, and by his words, is every one at once betrayed; and whether he has Christ in his heart, or Antichrist, is discerned in his speaking, according to what the Lord says in His Gospel, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (Matthew 12:34-35) Whence also that rich sinner who implores help from Lazarus, then laid in Abraham's bosom, and established in a place of comfort, while he, writhing in torments, is consumed by the heats of burning flame, suffers most punishment of all parts of his body in his mouth and his tongue, because doubtless in his mouth and his tongue he had most sinned. (Luke 16:19-31)

4. For since it is written, "Neither shall revilers inherit the kingdom of God," (1 Corinthians 6:10) and again the Lord says in His Gospel, "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool; and whosoever shall say, Raca, shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire," (Matthew 5:22) how can they evade the rebuke of the Lord the avenger, who heap up such expressions, not only on their brethren, but also on the priests, to whom is granted such honour of the condescension of God, that whosoever should not obey his priest, and him that judgeth here for the time, was immediately to be slain? In Deuteronomy the Lord God speaks, saying, "And the

man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest or to the judge, whosoever he shall be in those days, that man shall die; and all the people, when they hear, shall fear, and shall do no more wickedly.” Deuteronomy 17:12-13) Moreover, to Samuel when he was despised by the Jews, God says; “They have not despised thee, but they have despised me.” (1 Samuel 8:7) And the Lord also in the Gospel says, “He that heareth you, heareth me, and Him that sent me; and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me, rejecteth Him that sent me.” (Luke 10:16) And when he had cleansed the leprous man, he said, “Go, show thyself to the priest.” (Matthew 8:4) And when afterwards, in the time of His passion, He had received a buffet from a servant of the priest, and the servant said to Him, “Answerest thou the high priest so?” (John 18:22) the Lord said nothing reproachfully against the high priest, nor detracted anything from the priest’s honour; but rather asserting His own innocence, and showing it, He says, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?” (John 18:23) Also subsequently, in the Acts of the Apostles, the blessed Apostle Paul, when it was said to him, “Revilest thou God’s priest?” (Acts 23:4)—although they had begun to be sacrilegious, and impious, and bloody, the Lord having already been crucified, and had no longer retained anything of the priestly honour and authority—yet Paul, considering the name itself, however empty, and the shadow, as it were, of the priest, said, “I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” (Acts 23:5)

**Comment:** In paragraph 3, Cyprian is speaking to Cornelius, the bishop of Rome. Cyprian quotes a lot of Scripture here.

He begins as he says, “But, dearest brother, ecclesiastical discipline is not on that account to be forsaken, nor priestly censure to be relaxed, because we are disturbed with reproaches or are shaken with terrors; since Holy Scripture meets and warns us, saying, “But he who presumes and is haughty, the man who boasts of himself, who hath enlarged his soul as hell, shall accomplish nothing.” (Habakkuk 2:5)

Cyprian says that “priestly censure” is not “to be relaxed”. Censure is “a judgment involving condemnation”. (Merriam Webster Dictionary) So Cyprian is saying that the priests should continue their judgment upon wrongdoers.

He then refers in context to **Habakkuk 2 (KJV):4** Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. **5** Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people:

And then he refers to the apocryphal book of **1 Maccabees 2 (RSVUE):62** Do not fear the words of sinners, for their splendor will turn into dung and worms. **63** Today they will be exalted, but tomorrow they will not be found, for they will have returned to the dust, and their plans will have perished.

And then to **Psalms 37 (KJV):35** I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. **36** Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

Cyprian continues, as he then says, “Exaltation, and puffing up, and arrogant and

haughty boastfulness, spring not from the teaching of Christ who teaches humility, but from the spirit of Antichrist, whom the Lord rebukes by His prophet, saying, “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will place my throne above the stars of God: I will sit on a lofty mountain, above the lofty mountains to the north: I will ascend above the clouds; I will be like the Most High.” (Isaiah 14:13-14) And he added, saying, “Yet thou shalt descend into hell, to the foundations of the earth; and they that see thee shall wonder at thee.” (Isaiah 14:15-16)”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 14 (KJV):**12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. 16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

In verse 12, we read that Lucifer had “fallen from heaven”. This Scripture is speaking of the fall of Lucifer, that is, of Satan.

Cyprian continues, as he then says, “Whence also divine Scripture threatens a like punishment to such in another place, and says, “For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is injurious and proud, and upon every one that is lifted up, and lofty.” (Isaiah 2:12)”

He refers to **Isaiah 2 (KJV):**12 For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

And Cyprian continues, as he then says, “By his mouth, therefore, and by his words, is every one at once betrayed; and whether he has Christ in his heart, or Antichrist, is discerned in his speaking, according to what the Lord says in His Gospel, “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” (Matthew 12:34-35)

He refers in context to **Matthew 12 (KJV):**33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. 34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. 36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

And Cyprian concludes in paragraph 3, as he then says, “Whence also that rich sinner who implores help from Lazarus, then laid in Abraham’s bosom, and established in a place of comfort, while he, writhing in torments, is consumed by the heats of burning flame, suffers most punishment of all parts of his body in his mouth and his tongue, because doubtless in his mouth and his tongue he had most sinned. (Luke 16:19-31)

He refers in context to **Luke 16 (KJV):**19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain

beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

In paragraph 4, Cyprian begins as he says, "For since it is written, "Neither shall revilers inherit the kingdom of God," (1 Corinthians 6:10) and again the Lord says in His Gospel, "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool; and whosoever shall say, Raca, shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire," (Matthew 5:22) how can they evade the rebuke of the Lord the avenger, who heap up such expressions, not only on their brethren, but also on the priests, to whom is granted such honour of the condescension of God, that whosoever should not obey his priest, and him that judgeth here for the time, was immediately to be slain?

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):9** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

And in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):21** Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

And Cyprian explains, as he then says, "In Deuteronomy the Lord God speaks, saying, "And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest or to the judge, whosoever he shall be in those days, that man shall die; and all the people, when they hear, shall fear, and shall do no more wickedly." Deuteronomy 17:12-13)

But Cyprian does not quote Deuteronomy completely, as we read in **Deuteronomy 17 (KJV):12** And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die:

**and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.** 13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

The Lord is speaking to Israel here. This was a time when Israel was under the law which consisted of the first five books of the Old Testament. This included the ten commandments, the civil laws, and the laws of the priesthood, and the rituals to be observed. Cyprian writes as if the laws of the priesthood still had application to the Church.

Cyprian continues in paragraph 4, as he then says, “Moreover, to Samuel when he was despised by the Jews, God says; “They have not despised thee, but they have despised me.” (1 Samuel 8:7) And the Lord also in the Gospel says, “He that heareth you, heareth me, and Him that sent me; and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me, rejecteth Him that sent me.” (Luke 10:16)

He refers to **1 Samuel 8 (KJV):7** And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

And to **Luke 10 (KJV):16** He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

Cyprian continues, as he then says, “And when he had cleansed the leprous man, he said, “Go, show thyself to the priest.” (Matthew 8:4) And when afterwards, in the time of His passion, He had received a buffet from a servant of the priest, and the servant said to Him, “Answerest thou the high priest so?” (John 18:22) the Lord said nothing reproachfully against the high priest, nor detracted anything from the priest’s honour; but rather asserting His own innocence, and showing it, He says, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?” (John 18:23) Also subsequently, in the Acts of the Apostles, the blessed Apostle Paul, when it was said to him, “Revilest thou God’s priest?” (Acts 23:4)—although they had begun to be sacrilegious, and impious, and bloody, the Lord having already been crucified, and had no longer retained anything of the priestly honour and authority—yet Paul, considering the name itself, however empty, and the shadow, as it were, of the priest, said, “I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” (Acts 23:5)

Cyprian refers to **Matthew 8 (KJV):4** And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Jesus did this because He was fulfilling all the righteousness of the law at that time. This would enable Him to redeem us since He fulfilled all of the law’s requirements for us. When He died, He entered into heaven by His own blood, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

And Cyprian refers to **John 18 (KJV):22** And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? 23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

And in context to **Acts 23 (KJV):2** And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. 3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou



whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? 4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

Jesus was acting in obedience to the law under the Old Covenant in order to fulfill all righteousness, as we read in **Matthew 3 (KJV):**13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

When Jesus died on the cross, He inaugurated the new covenant. He spoke of this in **Matthew 26 (KJV):**26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

The word “testament” in the Greek is **διαθήκη** (pronounced dee-ath-ay'-kay); from G1303; properly, a disposition, i.e. (specially) a contract (especially a devisory will):—covenant, testament.

This Greek word is translated as “covenant” twenty times in the **King James Version**, and thirteen times as “testament”. We are now in the time of the New Covenant, or Testament.

Cyprian is using these Scriptures to show what he believed to be the “priestly authority” in the time of the New Covenant. He mentions this “priestly authority” in the next paragraph.

## **Epistle LIV, To Cornelius, paragraph 5**

### **Epistle LIV.**

#### **To Cornelius, Concerning Fortunatus and Felicissimus, or Against the Heretics.**

#### **ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 340-341, col. 2, Page 822-823 (pdf)**

5. When, then, such and so great examples, and many others, are precedents whereby the priestly authority and power by the divine condescension is established, what kind of people, think you, are they who, being enemies of the priests, and rebels against the Catholic Church, are frightened neither by the threatening of a forewarning Lord, nor by the vengeance of coming judgment? For neither have heresies arisen, nor have schisms originated, from any other source than from this, that God's priest is not obeyed; nor do they consider that there is one person for the time priest in the Church, and for the time judge in the stead of Christ; whom, if, according to divine teaching, the whole fraternity should obey, no one would stir up anything against the college of priests; no one, after the divine judgment, after the suffrage of the people, after the consent of the co-bishops, would make himself a judge, not now of the bishop, but of God. No one would rend the Church by a division of the unity of Christ. No one, pleasing himself, and swelling with arrogance, would found a new heresy, separate and without, unless any one be of such sacrilegious daring and abandoned mind, as to think that a priest is made without God's judgment, when the Lord says in His Gospel, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them does not fall to the ground without the will of your Father.” (Matthew 10:29)

**When He says that not even the least things are done without God's will, does any one**

**think that the highest and greatest things are done in God’s Church either without God’s knowledge or permission, and that priests—that is, His stewards—are not ordained by His decree? This is not to have faith, whereby we live; this is not to give honour to God, by whose direction and decision we know and believe that all things are ruled and governed.** Undoubtedly there are bishops made, not by the will of God, but they are such as are made outside of the Church—such as are made contrary to the ordinance and tradition of the Gospel, as the Lord Himself in the twelve prophets asserts, saying, “They have set up a king for themselves, and not by me.” (Hosea 8:4) And again: “Their sacrifices are as the bread of mourning; all that eat thereof shall be polluted.” (Hosea 9:4) And the Holy Spirit also cries by Isaiah, and says, “Woe unto you, children that are deserters. Thus saith the Lord, Ye have taken counsel, but not of me; and ye have made a covenant, but not of my Spirit, that ye may add sin to sin.” (Isaiah 30:10)

**Comment:** Cyprian refers to the Scriptures he quoted in the previous paragraph, as he now says, “When, then, such and so great examples, and many others, are precedents whereby the priestly authority and power by the divine condescension is established, what kind of people, think you, are they who, being enemies of the priests, and rebels against the Catholic Church, are frightened neither by the threatening of a forewarning Lord, nor by the vengeance of coming judgment? For neither have heresies arisen, nor have schisms originated, from any other source than from this, that God’s priest is not obeyed; nor do they consider that there is one person for the time priest in the Church, and for the time judge in the stead of Christ; whom, if, according to divine teaching, the whole fraternity should obey, no one would stir up anything against the college of priests; no one, after the divine judgment, after the suffrage of the people, after the consent of the co-bishops, would make himself a judge, not now of the bishop, but of God.”

Cyprian is saying that the source of heresies and schisms is that “God’s priest is not obeyed”. Cyprian is making the priest to be “judge in the stead of Christ”. And to the priest, he says that “according to divine teaching, the whole fraternity should obey”. So therefore according to Cyprian the priest is God’s representative on earth.

Cyprian then continues, and says, “No one would rend the Church by a division of the unity of Christ. No one, pleasing himself, and swelling with arrogance, would found a new heresy, separate and without, unless any one be of such sacrilegious daring and abandoned mind, as to think that a priest is made without God’s judgment, when the Lord says in His Gospel, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them does not fall to the ground without the will of your Father.” (Matthew 10:29)”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):29** Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

So Cyprian is arguing that because priests exist in the Church, this is evidence that a priest is made with God’s judgment. But there is nothing in Matthew 10:29 that refers to priests.

Cyprian continues, and says, **“When He says that not even the least things are done without God’s will, does any one think that the highest and greatest things are done in God’s Church either without God’s knowledge or permission, and that priests—that is, His stewards—are not ordained by His decree? This is not to have faith, whereby we live; this is not to give honour to God, by whose direction and decision we know and believe**

**that all things are ruled and governed.**

But there is no place in the Scriptures that says that God decreed a priesthood that is separate from other believers in the New Testament. Philip Schaff, the author of **The History of the Christian Church**, wrote:

“The idea and institution of a special priesthood, distinct from the body of the people, with the accompanying notion of sacrifice and altar, passed imperceptibly from Jewish and heathen reminiscences and analogies into the Christian church. The majority of Jewish converts adhered tenaciously to the Mosaic institutions and rites, and a considerable part never fully attained to the height of spiritual freedom proclaimed by Paul, or soon fell away from it. He opposed legalistic and ceremonial tendencies in Galatia and Corinth; and although sacerdotalism does not appear among the errors of his Judaizing opponents, the Levitical priesthood, with its three ranks of high-priest, priest, and Levite, naturally furnished an analogy for the threefold ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon, and came to be regarded as typical of it. Still less could the Gentile Christians, as a body, at once emancipate themselves from their traditional notions of priesthood, altar, and sacrifice, on which their former religion was based. Whether we regard the change as an apostasy from a higher position attained, or as a reaction of old ideas never fully abandoned, the change is undeniable, and can be traced to the second century. The church could not long occupy the ideal height of the apostolic age, and as the Pentecostal illumination passed away with the death of the apostles, the old reminiscences began to reassert themselves.” **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Philip Schaff, page 123.**

In the Old Testament, in order to be a priest, one had to be a son of Aaron. The law gave the Levitical priesthood to Aaron and his sons exclusively as we see in **Numbers 18 (KJV):1** And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. **2** And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. **3** And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. **4** And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. **5** And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. **6** And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. **7** Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

In verse 3, if those Levites, who were not sons of Aaron but of the tribe of Levi, came near to “the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar,” both they and Aaron and his sons would die. In verse 1, Aaron and his sons were to “bear the iniquity of the sanctuary” as priests. In verse 2, the Levites were given to “minister” as the helpers of the priests, that is, to Aaron and his sons.

The Levitical priesthood was therefore not given to all the Levites but only to the sons

of Aaron. This was a perpetual statute as stated in **Exodus 29 (KJV):**4 And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. 5 And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: 6 And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. 7 Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. 8 And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. 9 And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

The fact that the priesthood was exclusively Aaron and his son's, and not the other Levites, is proven also by the rebellion of Korah, who was a Levite, but not a son of Aaron. The account of Korah's rebellion begins in **Numbers 16 (KJV):**1 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Korah and his followers were sons of Levi but they were not sons of Aaron. They wanted the priesthood also as we read in **Numbers 16 (KJV):**8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

Then Moses commanded Korah and all his company to take censors and to put fire and incense in them and appear before the Lord. There were 250 men with censors offering incense. Aaron was present as well. They stood in front of Moses when Moses pronounced judgment on them as we read in **Numbers 16 (KJV):**26 And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. 27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. 28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. 29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. 30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. 31 And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: 32 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

Fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men offering incense as we see in

**Numbers 16 (KJV):**35 And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

The censors of these men were gathered up and hammered out as a covering for the altar so that the people of Israel would not forget that the priesthood belonged to the sons of Aaron exclusively as we read in **Numbers 16 (KJV):**39 And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar: 40 To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

Again the Levites were to assist the sons of Aaron as we read in **1 Chronicles 23 (KJV):**27 For by the last words of David the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above: 28 Because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God; 29 Both for the shewbread, and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for that which is baked in the pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size; 30 And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even: 31 And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD: 32 And that they should keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy place, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD.

The division of the priests was strictly within the families of the sons of Aaron as recorded in **1 Chronicles 24 (KJV):**1 Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. 3 And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service.

The priesthood has now been changed, as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

This was prophesied in **Psalms 110 (KJV):**4 The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

We continue to read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21 (For those priests were

made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

In verse 24, "Jesus has an unchangeable priesthood" because "he continueth ever". And in verse 27, Jesus doesn't need "to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself."

And we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):**14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We have no need of priests who have to offer up a sacrifice for their own sins, as in Hebrews 7:27. Jesus is our "great high priest", as in verse 14 above. And in verse 16, we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

We maintain the unity of the Spirit by walking in the light of the word of God. Our surrender is to God, and not to man. We must speak the truth in love, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Being raised a Catholic as a boy, I wondered where the mitre on the bishop's head came from, but no one ever mentioned it. But as I read again in **Exodus 29 (KJV):**6 And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. 7 Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. 8 And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. 9 And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

I realized that the Catholic Church in Cyprian's time had continued the Old Testament priesthood of Aaron and his sons. But now that the priesthood has been changed, there are no grounds for the wearing of such a mitre, or bonnets, or even a priesthood that is separate from other believers. We have no need of priests because we now have Jesus as our great High Priest who ever lives to intercede for us. And again, in Hebrews 4:16, we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need".

We don't need anyone to offer sacrifice for our sins, for Jesus did this once and for all,

as we read again in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):27** Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

In the Old Testament, the sacrifices of the priests did not take away sin, but only covered sins, as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

It was their trust in the redeemer who was promised to come that saved them, as we continue to read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):5** Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

We don't need anyone to offer sacrifice for our sins, for Jesus did this once and for all, as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):9** Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

We who are believers in Jesus Christ are a royal priesthood, as Peter taught in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):9** But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light;

As believer priests, we are to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And in **Hebrews 13 (NASB):15** Through Him then, let's continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips praising His name. 16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Cyprian and the early Church had continued the Old Testament priesthood with mitre and garments and altar with Communion as their sacrifice. They did not understand that Jesus had instituted the New Covenant, and that the priesthood had changed to the order of Melchisedec whose priesthood never ends.

**Epistle LIV, To Cornelius, paragraphs 13-14**

**Epistle LIV.**

**To Cornelius, Concerning Fortunatus and Felicissimus, or Against the Heretics.**

13. In the very time of persecution we wrote letters on this matter, but we were not attended to. A full council being held, we decreed, not only with our consent, but also with our threatening, that the brethren should repent, (Strictly, the phrase here as elsewhere is, “should do penance,” “pœnitentiam agerent.”) and that none should rashly grant peace to those who did not repent. And those sacrilegious persons rush with impious madness against God’s priests, departing from the Church; and raising their parricidal arms against the Church, in order that the malice of the devil may consummate their work, take pains that the divine clemency may not heal the wounded in His Church. They corrupt the repentance of the wretched men by the deceitfulness of their lies, that it may not satisfy an offended God—that he who has either blushed or feared to be a Christian before, may not afterwards seek Christ his Lord, nor he return to the Church who had departed from the Church. Efforts are used that the sins may not be atoned for with just satisfactions and lamentations, that the wounds may not be washed away with tears. True peace is done away by the falsehood of a false peace; the healthful bosom of a mother is closed by the interference of the stepmother, that weeping and groaning may not be heard from the breast and from the lips of the lapsed. And beyond this, the lapsed are compelled with their tongues and lips, in the Capitol (Capitol of Carthage, for the provinces imitated Rome in this respect. Du Cange gives many instances.) wherein before they had sinned, to reproach the priests—to assail with contumelies and with abusive words the confessors and virgins, and those righteous men who are most eminent for the praise of the faith, and most glorious in the Church. By which things, indeed, it is not so much the modesty and the humility and the shame of our people that are smitten, as their own hope and life that are lacerated. For neither is it he who hears, but he who utters the reproach, that is wretched; nor is it he who is smitten by his brother, but he who smites a brother, that is a sinner under the law; and when the guilty do a wrong to the innocent, they suffer the injury who think that they are doing it. Finally, their mind is smitten by these things, and their spirit is dull, and their sense of right is estranged: it is God’s wrath that they do not perceive their sins, lest repentance should follow as it is written, “And God gave them the spirit of torpor,” (Isaiah 29:10) that is, that they may not return and be healed, and be made whole after their sins by just prayers and satisfactions. Paul the apostle in his epistle lays it down, and says, “They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12) **The highest degree of happiness is, not to sin; the second, to acknowledge our sins. In the former, innocence flows pure and unstained to preserve us; in the latter, there comes a medicine to heal us. Both of these they have lost by offending God, both because the grace is lost which is received from the sanctification of baptism, and repentance comes not to their help, whereby the sin is healed.** Think you, brother, that their wickednesses against God are trifling, their sins small and moderate—since by their means the majesty of an angry God is not besought, since the anger and the fire and the day of the Lord is not feared—since, when Antichrist is at hand the faith of the militant people is disarmed by the taking away of the power of Christ and His fear? **Let the laity see to it how they may amend this.** A heavier labour is incumbent on the priests in asserting and maintaining the



majesty of God, that we seem not to neglect anything in this respect, when God admonishes us, and says, “And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessing.” (Malachi 2:1-2) Is honour, then, given to God when the majesty and decree of God are so condemned, that when He declares that He is indignant and angry with those who sacrifice, and when He threatens eternal penalties and perpetual punishments, it is proposed by the sacrilegious, and said, Let not the wrath of God be considered, let not the judgment of the Lord be feared, let not any knock at the Church of Christ; but repentance being done away with, and no confession of sin being made, the bishops being despised and trodden under foot, let peace be proclaimed by the presbyters in deceitful words; and lest the lapsed should rise up, or those placed without should return to the Church, let communion be offered to those who are not in communion?

14. To these also it was not sufficient that they had withdrawn from the Gospel, that they had taken away from the lapsed the hope of satisfaction and repentance, that they had taken away those involved in frauds or stained with adulteries, or polluted with the deadly contagion of sacrifices, lest they should entreat God, or make confession of their crimes in the Church, from all feeling and fruit of repentance; that they had set up outside for themselves—outside the Church, and opposed to the Church, a conventicle of their abandoned faction, when there had flowed together a band of creatures with evil consciences, and unwilling to entreat and to satisfy God. **After such things as these, moreover, they still dare—a false bishop having been appointed for them by heretics—to set sail and to bear letters from schismatic and profane persons to the throne of Peter, and to the chief church whence priestly unity takes its source; and not to consider that these were the Romans whose faith was praised in the preaching of the apostle, to whom faithlessness could have no access.** But what was the reason of their coming and announcing the making of the pseudo-bishop in opposition to the bishops? For either they are pleased with what they have done, and persist in their wickedness; or, if they are displeased and retreat, they know whither they may return. For, as it has been decreed by all of us—and is equally fair and just—that the case of every one should be heard there where the crime has been committed; and a portion of the flock has been assigned to each individual pastor, which he is to rule and govern, having to give account of his doing to the Lord; it certainly behooves those over whom we are placed not to run about nor to break up the harmonious agreement of the bishops with their crafty and deceitful rashness, but there to plead their cause, where they may be able to have both accusers and witnesses of their crime; unless perchance the authority of the bishops constituted in Africa seems to a few desperate and abandoned men to be too little, who have already judged concerning them, and have lately condemned, by the gravity of their judgment, their conscience bound in many bonds of sins. Already their case has been examined, already sentence concerning them has been pronounced; nor is it fitting for the dignity of priests to be blamed for the levity of a changeable and inconstant mind, when the Lord teaches and says, “Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay.” (Matthew 5:37)

**Comment:** In paragraphs 13 to 14, Cyprian is writing to Cornelius about Fortunatus and Felicissimus, who were leaders among the “lapsed”. Here is a summary of the history of

Fortunatus and Felicissimus:

“Felicissimus the author of a schism in the Church of Carthage in the 3d century, was appointed deacon in Carthage by the presbyter Novatus, without a previous understanding with Cyprian, who, a short time before, had been elected bishop. Cyprian declared his appointment to be an encroachment upon his episcopal prerogatives, but did not depose him. During the Decian persecution Cyprian was for some time absent from Carthage, and some of the presbyters, who claimed greater rights than Cyprian was willing to concede to them, began to readmit the *lapsi* to the communion of the Church in consequence of the *libelli pacis* given by the martyrs, without having an understanding on the subject with Cyprian. The latter reproached the presbyters with too great laxity, and sent a commission to Carthage which was to investigate the conduct of the *lapsi*, and to regulate the support which the treasury of the Church granted in certain cases. Felicissimus denounced the conduct of Cyprian as an encroachment upon his rights as deacon, among which belonged, in the Church of Africa, the administration of the treasury of the Church; and he even went so far as to exclude from the communion of his church those who should appear before the episcopal commission. He was joined in his opposition by five - Presbyters and a number of confessors, and his church became the centre of all the *lapsi* who wished to have their cases decided before the return of Cyprian. After the return of Cyprian to Carthage in 251, a synod regulated the affair of the *lapsi*, and excluded Felicissimus and the presbyters acting with him from the Church. Felicissimus, however, not only persisted in his opposition, but his party, strengthened by the accession of several African bishops, elected Fortunatus, one of the five presbyters siding with Felicissimus, bishop of Carthage, and sent Felicissimus himself to Rome where, in the mean while, the Novatian controversy had broken out for the purpose of gaining the 'Roman bishop Cornelius over to their side. The mission was, however, unsuccessful, and the schism of Felicissimus seems soon after to have become extinct.-Herzog, *Real-Encyklop.* 4:349; Schaf, *Church History.* (A. J. S.)”  
<https://www.biblicalcyclopedia.com/F/felicissimus.html>

“**Novatianism** or **Novationism** was an early Christian sect devoted to the theologian Novatian (c. 200–258) that held a strict view that refused readmission to communion of *lapsi* (those baptized Christians who had denied their faith or performed the formalities of a ritual sacrifice to the pagan gods under the pressures of the persecution sanctioned by Emperor Decius in AD 250). The Church of Rome declared the Novatianists heretical following the letters of Saint Cyprian of Carthage and Ambrose wrote against them. Novatianism survived until the 8th century.”

“Novatian believed that the *lapsi* should not be let back into the church. He believed that the *lapsi* might repent and be put to lifelong penance, but the forgiveness must be left to God, and that the *lapsi* could not be forgiven on this earth.”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novatianism#Other>

Novatian was clearly in error. Whether or not Felicissimus and Fortunatus were heretics must be decided by what they taught in comparison with the word of God.

But in paragraph 13 Cyprian writes, “**The highest degree of happiness is, not to sin; the second, to acknowledge our sins. In the former, innocence flows pure and unstained to preserve us; in the latter, there comes a medicine to heal us. Both of these they have lost**

**by offending God, both because the grace is lost which is received from the sanctification of baptism, and repentance comes not to their help, whereby the sin is healed.”**

To Cyprian, grace could be lost by “offending God”. In Cyprian’s time, the Church believed that one was sanctified by baptism. The early church did not understand that it is when one believes that one is born again, as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And once one is born again, God justifies them. That is, He puts His righteousness down to our account, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all that believe, as we read in verse 22 above. So because God has justified us when we believe, we now have a standing of righteousness before Him. Now some may not understand when justification occurs. It is clear from John 5:24 that we pass from death to life when we believe in Jesus Christ. This is when we are born again, as Jesus also taught in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

The reason that we receive everlasting life when we believe is because we are born of the Spirit of God. And this birth takes place in our spirit, for “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”, as in verse 6 above. Having been born of the Spirit of God, we now have a new nature in our spirit, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Our soul is our mind, will, emotions, conscience, and heart which is the center of our emotions. When we are born again in our spirit, our soul still has all of the baggage of our past sinful life. Our old ways of thinking, our hurts of the past will all undergo a progressive

sanctification as we walk in the light of His word of truth, and grow in grace and knowledge, as Peter encouraged in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever.

Amen.

Because of the change in our spirit when we are born again, and because of our standing of righteousness, we cannot lose the grace by which we are saved through our faith. This is the grace that Paul speaks of in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are saved by grace through faith, which is a gift to believe in Jesus Christ. Our spirit now has eternal life, and we are righteous in our standing before God, having been justified by God. The early Church did not have this understanding of the Scriptures.

Also in paragraph 13, Cyprian says, **“Let the laity see to it how they may amend this.”** To Cyprian, if you were not a priest, you were among the laity. But the Church is the body of Christ with members in particular. And God has set the members in the body, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Each member of the body has a function. No member can say that I have no need of you. Each member has a purpose. The clergy and laity makeup of the early church has no correspondence to the vision in the Scriptures of a body with many members.

Then in paragraph 14, Cyprian says, **“After such things as these, moreover, they still dare—a false bishop having been appointed for them by heretics—to set sail and to bear letters from schismatic and profane persons to the throne of Peter, and to the chief church whence priestly unity takes its source; and not to consider that these were the Romans whose faith was praised in the preaching of the apostle, to whom faithlessness could have no access.”**

Cyprian calls the chair of the bishop of Rome **“the throne of Peter”**. Not only so, but he also says that this church is **“the chief church whence priestly unity takes its source”**. And he also adds that to the Romans in this church, **“whose faith was praised in the preaching of the apostle”**, that **“faithlessness could have no access.”**

As an apostle, Peter never mentioned that he had a throne. He considered himself a fellow elder, as we read in **1 Peter 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, I urge elders among you, as *your*

fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, *and* one who is also a fellow partaker of the glory that is to be revealed:

Elders were overseers, that is, bishops, as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):17** And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The word “overseers” in the Greek is **ἐπίσκοπος** (pronounced ep-is'-kop-os); from G1909 (in the sense of G1983); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church (literally or figuratively):—bishop, overseer. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G1985.**

The **KJV** translates Strong's **G1985** in the following manner: bishop (6x), overseer (1x).

Of these overseers, or bishops, Paul then says some will speak “perverse things”, as we continue in **Acts 20 (KJV):29** For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Though these were not bishops of the “chief church” in Rome, some of these bishops, that is, overseers in Ephesus, who were elders were going to give in to their flesh and be unfaithful, “speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” in verse 30 above.

Now Paul did say that the faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout the whole world in **Romans 1 (KJV):8** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

But it is evident that Paul did not consider them as “established”, as we continue to read again in **Romans 1 (KJV):9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; 10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the

end ye may be established; 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

And Paul also praised the Romans, as we read in **Romans 16 (KJV):19** For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

But there were also no elders mentioned in this church, so Paul wants the Lord to establish them, as we read in **Romans 16 (KJV):25** Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: 27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

The word “stablish” in the Greek is **στηρίζω** (pronounced stay-rid'-zo); from a presumed derivative of G2476 (like G4731); to set fast, i.e. (literally) to turn resolutely in a certain direction, or (figuratively) to confirm:—fix, (e-)stablish, stedfastly set, strengthen.

This is the same Greek word translated “established” in Romans 1:11 above.

But again, Cyprian pointed to the church in Rome as the place of **“the throne of Peter, and to the chief church whence priestly unity takes its source”**. The early Church was heading down a road that was more and more reliant on tradition than on the Scriptures and the way of truth. For Cyprian to say that, **“faithlessness could have no access”** to those in the church at Rome, is not something that could be known with certainty of any church.

## **Epistle LIV, To Cornelius, paragraph 21**

### **Epistle LIV.**

**To Cornelius, Concerning Fortunatus and Felicissimus, or Against the Heretics.**  
**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 346-347, col. 1, Page 833-834 (pdf)**

21. But for the rest, let our most beloved brethren firmly decline, and avoid the words and conversations of those whose word creeps onwards like a cancer; as the apostle says, “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” (1 Corinthians 15:22) And again: “A man that is an heretic, after one admonition, reject: knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.” (Titus 3:10-11) And the Holy Spirit speaks by Solomon, saying, “A perverse man carrieth perdition in his mouth; and in his lips he hideth a fire.” (Proverbs 16:17) Also again, he warneth us, and says, “Hedge in thy ears with thorns, and hearken not to a wicked tongue.” (Ecclesiasticus 28:24) And again: “A wicked doer giveth heed to the tongue of the unjust; but a righteous man does not listen to lying lips.” (Proverbs 27:4) And although I know that our brotherhood there, assuredly fortified by your foresight, and besides sufficiently cautious by their own vigilance, cannot be taken nor deceived by the poisons of heretics, and that the teachings and precepts of God prevail with them only in proportion as the fear of God is in them; yet, even although needlessly, either my solicitude or my love persuaded me to write these things to you, that no commerce should be entered into with such; that no banquets nor conferences be entertained with the wicked; **but that we should be as much separated from them, as they are deserters from the Church; because it is written, “If he shall neglect to**

**hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” (Matthew 18:17)** And the blessed apostle not only warns, but also commands us to withdraw from such. “We command you,” he says, “in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” (2 Thessalonians 3:6) There can be no fellowship between faith and faithlessness. He who is not with Christ, who is an adversary of Christ, who is hostile to His unity and peace, cannot be associated with us. If they come with prayers and atonements, let them be heard; if they heap together curses and threats, let them be rejected. I bid you, dearest brother, ever heartily farewell.

**Comment:** Fortunatus and Felicissimus were evidently in error saying that anyone who had denied the Lord in the Decian persecution could not repent. And the Scriptures that Cyprian refers to above are valid in their context. But Cyprian was making unity within the Church a condition of salvation.

Cyprian refers in context to **Matthew 18 (KJV):15** Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

And to **2 Thessalonians 3 (KJV):6** Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

But Jesus taught as in **Matthew 15 (KJV):1** Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

We need to be careful of what tradition we are following, or we could wind up “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”. If our traditions don’t line up with the word of God rightly divided, then we need to let go of our traditions.

Cyprian assumed that the Church in his time was walking “after the tradition which” they had received from the apostles. What Cyprian did not discern was the error of the priestly system that had become established in the Church in his time which was not something taught by the apostles. Not only was there a priestly system of ministry, but there was a hierarchy which had reached its highest at “the throne of Peter” in Rome.

## Epistle LVI, To Cornelius, paragraph 3

### Epistle LVI.

#### To Cornelius in Exile, Concerning His Confession.

ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 351-352, col. 1, Page 843-844 (pdf)

3. What does Novatian say to these things, dearest brother? Does he yet lay aside his error? Or, indeed, as is the custom of foolish men, is he more driven to fury by our very benefits and prosperity; and in proportion as the glory of love and faith grows here more and more, does the madness of dissension and envy break out anew there? Does the wretched man not cure his own wound, but wound both himself and his friends still more severely, clamouring with his tongue to the ruin of the brethren, and hurling darts of poisonous eloquence, more severe in accordance with the wickedness of a secular philosophy than peaceable with the gentleness of the Lord's wisdom,—a deserter of the Church, a foe to mercy, a destroyer of repentance, a teacher of arrogance, a corrupter of truth, a murderer of love? **Does he now acknowledge who is the priest of God; which is the Church and the house of Christ; who are God's servants, whom the devil molests; who the Christians, whom Antichrist attacks?** For neither does he seek those whom he has already subdued, nor does he take the trouble to overthrow those whom he has already made his own. The foe and enemy of the Church despises and passes by those whom he has alienated from the Church, and led without as captives and conquered; he goes on to harass those in whom he sees Christ dwell.

**Comment:** While Novatian was in error saying that the “lapsed” could not repent, Cyprian was following the tradition of his time. He says above that the “**priest of God**” is “**the Church and the house of Christ**”. To Cyprian, everyone who aligned with the Church in his time was one of “**God's servants**”, and who were “**the Christians**”. Cyprian did not see that the Church is a spiritual house composed of all believers in Jesus Christ whether they were aligning with Cyprian's church or any church of believers.

All believers are in the process of growing in the Lord in grace and knowledge. They begin as “babes” in Christ, just as in Corinth, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. **2** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. **3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? **4** For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? **5** Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? **6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. **7** So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

The Corinthians were “babes in Christ”. Being in Christ they were saved. But they walked as if they were just natural men and women, and not spiritual. This is the way we begin in Christ. We start as babes, and then, as we grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God, we progress to be young men and women in the Lord, and then to fathers and mothers in the Lord.

And in verse 4 above, Paul does not insist that they are in succession from him or



Apollos. Our focus must be on God and what He has done for us through Jesus Christ.

We are to bear the infirmities of the weak, as we read in **Romans 15 (KJV)**:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. 3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Now Paul does say to mark them which cause divisions, as we read in **Romans 16 (KJV)**:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

But the “doctrine” which we are to learn today is in the Scriptures, as Paul also taught in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV)**:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

We must have a vision of the Church that God is building, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians in **Ephesians 2 (KJV)**:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

The churches Paul had planted did not have all of his writings. It took time to collect all of his writings and the writings of others that would make up the New Testament. As we look back on this, we see how God has brought all of this together. And He is still working to bring the church to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

It is God who gives “the increase”, as we read above in 1 Corinthians 3:6.

#### **Epistle LXI, To Cornelius, paragraph 4**

#### **Epistle LXI.**

#### **To Cornelius in Exile, Concerning His Confession.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 358, col. 1, Page 857 (pdf)**

4. And therefore you have acted advisedly and with vigour, dearest brother, in excommunicating the deacon who has often abode with a virgin; and, moreover, the others who

had been used to sleep with virgins. But if they have repented of this their unlawful lying together, and have mutually withdrawn from one another, let the virgins meantime be carefully inspected by midwives; and if they should be found virgins, let them be received to communion, and admitted to the Church; yet with this threatening, that if subsequently they should return to the same men, or if they should dwell together with the same men in one house or under the same roof, they should be ejected with a severer censure, nor should such be afterwards easily received into the Church. But if any one of them be found to be corrupted, let her abundantly repent, because she who has been guilty of this crime is an adulteress, not (indeed) against a husband, but against Christ; and therefore, a due time being appointed, let her afterwards, when confession has been made, return to the Church. But if they obstinately persevere, and do not mutually separate themselves, let them know that, with this their immodest obstinacy, they can never be admitted by us into the Church, lest they should begin to set an example to others to go to ruin by their crimes. **Nor let them think that the way of life or of salvation is still open to them, if they have refused to obey the bishops and priests, since in Deuteronomy the Lord God says, “And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest or judge, whosoever he shall be in those days, that man shall die, and all the people shall hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously.” (Deuteronomy 17:12-13)** God commanded those who did not obey His priests to be slain, and those who did not hearken to His judges who were appointed for the time. And then indeed they were slain with the sword, when the circumcision of the flesh was yet in force; **but now that circumcision has begun to be of the spirit among God’s faithful servants, the proud and contumacious are slain with the sword of the Spirit, in that they are cast out of the Church. For they cannot live out of it, since the house of God is one, and there can be no salvation to any except in the Church.** But the divine Scripture testifies that the undisciplined perish, because they do not listen to, nor obey wholesome precepts; for it says, “An undisciplined man loveth not him that correcteth him. But they who hate reproof shall be consumed with disgrace.” (Proverbs 15:12, 10)

**Comment:** Cyprian was writing to Cornelius the bishop of Rome in exile. Here is a note about Cornelius:

“Pope Cornelius was the bishop of Rome from 6th or 13th March 251 until his martyrdom in June 253. He was pope during and following a period of persecution of the church, while a schism occurred over how repentant church members who had practiced pagan sacrifices to protect themselves could be readmitted to the church. He agreed with Cyprian of Carthage that those who had lapsed could be restored to communion after varying forms of Reinitiation and Penance. This position was in contrast to the Novatianists, who held that those who failed to maintain their confession of faith under persecution would not be received again into communion with the church. This resulted in a short-lived schism in the Church of Rome that spread as each side sought to gather support. Cornelius held a synod that confirmed his election and excommunicated Novatian, but the controversy regarding lapsed members continued for years.”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_Cornelius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Cornelius)

Cyprian is writing to Cornelius in exile about those who were sleeping with virgins. That

is, he was writing about those who were committing fornication, that is, having sex outside of marriage.

Of these Cyprian says, **“Nor let them think that the way of life or of salvation is still open to them, if they have refused to obey the bishops and priests, since in Deuteronomy the Lord God says, “And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest or judge, whosoever he shall be in those days, that man shall die, and all the people shall hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously.” (Deuteronomy 17:12-13)”**

He refers to **Deuteronomy 17 (KJV):12** And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. **13** And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

Cyprian then says, “God commanded those who did not obey His priests to be slain, and those who did not hearken to His judges who were appointed for the time. And then indeed they were slain with the sword, when the circumcision of the flesh was yet in force; **but now that circumcision has begun to be of the spirit among God’s faithful servants, the proud and contumacious are slain with the sword of the Spirit, in that they are cast out of the Church.”**

The circumcision he refers to is mentioned in **Romans 2 (KJV):28** For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: **29** But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

And the “sword of the Spirit” is mentioned in **Ephesians 6 (KJV):17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

So the “sword of the Spirit” is the “word of God”. In Cyprian’s thinking, if one was cast out of the Church, they would lose salvation. They would then be “slain with the sword of the Spirit”. But the “sword of the Spirit” is not for slaying our brethren, but for wrestling with “the rulers of the darkness of this world”, as we read in context in **Ephesians 6 (KJV):12** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. **13** Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **14** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; **15** And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **16** Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. **17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

The truth in “the word of God” is that if one is born again by the Spirit of God, they have eternal life. If all they produce is wood, hay, and stubble, they will still be saved yet as by the fire of their bad choices in this life. We are not to take any chances that we have not truly believed, as Paul taught in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

In Cyprian’s time, the Church had grown from the state of some churches having a letter from Paul, and some having a gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. It wasn’t until they

could finally gather all of the writings of the New Testament together that they could know the whole truth in context. However the tradition that had developed hindered them from realizing the errors they were following. As we now look back, we can see how far the Church has come in its growth in the truth. Having the full New Testament, we are now able to see more clearly what God is saying in His word. Let us “go on unto perfection”, as we read in **Hebrews 6 (KJV)**:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

## **Epistle LXII, To Cæcilius, paragraphs 7-9**

### **Epistle LXII.**

#### **To Cæcilius, on the Sacrament of the Cup of the Lord.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 360, col. 2, Page 861-62 (pdf)**

7. In Isaiah also the Holy Spirit testifies this same thing concerning the Lord’s passion, saying, “Wherefore are Thy garments red, and Thy apparel as from the treading of the winepress full and well trodden?” (Isaiah 63:2) Can water make garments red? or is it water in the winepress which is trodden by the feet, or pressed out by the press? Assuredly, therefore, mention is made of wine, that the Lord’s blood may be understood, and that which was afterwards manifested in the cup of the Lord might be foretold by the prophets who announced it. The treading also, and pressure of the wine-press, is repeatedly dwelt on; because just as the drinking of wine cannot be attained to unless the bunch of grapes be first trodden and pressed, so neither could we drink the blood of Christ unless Christ had first been trampled upon and pressed, and had first drunk the cup of which He should also give believers to drink.

8. But as often as water is named alone in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is referred to, as we see intimated in Isaiah: “Remember not,” says he, “the former things, and consider not the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, which shall now spring forth; and ye shall know it. I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the dry place, to give drink to my elected people, my people whom I have purchased, that they might show forth my praise.” (Isaiah 43:18-21) **There God foretold by the prophet, that among the nations, in places which previously had been dry, rivers should afterwards flow plenteously, and should provide water for the elected people of God, that is, for those who were made sons of God by the generation of baptism.** Moreover, it is again predicted and foretold before, that the Jews, if they should thirst and seek after Christ, should drink with us, that is, should attain the grace of baptism. “If they shall thirst,” he says, “He shall lead them through the deserts, shall bring forth water for them out of the rock; the rock shall be cloven, and the water shall flow, and my people shall drink;” (Isaiah 48:21) which is fulfilled in the Gospel, when Christ, who is the Rock, is cloven by a stroke of the spear in His passion; who also, admonishing what was before announced by the prophet, cries and says, “If any man thirst, let him come and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” And that it might be more evident that the Lord is speaking there, not of the cup, but of baptism, the Scripture adds, saying, “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should

receive.” (John 7:37-39) For by baptism the Holy Spirit is received; and thus by those who are baptized, and have attained to the Holy Spirit, is attained the drinking of the Lord’s cup. And let it disturb no one, that when the divine Scripture speaks of baptism, it says that we thirst and drink, since the Lord also in the Gospel says, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness;” (Matthew 5:6) because what is received with a greedy and thirsting desire is drunk more fully and plentifully. As also, in another place, the Lord speaks to the Samaritan woman, saying, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever.” (John 4:13-14) By which is also signified the very baptism of saving water, which indeed is once received, and is not again repeated. But the cup of the Lord is always both thirsted for and drunk in the Church.

9. Nor is there need of very many arguments, dearest brother, to prove that baptism is always indicated by the appellation of water, and that thus we ought to understand it, since the Lord, when He came, manifested the truth of baptism and the cup in commanding that that faithful water, the water of life eternal, should be given to believers in baptism, but, teaching by the example of His own authority, that the cup should be mingled with a union of wine and water. For, taking the cup on the eve of His passion, He blessed it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Drink ye all of this; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins. I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day in which I shall drink new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.” (Matthew 26:28-29) In which portion we find that the cup which the Lord offered was mixed, and that that was wine which He called His blood. Whence it appears that the blood of Christ is not offered if there be no wine in the cup, nor the Lord’s sacrifice celebrated with a legitimate consecration unless our oblation and sacrifice respond to His passion. But how shall we drink the new wine of the fruit of the vine with Christ in the kingdom of His Father, if in the sacrifice of God the Father and of Christ we do not offer wine, nor mix the cup of the Lord by the Lord’s own tradition?

**Comment:** Cyprian begins in paragraph 7, as he says, “In Isaiah also the Holy Spirit testifies this same thing concerning the Lord’s passion, saying, “Wherefore are Thy garments red, and Thy apparel as from the treading of the winepress full and well trodden?” (Isaiah 63:2) Can water make garments red? or is it water in the winepress which is trodden by the feet, or pressed out by the press? Assuredly, therefore, mention is made of wine, that the Lord’s blood may be understood, and that which was afterwards manifested in the cup of the Lord might be foretold by the prophets who announced it.”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 63 (KJV)**:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. 4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. 5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. 6 And I

will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

This Scripture pictures the Lord trampling upon the unbelievers in the day of His “vengeance” in verse 4 above. It is not a picture of the Lord Himself being trampled by unbelievers.

Bozrah is also mentioned in **Isaiah 34 (KJV)**:1 Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. 2 For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. 3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. 4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. 5 For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. 6 The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

This is referring to the battle of Armageddon at the end of the tribulation week in **Revelation 16 (KJV)**:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

And in **Revelation 19 (KJV)**:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the

remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

In verse 13 above we read that, “he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood”. This would correspond to Isaiah 34:6 where the “sword of the Lord is filled with blood”, and in Isaiah 63:3 where “their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment”. This is a different time than the Lord’s suffering mentioned in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):1** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

But Cyprian then continues, and says, “The treading also, and pressure of the wine-press, is repeatedly dwelt on; because just as the drinking of wine cannot be attained to unless the bunch of grapes be first trodden and pressed, so neither could we drink the blood of Christ unless Christ had first been trampled upon and pressed, and had first drunk the cup of which He should also give believers to drink.”

Cyprian did not fully understand the symbolism of the Communion meal.

Let us continue in paragraph 8, as Cyprian then says, “But as often as water is named alone in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is referred to, as we see intimated in Isaiah: “Remember not,” says he, “the former things, and consider not the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, which shall now spring forth; and ye shall know it. I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the dry place, to give drink to my elected people, my people whom I have purchased, that they might show forth my praise.” (Isaiah 43:18-21)”

He is referring to **Isaiah 43 (KJV):18** Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. 19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. 20 The beast of

the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. 21 This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

So Cyprian believes that everywhere that “water is named alone in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is referred to”.

Cyprian then continues, **“There God foretold by the prophet, that among the nations, in places which previously had been dry, rivers should afterwards flow plenteously, and should provide water for the elected people of God, that is, for those who were made sons of God by the generation of baptism.”**

This was the common understanding in the early church. They believed that when one was baptized, they were regenerated, that is, born again. However the Scriptures are very clear, that just as circumcision didn’t save anyone but was only a sign that one had the righteousness of faith, so baptism is in the same way a sign that we have believed.

And so we read of Abraham in **Romans 4 (KJV):6** Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. 13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

So in verse 9, faith was “reckoned” or counted “to Abraham for righteousness”, when, in verse 10, Abraham was “in uncircumcision”. Water baptism is like circumcision. It does not save us, but it is our testimony to the world that we have believed in Jesus Christ.

Cyprian continues, “Moreover, it is again predicted and foretold before, that the Jews, if they should thirst and seek after Christ, should drink with us, that is, should attain the grace of baptism. “If they shall thirst,” he says, “He shall lead them through the deserts, shall bring forth water for them out of the rock; the rock shall be cloven, and the water shall flow, and my people shall drink;” (Isaiah 48:21) which is fulfilled in the Gospel, when Christ, who is the Rock, is cloven by a stroke of the spear in His passion; who also, admonishing what was before announced by the prophet, cries and says, “If any man thirst, let him come and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

He refers to **Isaiah 48 (KJV):21** And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

And that “rock” was Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** And did all drink



the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

It was because of their faith in the “spiritual Rock that followed them” that God provided water for them miraculously to drink through the rock.

And Cyprian refers to **John 19 (KJV):34** But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

The “blood and water” that flowed from the side of Jesus is proof that He really died a physical death.

And he refers in context to **John 7 (KJV):37** In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Cyprian then explains what he means, as he says, “And that it might be more evident that the Lord is speaking there, not of the cup, but of baptism, the Scripture adds, saying, “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.” (John 7:37-39) For by baptism the Holy Spirit is received; and thus by those who are baptized, and have attained to the Holy Spirit, is attained the drinking of the Lord’s cup.”

He refers to **John 7 (KJV):39** (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

But Jesus is not referring here to water baptism, but to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which they were to receive at Pentecost, as Jesus told them in **Acts 1 (KJV):5** For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is to empower believers to be His witnesses.

And if the Holy Spirit was received by water baptism, then why did the apostles in Jerusalem send Peter and John to Samaria after Philip had preached Jesus Christ, and they had believed and “were baptized, both men and women”, as we read in **Acts 8 (KJV):12** But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. 14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Again, in verse 16, we read that the Holy Spirit “was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus”. They had been baptized in water, but had not been baptized with the Holy Spirit yet. So in verse 17, the apostles “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

Cyprian did not realize that there were two baptisms being spoken of in the word of God.

Cyprian continues, “And let it disturb no one, that when the divine Scripture speaks of baptism, it says that we thirst and drink, since the Lord also in the Gospel says, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness;” (Matthew 5:6) because what is received with a greedy and thirsting desire is drunk more fully and plentifully. As also, in another place, the Lord speaks to the Samaritan woman, saying, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever.” (John 4:13-14) By which is also signified the very baptism of saving water, which indeed is once received, and is not again repeated. But the cup of the Lord is always both thirsted for and drunk in the Church.”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):6** Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

And to **John 4 (KJV):13** Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

No mention of baptism is made in the Scriptures here. But the Samaritans simply believed that Jesus was the Christ, and they were saved, as we read in **John 4 (KJV):39** And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. 40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his own word; 42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

And again Jesus taught as in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

It is not when we are baptized that we are born again, but when we truly believe in Jesus Christ. That is when we pass from death to life in our spirit.

Cyprian continues in paragraph 9, as he says, “Nor is there need of very many arguments, dearest brother, to prove that baptism is always indicated by the appellation of water, and that thus we ought to understand it, since the Lord, when He came, manifested the truth of baptism and the cup in commanding that that faithful water, the water of life eternal, should be given to believers in baptism, but, teaching by the example of His own authority, that the cup should be mingled with a union of wine and water. For, taking the cup on the eve of His passion, He blessed it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Drink ye all of this; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins. I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day in which I shall drink new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.” (Matthew 26:28-29)”

So Cyprian says that, “the cup should be mingled with a union of wine and water”. The water he is referring to is the “that faithful water, the water of life eternal”, which “should be given to believers in baptism”. In other words, you can’t partake of the cup unless you have been baptized. So when one who has been baptized partakes of the cup, the cup is then

“mingled with a union of wine and water”.

He then refers in context to **Matthew 26 (KJV):**27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Cyprian continues, “In which portion we find that the cup which the Lord offered was mixed, and that that was wine which He called His blood. Whence it appears that the blood of Christ is not offered if there be no wine in the cup, nor the Lord’s sacrifice celebrated with a legitimate consecration unless our oblation and sacrifice respond to His passion. But how shall we drink the new wine of the fruit of the vine with Christ in the kingdom of His Father, if in the sacrifice of God the Father and of Christ we do not offer wine, nor mix the cup of the Lord by the Lord’s own tradition?”

Cyprian points here to another mixture in the cup, that is, of wine and blood. And Cyprian said before, “the cup should be mingled with a union of wine and water”, referring to the first mixture in the cup.

But in verse 29 above, Jesus simply called it “this fruit of the vine” which He would also drink with us “in the kingdom of my Father”. And so we read in **Luke 22 (KJV):**17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

We are to do this “in remembrance” of the Lord’s sacrifice for us. There is no actual mixture of His blood in the cup. The blood of Christ is not offered up in the cup.

It is true that we are not to celebrate the Lord’s supper in an unworthy manner, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. 23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye

come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

Eating the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner brings judgment, as in verse 27, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

And then in verse 30, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." God chastens those He loves. This may even include physical death, as he says, "many sleep". But God's judgment of believers does not include condemnation with the world, as in verse 32, where Paul says, "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Many may sleep in physical death, but not spiritual death.

Now Cyprian began paragraph 9, as he said, "Nor is there need of very many arguments, dearest brother, to prove that baptism is always indicated by the appellation of water..."

But water is simply symbolic of the word of God, as we read in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

The "word" is what washes or cleanses us, as we read also in **Psalms 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

By receiving the word, we are born again, as James taught in **James 1 (KJV):18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

And Paul planted, but Apollos watered, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

Apollos was a teacher and he watered what Paul planted. He explained the word of God to give the new believers an understanding of what God has done for them.

By receiving the word, we are born again, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And by the water of the word we grow in grace and knowledge.

Baptism in water is only a step the believer takes to show a sign to the world that he or she has believed in Jesus Christ and confessed Him as Lord.

John the Baptist spoke of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in **Matthew 3 (KJV):11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

And Jesus mentions this baptism in **Acts 1 (KJV):5** For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

And in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The apostles had already been baptized in water. But what Jesus had prophesied in Acts 1:5 and Acts 1:8 finally came to pass ten days later, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV)**:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Cyprian and the early Church did not understand the “doctrine of baptisms” mentioned in **Hebrews 6 (KJV)**:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit.

### **Epistle LXIII, To Epictetus, paragraph 2**

#### **Epistle LXIII.**

**To Epictetus and to the Congregation of Assuræ, Concerning Fortunatianus, Formerly Their Bishop.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 364, col. 1, Page 870 (pdf)**

2. Since, therefore, the Lord threatens these torments, these punishments in the day of judgment, to those who obey the devil and sacrifice to idols, how does he think that he can act as a priest of God who has obeyed and served the priests of the devil; or how does he think that his hand can be transferred to the sacrifice of God and the prayer of the Lord which has been captive to sacrilege and to crime, when in the sacred Scriptures God forbids the priests to approach to sacrifice even if they have been in lighter guilt; and says in Leviticus: “The man in whom there shall be any blemish or stain shall not approach to offer gifts to God?” (Leviticus 21:17) Also in Exodus: “And let the priests which come near to the Lord God sanctify themselves, lest perchance the Lord forsake them.” (Exodus 19:22) And again: “And when they come near to minister at the altar of the Holy One, they shall not bring sin upon them, lest they die.” (Exodus 28:43) **Those, therefore, who have brought grievous sins upon themselves, that is, who, by sacrificing to idols, have offered sacrilegious sacrifices, cannot claim to themselves the priesthood of God, nor make any prayer for their brethren in His sight;** since it is written in the Gospel, “God heareth not a sinner; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth.” (John 9:31) Nevertheless the profound gloom of the falling darkness has so blinded the hearts of some, that they receive no light from the wholesome precepts, but, once turned away from the direct path of the true way, they are hurried headlong and suddenly by the night and error of their sins. (2 Thessalonians 2:11)

**Comment:** Cyprian begins, as he says, “Since, therefore, the Lord threatens these torments, these punishments in the day of judgment, to those who obey the devil and sacrifice to idols, how does he think that he can act as a priest of God who has obeyed and served the priests of the devil; or how does he think that his hand can be transferred to the sacrifice of God and the prayer of the Lord which has been captive to sacrilege and to crime, when in the sacred

Scriptures God forbids the priests to approach to sacrifice even if they have been in lighter guilt; and says in Leviticus: “The man in whom there shall be any blemish or stain shall not approach to offer gifts to God?” (Leviticus 21:17) Also in Exodus: “And let the priests which come near to the Lord God sanctify themselves, lest perchance the Lord forsake them.” (Exodus 19:22) And again: “And when they come near to minister at the altar of the Holy One, they shall not bring sin upon them, lest they die.” (Exodus 28:43)”

He refers in context to **Leviticus 21 (KJV):**16 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 17 Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. 18 For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, 19 Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, 20 Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; 21 No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. 22 He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. 23 Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them.

Moses was speaking to Aaron and his seed, that is, the direct descendants of Aaron. To be a priest, one had to be a son of Aaron, or of his lineage. The “blemish” related to a physical deformity. If a priest sinned, he must offer sacrifice for his sin, but a deformity was not a sin.

The Lord did hold priests to great accountability, as we read in **Numbers 3 (KJV):**2 And these are the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3 These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office. 4 And Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord, when they offered strange fire before the Lord, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father.

And Cyprian refers to **Exodus 19 (KJV):**22 And let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them.

And in context to **Exodus 28 (KJV):**36 And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, Holiness To The Lord. 37 And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. 38 And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord. 39 And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework. 40 And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. 41 And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 42 And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: 43 And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy

place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.

The definition of “mitre” in English is “a tall headdress worn by bishops and senior abbots as a symbol of office, tapering to a point at front and back with a deep cleft between.” So in verses 36 to 38 above we can see why the early church adopted the mitre as a symbol of holiness. They were adopting the practices of the Old Testament, that is, the old covenant.

Again, in verse 43, it was a “statute” of the priests, that is, for Aaron and his sons, and “his seed after him”, “to minister in the holy place”.

Cyprian then continues, **“Those, therefore, who have brought grievous sins upon themselves, that is, who, by sacrificing to idols, have offered sacrilegious sacrifices, cannot claim to themselves the priesthood of God, nor make any prayer for their brethren in His sight;** since it is written in the Gospel, “God heareth not a sinner; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth.” (John 9:31) Nevertheless the profound gloom of the falling darkness has so blinded the hearts of some, that they receive no light from the wholesome precepts, but, once turned away from the direct path of the true way, they are hurried headlong and suddenly by the night and error of their sins. (2 Thessalonians 2:11)”

He refers to **John 9 (KJV):31** Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

And in context to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):10** And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

To be one of the **“priesthood of God”** in the Old Testament, one had to be a son of Aaron, or a descendant of one of Aaron’s sons. But this all changed when Jesus died and rose again from the dead and entered heaven to be our great high priest, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

This understanding was not in the early church.

## **Epistle LXVIII, To Florentius Pupianus, paragraphs 1-10**

### **Epistle LXVIII.**

#### **To Florentius Pupianus, on Calumniators.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 374-375, col. 2, Page 890-891 (pdf)**

*Argument.*—Cyprian Clears Himself in the Eyes of Florentius Pupianus from Various Crimes of Which He is Accused by Him; And Argues the Lightness of His Mind, in that He Has So Hastily Trusted Calumniators.

1. Cyprian, who is also called Thascius, (**Note:** It is suggested with some probability, that this form of superscription was intended to rebuke the rudeness of Florentius, who, in addressing Cyprian, had used his heathen name of Thascius instead of his baptismal name of Cæcilius, which he had adopted from the presbyter who had been the means of his conversion.) to Florentius, who is also Pupianus, his brother, greeting. I had believed, brother, that you were

now at length turned to repentance for having either rashly heard or believed in time past things so wicked, so disgraceful, so execrable even among Gentiles, concerning me. But even now in your letter I perceive that you are still the same as you were before—that you believe the same things concerning me, and that you persist in what you did believe, and, lest by chance the dignity of your eminence and your martyrdom should be stained by communion with me, that you are inquiring carefully into my character; **and after God the Judge who makes priests, that you wish to judge—I will not say of me, for what am I?—but of the judgment of God and of Christ.** This is not to believe in God—this is to stand forth as a rebel against Christ and His Gospel; so that although He says, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and neither of them falls to the ground without the will of my Father,” (Matthew 10:29) and His majesty and truth prove that even things of little consequence are not done without the consciousness and permission of God, **you think that God’s priests are ordained in the Church without His knowledge. For to believe that they who are ordained are unworthy and unchaste, what else is it than to believe that his priests are not appointed in the Church by God, nor through God?**

2. Think you that my testimony of myself is better than that of God? when the Lord Himself teaches, and says that testimony is not true, if any one himself appears as a witness concerning himself, for the reason that every one would assuredly favour himself. Nor would any one put forward mischievous and adverse things against himself, but there may be a simple confidence of truth if, in what was announced of us, another is the announcer and witness. “If,” He says, “I bear witness of myself, my testimony is not true; but there is another who beareth witness of me.” (John 5:31-32) But if the Lord Himself, who will by and by judge all things, was unwilling to be believed on His own testimony, but preferred to be approved by the judgment and testimony of God the Father, how much more does it behoove His servants to observe this, who are not only approved by, but even glory in the judgment and testimony of God! But with you the fabrication of hostile and malignant men has prevailed against the divine decree, and against our conscience resting upon the strength of its faith, as if among lapsed and profane persons placed outside the Church, from whose breasts the Holy Spirit has departed, there could be anything else than a depraved mind and a deceitful tongue, and venomous hatred, and sacrilegious lies, which whosoever believes, must of necessity be found with them when the day of judgment shall come.

3. But with respect to what you have said, that priests should be lowly, because both the Lord and His apostles were lowly; both all the brethren and Gentiles also well know and love my humility; and you also knew and loved it while you were still in the Church, and were in communion with me. But which of us is far from humility: I, who daily serve the brethren, and kindly receive with good-will and gladness every one that comes to the Church; or you, who appoint yourself bishop of a bishop, and judge of a judge, given for the time by God? Although the Lord God says in Deuteronomy, “And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priests or unto the judge who shall be in those days, even that man shall die; and all the people, when they hear, shall fear, and do no more presumptuously.” (Deuteronomy 17:12-13) And again He speaks to Samuel, and says, “They have not despised thee, but they have despised me.” (1 Samuel 8:7) And moreover the Lord, in the Gospel, when it was said to Him, “Answerest thou the high priest so?” guarding the priestly dignity, and teaching that it



ought to be maintained, would say nothing against the high priest, but only clearing His own innocence, answered, saying, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" (John 18:23) The blessed apostle also, when it was said to him, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" spoke nothing reproachfully against the priest, when he might have lifted up himself boldly against those who had crucified the Lord, and who had already sacrificed God and Christ, and the temple and the priesthood; but even although in false and degraded priests, considering still the mere empty shadow of the priestly name, he said, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." (Acts 23:4-5)

4. Unless perchance I was a priest to you before the persecution, when you held communion with me, and ceased to be a priest after the persecution! For the persecution, when it came, lifted you to the highest sublimity of martyrdom. But it depressed me with the burden of proscription, since it was publicly declared, "If any one holds or possesses any of the property of Cæcilius Cyprian, bishop of the Christians;" so that even they who did not believe in God appointing a bishop, could still believe in the devil proscribing a bishop. Nor do I boast of these things, but with grief I bring them forward, since you constitute yourself a judge of God and of Christ, who says to the apostles, and thereby to all chief rulers, who by vicarious ordination succeed to the apostles: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that heareth me, heareth Him that sent me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and Him that sent me." (Luke 10:16)

5. For from this have arisen, and still arise, schisms and heresies, in that the bishop who is one and rules over the Church is contemned by the haughty presumption of some persons; and the man who is honoured by God's condescension, is judged unworthy by men. For what swelling of pride is this, what arrogance of soul, what inflation of mind, to call prelates and priests to one's own recognition, and unless I may be declared clear in your sight and absolved by your judgment, behold now for six years the brotherhood has neither had a bishop, nor the people a prelate, nor the flock a pastor, nor the Church a governor, nor Christ a representative, nor God a priest! Pupianus must come to the rescue, and give judgment, and declare the decision of God and Christ accepted, that so great a number of the faithful who have been summoned away, under my rule, may not appear to have departed without hope of salvation and of peace; that the new crowd of believers may not be considered to have failed of attaining any grace of baptism and the Holy Spirit by my ministry; that the peace conferred upon so many lapsed and penitent persons, and the communion vouchsafed by my examination, may not be abrogated by the authority of your judgment. Condescend for once, and deign to pronounce concerning us, and to establish our episcopate by the authority of your recognition, that God and His Christ may thank you, in that by your means a representative and ruler has been restored as well to their altar as to their people.

6. Bees have a king, and cattle a leader, and *they* keep faith to him. Robbers obey their chief with an obedience full of humility. How much more simple and better than you are the brute cattle and dumb animals, and robbers, although bloody, and raging among swords and weapons! The chief among them is acknowledged and feared, whom no divine judgment has appointed, but on whom an abandoned faction and a guilty band have agreed.

7. You say, indeed, that the scruple into which you have fallen ought to be taken from

your mind. You have fallen into it, but it was by your irreligious credulity. You have fallen into it, but it was by your own sacrilegious disposition and will in easily hearkening to unchaste, to impious, to unspeakable things against your brother, against a priest, and in willingly believing them in defending other men's falsehoods, as if they were your own and your private property; and in not remembering that it is written, "Hedge thine ears with thorns, and hearken not to a wicked tongue;" (Ecclesiasticus 28:24) and again: "A wicked doer giveth heed to the tongue of the unjust; but a righteous man regards not lying lips." (Proverbs 17:4 LXX) Wherefore have not the martyrs fallen into this scruple, full of the Holy Ghost, and already by their passion near to the presence of God and of His Christ; martyrs who, from their dungeon, directed letters to Cyprian the bishop, acknowledging the priest of God, and bearing witness to him? Wherefore have not so many bishops, my colleagues, fallen into this scruple, who either, when they departed from the midst of us, were proscribed, or being taken were cast into prison and were in chains; or who, sent away into exile, have gone by an illustrious road to the Lord; or who in some places, condemned to death, have received heavenly crowns from the glorification of the Lord? Wherefore have not they fallen into this scruple, from among that people of ours which is with us, and is by God's condescension committed to us—so many confessors who have been put to the question and tortured, and glorious by the memory of illustrious wounds and scars; so many chaste virgins, so many praiseworthy widows; finally, all the churches throughout the whole world who are associated with us in the bond of unity? Unless all these, who are in communion with me, as you have written, are polluted with the pollution of my lips, and have lost the hope of eternal life by the contagion of my communion. Pupianus alone, sound, inviolate, holy, modest, who would not associate himself with us, shall dwell alone in paradise and in the kingdom of heaven.

8. You have written also, that on my account the Church has now a portion of herself in a state of dispersion, although the whole people of the Church are collected, and united, and joined to itself in an undivided concord: they alone have remained without, who even, if they had been within, would have had to be cast out. Nor does the Lord, the protector of His people, and their guardian, suffer the wheat to be snatched from His floor; but the chaff alone can be separated from the Church, since also the apostle says, "For what if some of them have departed from the faith? shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? God forbid; for God is true, but every man a liar." (Romans 3:3-4) And the Lord also in the Gospel, when disciples forsook Him as He spoke, turning to the twelve, said, "Will ye also go away?" then Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the word of eternal life; and we believe, and are sure, that Thou art the Son of the living God." (John 6:67-69) Peter speaks there, on whom the Church was to be built, teaching and showing in the name of the Church, that although a rebellious and arrogant multitude of those who will not hear and obey may depart, yet the Church does not depart from Christ; and they are the Church who are a people united to the priest, and the flock which adheres to its pastor. **Whence you ought to know that the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop; and if any one be not with the bishop, that he is not in the Church, and that those flatter themselves in vain who creep in, not having peace with God's priests, and think that they communicate secretly with some; while the Church, which is Catholic and one, is not cut nor divided, but is indeed connected and bound together by the cement of priests who cohere with one another.**

9. Wherefore, brother, if you consider God's majesty who ordains priests, if you will for once have respect to Christ, who by His decree and word, and by His presence, both rules prelates themselves, and rules the Church by prelates; if you will trust, in respect of the innocence of bishops, not human hatred, but the divine judgment; if you will begin even a late repentance for your temerity, and pride, and insolence; if you will most abundantly make satisfaction to God and His Christ whom I serve, and to whom with pure and unstained lips I ceaselessly offer sacrifices, not only in peace, but in persecution; we may have some ground for communion with you, even although there still remain among us respect and fear for the divine censure; so that first I should consult my Lord whether He would permit peace to be granted to you, and you to be received to the communion of His Church by His own showing and admonition.

10. For I remember what has already been manifested to me, nay, what has been prescribed by the authority of our Lord and God to an obedient and fearing servant; and among other things which He condescended to show and to reveal, He also added this: "Whoso therefore does not believe Christ, who maketh the priest, shall hereafter begin to believe Him who avengeth the priest." Although I know that to some men dreams seem ridiculous and visions foolish, yet assuredly it is to such as would rather believe in opposition to the priest, than believe the priest. But it is no wonder, since his brethren said of Joseph, "Behold, this dreamer cometh; come now therefore, let us slay him." (Genesis 37:19-20) And afterwards the dreamer attained to what he had dreamed; and his slayers and sellers were put to confusion, so that they, who at first did not believe the words, afterwards believed the deeds. But of those things that you have done, either in persecution or in peace, it is foolish for me to pretend to judge you, since you rather appoint yourself a judge over us. These things, of the pure conscience of my mind, and of my confidence in my Lord and my God, I have written at length. You have my letter, and I yours. In the day of judgment, before the tribunal of Christ, both will be read.

**Comment:** In this Epistle, in paragraph 1, Cyprian begins as he says, "Cyprian, who is also called Thascius, (**Note:** It is suggested with some probability, that this form of superscription was intended to rebuke the rudeness of Florentius, who, in addressing Cyprian, had used his heathen name of Thascius instead of his baptismal name of Cæcilius, which he had adopted from the presbyter who had been the means of his conversion.) to Florentius, who is also Pupianus, his brother, greeting. I had believed, brother, that you were now at length turned to repentance for having either rashly heard or believed in time past things so wicked, so disgraceful, so execrable even among Gentiles, concerning me. But even now in your letter I perceive that you are still the same as you were before—that you believe the same things concerning me, and that you persist in what you did believe, and, lest by chance the dignity of your eminence and your martyrdom should be stained by communion with me, that you are inquiring carefully into my character;"

Cyprian is writing a rebuke to Florentius Pupianus who "believed in time past things so wicked, so disgraceful, so execrable even among Gentiles, concerning" Cyprian, and even now Florentius is "still the same" in his opinion of Cyprian.

Cyprian continues, and then says, "**and after God the Judge who makes priests, that**

**you wish to judge—I will not say of me, for what am I?—but of the judgment of God and of Christ.** This is not to believe in God—this is to stand forth as a rebel against Christ and His Gospel;”

Cyprian says that **“God the Judge”** is He **“who makes priests”**, and so to judge Cyprian is “not to believe in God—this is to stand forth as a rebel against Christ and His Gospel;”

Cyprian continues, and says, “so that although He says, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and neither of them falls to the ground without the will of my Father,” (Matthew 10:29) and His majesty and truth prove that even things of little consequence are not done without the consciousness and permission of God, **you think that God’s priests are ordained in the Church without His knowledge. For to believe that they who are ordained are unworthy and unchaste, what else is it than to believe that his priests are not appointed in the Church by God, nor through God?”**

Cyprian is giving the priesthood a standing before God as worthy and chaste. But this was not always the case in the Old Testament.

Then in paragraph 2, Cyprian says, “Think you that my testimony of myself is better than that of God? when the Lord Himself teaches, and says that testimony is not true, if any one himself appears as a witness concerning himself, for the reason that every one would assuredly favour himself. Nor would any one put forward mischievous and adverse things against himself, but there may be a simple confidence of truth if, in what was announced of us, another is the announcer and witness. “If,” He says, “I bear witness of myself, my testimony is not true; but there is another who beareth witness of me.” (John 5:31-32)”

He refers in context to **John 5 (KJV):**31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. 32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. 33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. 35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. 36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

Jesus said in verse 36 that He had “greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.” Cyprian never testifies of any such works. So his comparison of himself and other priests to the witness that Jesus had is unjustified.

Cyprian continues, “But if the Lord Himself, who will by and by judge all things, was unwilling to be believed on His own testimony, but preferred to be approved by the judgment and testimony of God the Father, how much more does it behoove His servants to observe this, who are not only approved by, but even glory in the judgment and testimony of God!”

Cyprian is giving himself and other priests God’s approval. But his priesthood is not according to Scripture. And he and the other priests are not above the accountability to the Scripture.

Cyprian continues, “But with you the fabrication of hostile and malignant men has prevailed against the divine decree, and against our conscience resting upon the strength of its faith, as if among lapsed and profane persons placed outside the Church, from whose breasts the Holy Spirit has departed, there could be anything else than a depraved mind and a deceitful

tongue, and venomous hatred, and sacrilegious lies, which whosoever believes, must of necessity be found with them when the day of judgment shall come.”

Cyprian continues in paragraph 3, and says, “But with respect to what you have said, that priests should be lowly, because both the Lord and His apostles were lowly; both all the brethren and Gentiles also well know and love my humility; and you also knew and loved it while you were still in the Church, and were in communion with me. But which of us is far from humility: I, who daily serve the brethren, and kindly receive with good-will and gladness every one that comes to the Church; or you, who appoint yourself bishop of a bishop, and judge of a judge, given for the time by God? Although the Lord God says in Deuteronomy, “And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priests or unto the judge who shall be in those days, even that man shall die; and all the people, when they hear, shall fear, and do no more presumptuously.” (Deuteronomy 17:12-13)”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 17 (KJV):12** And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. 13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

Cyprian believes that his priesthood is the same as that of the Old Testament, except that now in the Church people are slain with the “sword of the Spirit”.

Cyprian continues, “And again He speaks to Samuel, and says, “They have not despised thee, but they have despised me.” (1 Samuel 8:7) And moreover the Lord, in the Gospel, when it was said to Him, “Answerest thou the high priest so?” guarding the priestly dignity, and teaching that it ought to be maintained, would say nothing against the high priest, but only clearing His own innocence, answered, saying, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?” (John 18:23)”

He refers to **1 Samuel 8 (KJV):7** And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

And in context to **John 18 (KJV):19** The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. 21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. 22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? 23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

Jesus wasn't “guarding the priestly dignity”, but was pointing out the openness with which He preached the good news.

Cyprian continues, “The blessed apostle also, when it was said to him, “Revilest thou God's high priest?” spoke nothing reproachfully against the priest, when he might have lifted up himself boldly against those who had crucified the Lord, and who had already sacrificed God and Christ, and the temple and the priesthood; but even although in false and degraded priests, considering still the mere empty shadow of the priestly name, he said, “I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” (Acts 23:4-5)”

He refers in context to **Acts 23 (KJV):1** And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. 3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? 4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

Paul is quoting from **Exodus 22 (KJV):28** “You shall not curse God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

But Paul was pointing to the fact that Ananias, as the high priest, had been replaced by Jesus, who is now our great High Priest in heaven, as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):16** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

And Paul rebuked Ananias, as we read again in **Acts 23 (KJV):3** Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

Paul was also pointing out the fact that no one is above the law, including the high priest. Cyprian did not understand that the priesthood had been changed, and that Jesus was now our great High Priest.

In paragraph 4, Cyprian says, “Unless perchance I was a priest to you before the persecution, when you held communion with me, and ceased to be a priest after the persecution! For the persecution, when it came, lifted you to the highest sublimity of martyrdom. But it depressed me with the burden of proscription, since it was publicly declared, “If any one holds or possesses any of the property of Cæcilius Cyprian, bishop of the Christians;” so that even they who did not believe in God appointing a bishop, could still believe in the devil proscribing a bishop. Nor do I boast of these things, but with grief I bring them forward, since you constitute yourself a judge of God and of Christ, who says to the apostles, and thereby to all chief rulers, who by vicarious ordination succeed to the apostles: “He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that heareth me, heareth Him that sent me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and Him that sent me.” (Luke 10:16)

The word “vicarious” means “serving instead of someone or something else”.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vicarious>

The understanding of the early church was that the overseers, or bishops, had replaced the apostles because the apostles were no longer in their sight. Cyprian uses Luke 10:16 to support this understanding.

And Cyprian refers here in context to **Luke 10 (KJV):1** After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. 2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. 3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. 5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. 6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. 7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. 8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: 9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, 11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. 13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. 15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. 16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

The Lord was not speaking to the apostles here, but in, verse 1, to the other 70 He appointed, “and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come”.

In paragraph 5, Cyprian says, “For from this have arisen, and still arise, schisms and heresies, in that the bishop who is one and rules over the Church is contemned by the haughty presumption of some persons; and the man who is honoured by God’s condescension, is judged unworthy by men.”

The word “condescension” means “showing or characterized by a patronizing or superior attitude toward others”.

**<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/condescending>**

So Cyprian is saying that God has “a patronizing or superior attitude toward” priests and bishops.

Cyprian continues, “For what swelling of pride is this, what arrogance of soul, what inflation of mind, to call prelates and priests to one’s own recognition, and unless I may be declared clear in your sight and absolved by your judgment, behold now for six years the brotherhood has neither had a bishop, nor the people a prelate, nor the flock a pastor, nor the Church a governor, nor Christ a representative, nor God a priest!”

Cyprian is saying that according to the judgment of Florentius Pupianus, Cyprian now is not a bishop, and so he has no flock, and his flock has then been without a pastor and priest for the last six years.

Cyprian continues, “Pupianus must come to the rescue, and give judgment, and declare the decision of God and Christ accepted, that so great a number of the faithful who have been summoned away, under my rule, may not appear to have departed without hope of salvation and of peace; that the new crowd of believers may not be considered to have failed of attaining any grace of baptism and the Holy Spirit by my ministry; that the peace conferred upon so many lapsed and penitent persons, and the communion vouchsafed by my examination, may not be abrogated by the authority of your judgment. Condescend for once, and deign to pronounce

concerning us, and to establish our episcopate by the authority of your recognition, that God and His Christ may thank you, in that by your means a representative and ruler has been restored as well to their altar as to their people.”

Florentius Pupianus has apparently caused some to follow his judgment of Cyprian. So Cyprian is asking him to change his judgment to be favorable to Cyprian.

Then in paragraph 6, Cyprian says, “Bees have a king, and cattle a leader, and *they* keep faith to him. Robbers obey their chief with an obedience full of humility. How much more simple and better than you are the brute cattle and dumb animals, and robbers, although bloody, and raging among swords and weapons! The chief among them is acknowledged and feared, whom no divine judgment has appointed, but on whom an abandoned faction and a guilty band have agreed.”

Cyprian compares Florentius Pupianus to “brute cattle and dumb animals, and robbers”, who are “much more simple and better than” Florentius Pupianus.

Cyprian continues in paragraph 7, and says, “You say, indeed, that the scruple into which you have fallen ought to be taken from your mind. You have fallen into it, but it was by your irreligious credulity. You have fallen into it, but it was by your own sacrilegious disposition and will in easily hearkening to unchaste, to impious, to unspeakable things against your brother, against a priest, and in willingly believing them in defending other men’s falsehoods, as if they were your own and your private property; and in not remembering that it is written, “Hedge thine ears with thorns, and hearken not to a wicked tongue;” (Ecclesiasticus 28:24) and again: “A wicked doer giveth heed to the tongue of the unjust; but a righteous man regards not lying lips.” (Proverbs 17:4 LXX)”

The definition of “scruple” is “an ethical consideration or principle that inhibits action.” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/scruple>

The definition of “credulity” is “readiness or willingness to believe especially on slight or uncertain evidence”. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/credulity>

And we read also as in **Proverbs 17 (KJV):4** A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

And in **Proverbs 14 (KJV):15** The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

Cyprian is saying that Florentius Pupianus didn’t feel guilty for “hearkening to unchaste, to impious, to unspeakable things against your brother, against a priest”. The “scruple” that Florentius Pupianus wanted to be taken from his mind was any guilt for speaking against Cyprian.

But the martyrs honored Cyprian, as Cyprian continues, “Wherefore have not the martyrs fallen into this scruple, full of the Holy Ghost, and already by their passion near to the presence of God and of His Christ; martyrs who, from their dungeon, directed letters to Cyprian the bishop, acknowledging the priest of God, and bearing witness to him? Wherefore have not so many bishops, my colleagues, fallen into this scruple, who either, when they departed from the midst of us, were proscribed, or being taken were cast into prison and were in chains; or who, sent away into exile, have gone by an illustrious road to the Lord; or who in some places, condemned to death, have received heavenly crowns from the glorification of the Lord? Wherefore have not they fallen into this scruple, from among that people of ours which is with



us, and is by God's condescension committed to us—so many confessors who have been put to the question and tortured, and glorious by the memory of illustrious wounds and scars; so many chaste virgins, so many praiseworthy widows; finally, all the churches throughout the whole world who are associated with us in the bond of unity? Unless all these, who are in communion with me, as you have written, are polluted with the pollution of my lips, and have lost the hope of eternal life by the contagion of my communion. Papias alone, sound, inviolate, holy, modest, who would not associate himself with us, shall dwell alone in paradise and in the kingdom of heaven.”

Cyprian points to all of those in the Catholic Church who have recognized him as being “in the bond of unity”.

Then in paragraph 8, Cyprian says, “You have written also, that on my account the Church has now a portion of herself in a state of dispersion, although the whole people of the Church are collected, and united, and joined to itself in an undivided concord: they alone have remained without, who even, if they had been within, would have had to be cast out. Nor does the Lord, the protector of His people, and their guardian, suffer the wheat to be snatched from His floor; but the chaff alone can be separated from the Church, since also the apostle says, “For what if some of them have departed from the faith? shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? God forbid; for God is true, but every man a liar.” (Romans 3:3-4) And the Lord also in the Gospel, when disciples forsook Him as He spoke, turning to the twelve, said, “Will ye also go away?” then Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the word of eternal life; and we believe, and are sure, that Thou art the Son of the living God.” (John 6:67-69)”

Cyprian refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):3** For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

And to **John 6 (KJV):67** Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Cyprian continues, “Peter speaks there, on whom the Church was to be built, teaching and showing in the name of the Church, that although a rebellious and arrogant multitude of those who will not hear and obey may depart, yet the Church does not depart from Christ; and they are the Church who are a people united to the priest, and the flock which adheres to its pastor.”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The word “Peter” in the Greek is Πέτρος (pronounced pétros), apparently a primary word; a (piece of) rock (larger than G3037);

**Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G4074.**

And Πέτρος (pronounced pétros) is larger than G3037 which is λίθος (pronounced leethos), apparently a primary word; a stone (literally or figuratively):—(mill-, stumbling-)stone.

**Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G3037.**

So Peter is a “piece of rock”. Then Jesus says, “and upon this rock I will build my

church”. The Greek word for “rock” that Jesus now used is **πέτρα** (pronounced pétra), feminine of the same as [G4074](#); a (mass of) rock (literally or figuratively):—rock. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G4073.**

The “mass of rock” Jesus was referring to is what Peter had testified, that is, that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God”, as we read in **Matthew 16 (KJV):15** He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

The “rock” of Peter’s testimony is the rock that Jesus is building His church upon. That is, Jesus is the massive rock upon which He will build His Church. And Jesus is the foundation, as Paul taught in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

But the early Church did not have this understanding. To Cyprian, the Church was “a people united to the priest, and the flock which adheres to its pastor.”

Cyprian continues, **“Whence you ought to know that the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop; and if any one be not with the bishop, that he is not in the Church, and that those flatter themselves in vain who creep in, not having peace with God’s priests, and think that they communicate secretly with some; while the Church, which is Catholic and one, is not cut nor divided, but is indeed connected and bound together by the cement of priests who cohere with one another.”**

But Paul taught as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Cyprian’s vision of the Church is not according to Scripture. The body is one because of faith in Jesus Christ. When we believe in Jesus and we are born again, we are “all baptized into one body” by “one Spirit”. Cyprian was looking at the Church as if it was a human body, **“connected and bound together by the cement of priests who cohere with one another.”**

But the body of Christ is a spiritual body, and entrance is by the door, as we read in **John 10 (KJV):7** Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

And when Cyprian says, **“the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop”**, he is placing the bishop between the believer and God. This makes a distance between God and the believer in Jesus Christ that is artificial and not according to Scripture. It is a man made interference between the Lord and His children.

Then in paragraph 9, Cyprian says, **“Wherefore, brother, if you consider God’s majesty who ordains priests, if you will for once have respect to Christ, who by His decree and word, and by His presence, both rules prelates themselves, and rules the Church by prelates; if you will trust, in respect of the innocence of bishops, not human hatred, but the divine judgment; if you will begin even a late repentance for your temerity, and pride, and insolence; if you will most abundantly make satisfaction to God and His Christ whom I serve, and to whom with pure and unstained lips I ceaselessly offer sacrifices, not only in peace, but in**

persecution; we may have some ground for communion with you, even although there still remain among us respect and fear for the divine censure; so that first I should consult my Lord whether He would permit peace to be granted to you, and you to be received to the communion of His Church by His own showing and admonition.”

The definition of “prelates” is “an ecclesiastic (such as a bishop or abbot) of superior rank”. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prelate>

Cyprian says that “**Christ, who by His decree and word, and by His presence, both rules prelates themselves, and rules the Church by prelates**”. Cyprian and the early Church believed that God “ordains priests”, and rules the Church by prelates, which refers to bishops, and priests, and gradually to even cardinals and pope. The logical conclusion of Cyprian’s thinking is that the priests represent Christ on earth. But this is a false Christ. Christ is in heaven as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

And so we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):6** But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

What need is there for a priest. It is “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” in verse 10. It is our faith in Him that saves us.

Cyprian continues in paragraph 10, and says, “For I remember what has already been manifested to me, nay, what has been prescribed by the authority of our Lord and God to an obedient and fearing servant; and among other things which He condescended to show and to reveal, He also added this: “Whoso therefore does not believe Christ, who maketh the priest, shall hereafter begin to believe Him who avengeth the priest.””

The word “prescribed” means “the action of laying down authoritative rules or directions”. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prescription>

So Cyprian is saying that the Lord showed and revealed to him “this: “Whoso therefore does not believe Christ, who maketh the priest, shall hereafter begin to believe Him who avengeth the priest.”” But this is not found in the Scriptures. And all revelation is now to be judged by the Scriptures. And nowhere in the Scriptures is there to be found the mention of a priesthood separate from other believers in the New Testament. The priesthood has changed. Jesus is now our High Priest. The believer can go directly to Jesus, who is our mediator, as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Cyprian continues, “Although I know that to some men dreams seem ridiculous and visions foolish, yet assuredly it is to such as would rather believe in opposition to the priest, than believe the priest. But it is no wonder, since his brethren said of Joseph, “Behold, this

dreamer cometh; come now therefore, let us slay him.” (Genesis 37:19-20) And afterwards the dreamer attained to what he had dreamed; and his slayers and sellers were put to confusion, so that they, who at first did not believe the words, afterwards believed the deeds. But of those things that you have done, either in persecution or in peace, it is foolish for me to pretend to judge you, since you rather appoint yourself a judge over us. These things, of the pure conscience of my mind, and of my confidence in my Lord and my God, I have written at length. You have my letter, and I yours. In the day of judgment, before the tribunal of Christ, both will be read.”

He refers in context to **Genesis 37 (KJV):9** And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

And then to **Genesis 37 (KJV):18** And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. 19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. 20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

And this was fulfilled in **Genesis 43 (KJV):26** And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. 27 And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? 28 And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

The priesthood had taken over the ministry in the early Church. This is not according to Scripture. But the Scriptures were still being gathered together in the time of Cyprian. Cyprian apparently did not understand that the apostles had a more sure word of prophecy, as Peter taught in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):19** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

We must be careful how we hear, as we read in **Luke 8 (KJV):18** Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Whoever has a disposition to receive truth shall receive more truth, but whoever does not have such a disposition shall lose even what he seems to have.

We are not to add to Scripture, as John wrote in **Revelation 22 (KJV):18** For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

**Epistle LXIX, To Januarius, paragraphs 1-3**

**Epistle LXIX.**

**To Januarius and Other Numidian Bishops, on Baptizing Heretics.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 375-376, col. 1, Page 893-895 (pdf)**

1. Cyprian, Liberalis, Caldonius, Junius, Primus, Cæcilius, Polycarp, Nicomedes, Felix, Marrutius, Successus, Lucianus, Honoratus, Fortunatus, Victor, Donatus, Lucius, Herculanus, Pomponius, Demetrius, Quintus, Saturninus, Januarius, Marcus, another Saturninus, another Donatus, Rogatianus, Sedatus, Tertullus, Hortensianus, still another Saturninus, Sattius, to their brethren Januarius, Saturninus, Maximus, Victor, another Victor, Cassius, Proculus, Modianus, Cittinus, Gargilius, Eutycianus, another Gargilius, another Saturninus, Nemesianus, Nampulus, Antonianus, Rogatianus, Honoratus, greeting. **When we were together in council, dearest brethren, we read your letter which you wrote to us concerning those who seem to be baptized by heretics and schismatics, (asking) whether, when they come to the Catholic Church, which is one, they ought to be baptized. On which matter, although you yourselves hold thereupon the truth and certainty of the Catholic rule, yet since you have thought that of our mutual love we ought to be consulted, we put forward our opinion, not as a new one, but we join with you in equal agreement, in an opinion long since decreed by our predecessors, and observed by us,—judging, namely, and holding it for certain that no one can be baptized abroad outside the Church, since there is one baptism appointed in the holy Church. And it is written in the words of the Lord, “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out broken cisterns, which can hold no water.” (Jeremiah 2:13) And again, sacred Scripture warns, and says, “Keep thee from the strange water, and drink not from a fountain of strange water.” (Proverbs 9:19 LXX) It is required, then, that the water should first be cleansed and sanctified by the priest, that it may wash away by its baptism the sins of the man who is baptized; because the Lord says by Ezekiel the prophet: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your filthiness; and from all your idols will I cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” (Ezekiel 36:25-26) But how can he cleanse and sanctify the water who is himself unclean, and in whom the Holy Spirit is not? since the Lord says in the book of Numbers, “And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean.” (Numbers 19:22) Or how can he who baptizes give to another remission of sins who himself, being outside the Church, cannot put away his own sins?**

2. **But, moreover, the very interrogation which is put in baptism is a witness of the truth. For when we say, “Dost thou believe in eternal life and remission of sins through the holy Church?” we mean that remission of sins is not granted except in the Church, and that among heretics, where there is no Church, sins cannot be put away.** Therefore they who assert that heretics can baptize, must either change the interrogation or maintain the truth; unless indeed they attribute a church also to those who, they contend, have baptism. It is also necessary that he should be anointed who is baptized; so that, having received the chrism, (1 John 2:27 χρῖσμα chrisma) that is, the anointing, he may be anointed of God, and have in him the grace of Christ. Further, it is the Eucharist whence the baptized are anointed with the oil sanctified on the altar. But he cannot sanctify the creature of oil, who has neither an altar nor a

church; whence also there can be no spiritual anointing among heretics, since it is manifest that the oil cannot be sanctified nor the Eucharist celebrated at all among them. But we ought to know and remember that it is written, "Let not the oil of a sinner anoint my head," (Psalm 141:5 LXX) which the Holy Spirit before forewarned in the Psalms, lest any one going out of the way and wandering from the path of truth should be anointed by heretics and adversaries of Christ. Besides, what prayer can a priest who is impious and a sinner offer for a baptized person? since it is written, "God heareth not a sinner; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth." (John 9:31) Who, moreover, can give what he himself has not? or how can he discharge spiritual functions who himself has lost the Holy Spirit? And therefore he must be baptized and renewed who comes untrained to the Church, that he may be sanctified within by those who are holy, since it is written, "Be ye holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord." (Leviticus 19:2) So that he who has been seduced into error, and baptized outside *of the Church*, should lay aside even this very thing in the true and ecclesiastical baptism, viz., that he a man coming to God, while he seeks for a priest, fell by the deceit of error upon a profane one.

3. But it is to approve the baptism of heretics and schismatics, to admit that they have truly baptized. For therein a part cannot be void, and part be valid. If one could baptize, he could also give the Holy Spirit. **But if he cannot give the Holy Spirit, because he that is appointed without is not endowed with the Holy Spirit, he cannot baptize those who come; since both baptism is one and the Holy Spirit is one, and the Church founded by Christ the Lord upon Peter, by a source and principle of unity, is one also.** Hence it results, that since with them all things are futile and false, nothing of that which they have done ought to be approved by us. For what can be ratified and established by God which is done by them whom the Lord calls His enemies and adversaries? setting forth in His Gospel, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." (Luke 11:23) And the blessed Apostle John also, keeping the commandments and precepts of the Lord, has laid it down in his epistle, and said, "Ye have heard that antichrist shall come: even now there are many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us." (1 John 2:18-19) Whence we also ought to gather and consider whether they who are the Lord's adversaries, and are called antichrists, can give the grace of Christ. Wherefore we who are with the Lord, and maintain the unity of the Lord, and according to His condescension administer His priesthood in the Church, ought to repudiate and reject and regard as profane whatever His adversaries and the antichrists do; and to those who, coming out of error and wickedness, acknowledge the true faith of the one Church, we should give the truth both of unity and faith, by means of all the sacraments of divine grace. We bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell.

**Comment:** Cyprian is writing to **Januarius and Other Numidian Bishops**. Numidia was a Roman province along the northern coast of Africa.

In paragraph 1, after his greeting, Cyprian says, **"When we were together in council, dearest brethren, we read your letter which you wrote to us concerning those who seem to be baptized by heretics and schismatics, (asking) whether, when they come to the Catholic Church, which is one, they ought to be baptized. On which matter, although you yourselves hold thereupon the truth and certainty of the Catholic rule, yet since you have**

**thought that of our mutual love we ought to be consulted, we put forward our opinion, not as a new one, but we join with you in equal agreement, in an opinion long since decreed by our predecessors, and observed by us,—judging, namely, and holding it for certain that no one can be baptized abroad outside the Church, since there is one baptism appointed in the holy Church. And it is written in the words of the Lord, “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out broken cisterns, which can hold no water.” (Jeremiah 2:13) And again, sacred Scripture warns, and says, “Keep thee from the strange water, and drink not from a fountain of strange water.” (Proverbs 9:19 LXX)”**

He refers to **Jeremiah 2 (KJV):13** For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Cyprian says that it is “certain that no one can be baptized abroad outside the Church, since there is one baptism appointed in the holy Church”. But Jesus taught as in **Matthew 18 (KJV):19** Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

The Church is not a carnal organization but a spiritual body. Where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus, He is in the midst of them. We do not gather in the name of a Church but in the name of Jesus.

Cyprian continues, **“It is required, then, that the water should first be cleansed and sanctified by the priest, that it may wash away by its baptism the sins of the man who is baptized; because the Lord says by Ezekiel the prophet: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your filthiness; and from all your idols will I cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” (Ezekiel 36:25-26)”**

He refers in context to **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):24** For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

The Lord is speaking to Israel here and their future repentance. The “clean water” is an analogy of the cleansing that will take place when Israel repents as a nation. This will happen at the end of the tribulation week, which is mentioned in **Zechariah 12 (KJV):9** And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

There is no mention of water sanctified by a priest in the New Testament.

Cyprian continues, “But how can he cleanse and sanctify the water who is himself

unclean, and in whom the Holy Spirit is not? since the Lord says in the book of Numbers, “And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean.” (Numbers 19:22) Or how can he who baptizes give to another remission of sins who himself, being outside the Church, cannot put away his own sins?”

He refers to **Numbers 19 (KJV):22** And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even.

Cyprian and the early Church did not understand that it is by faith that we are cleansed, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

It is through the word that we are cleansed, as Jesus taught in **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

And so we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

In paragraph 2, Cyprian says, “**But, moreover, the very interrogation which is put in baptism is a witness of the truth. For when we say, “Dost thou believe in eternal life and remission of sins through the holy Church?” we mean that remission of sins is not granted except in the Church, and that among heretics, where there is no Church, sins cannot be put away.**”

But “**eternal life and remission of sins**” is not “**granted through the holy Church**”, but through faith in Jesus Christ, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

When one is baptized, they are asked if they believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and if they confess Him as Lord. If they do so, they will be saved as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

This is what Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch in **Acts 8 (KJV):27** And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. 32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom



speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Philip explained to the eunuch that Isaiah was prophesying of Jesus who was “led as a sheep to the slaughter” for him. Isaiah lived between b.c. 760 and b.c. 673. Isaiah’s prophecy was what convicted the eunuch to “believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”. It is not faith in a Church but in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that saves us.

Salvation is for all who believe on His name, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Cyprian continues, “Therefore they who assert that heretics can baptize, must either change the interrogation or maintain the truth; unless indeed they attribute a church also to those who, they contend, have baptism. It is also necessary that he should be anointed who is baptized; so that, having received the chrism, (1 John 2:27 **χρῖσμα** chrisma) that is, the anointing, he may be anointed of God, and have in him the grace of Christ.”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

The word “anointing” in the Greek is **χρῖσμα** (pronounced khris'-mah); from G5548; an unguent or smearing, i.e. (figuratively) the special endowment ("chrism") of the Holy Spirit:—anointing, unction.

This Greek word is translated as “unction” in **1 John 2 (KJV):20** But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

John is not talking about some kind of cream or ointment but about the presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer. The Holy Spirit is our anointing, our teacher, who guides us into all truth, as we read in **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The Spirit of God bears witness to the truth to our spirit, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

So again, Cyprian is saying that, “It is also necessary that he should be anointed who is baptized”. So the “anointing” was done after baptism “so that, having received the chrism, (1 John 2:27 **χρῖσμα** chrisma) that is, the anointing, he may be anointed of God, and have in him the grace of Christ.”

So according to Cyprian, the one anointed then has “the grace of Christ” in him. But where in the Scriptures does it speak of grace being in anyone? Jesus promised the disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father,

and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

The Holy Spirit is not some kind of cream or ointment. The Holy Spirit is the third person in the trinity, as we read in **Acts 5 (KJV)**: 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

When Ananias lied to the Holy Ghost in verse 3, and in verse 4, Peter said that he did not lie “unto men, but unto God”. The anointing we receive when we believe in Jesus Christ, that God raised Him from the dead, and we confess Him as Lord, is the anointing of the Holy Spirit’s presence in us. It is a spiritual anointing. The one who has believed in Jesus Christ has the Spirit of God in him or her, as we read in **1 John 4 (KJV)**: 1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Once we have believed in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is in us as a witness to the truth, as we read again in **Romans 8 (KJV)**: 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And in **1 John 5 (KJV)**: 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

It is not because we belong to a certain church that we have eternal life, but because we “believe on the name of the Son of God”. The Church in Cyprian’s time was sliding into ritual and legalism.

But Cyprian continues, as he then says, “Further, it is the Eucharist whence the baptized are anointed with the oil sanctified on the altar. But he cannot sanctify the creature of oil, who has neither an altar nor a church; whence also there can be no spiritual anointing among heretics, since it is manifest that the oil cannot be sanctified nor the Eucharist celebrated at all among them. But we ought to know and remember that it is written, “Let not the oil of a sinner

anoint my head,” (Psalm 141:5 LXX) which the Holy Spirit before forewarned in the Psalms, lest any one going out of the way and wandering from the path of truth should be anointed by heretics and adversaries of Christ.”

He refers in context to **Psalm 141 (KJV):4** Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties. 5 Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.

Cyprian speaks of “oil sanctified on the altar”. And we read in **Exodus 29 (KJV):21** And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.

Cyprian and the early Church were borrowing things from the Old Testament. The altar, the garments, and the anointing oil are all mentioned in the Old Testament as what should be used by the priesthood of Aaron. But the priesthood has changed.

This is explained in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):1** For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

This Melchisedec is first mentioned in **Genesis 14 (KJV):18** And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Salem in Hebrew is שָׁלֵם (pronounced shaw-lame'); the same as H8003; peaceful; Shalem, an early name of Jerusalem:—Salem. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, H8004**

So Melchizedec was king of Salem, or “king of peace”, and he was “the priest of the most high God”.

Melchisedec in the Greek is Μελχισεδέκ (pronounced mel-khis-ed-ek'); of Hebrew origin (H4442); Melchisedek (i.e. Malkitsedek), a patriarch:—Melchisedec. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G3198**

This word in Hebrew is מַלְכֵי־צְדָקָה (pronounced mal-kee-tseh'-dek); from H4428 and H6664; king of right; Malki-Tsedek, an early king in Palestine:—Melchizedek. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, H4442**

And this Hebrew word is derived from two Hebrew words. The first is מֶלֶךְ melek, meh'-lek; from H4427; a king:—king, royal. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, H4428**

And the second is צְדָקָה tsedeq, tseh'-dek; from H6663; the right (natural, moral or legal); also (abstractly) equity or (figuratively) prosperity:—× even, (× that which is altogether) just(-ice), (un-)right(-eous) (cause, -ly, -ness). **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, H6664**

So Melchisedec was also “king of righteousness”.

And so, just as the Hebrew words are defined, we continue to read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):2** To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Melchisedec had no recorded genealogy in the Bible. So he was “Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life” in verse 3. So he is “made like unto the Son of God”, and he “abideth a priest continually”.

Now we continue in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):4** Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. 11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

So because “perfection” was not “by the Levitical priesthood”, there was a need “that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron”.

And so we continue to read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):12** For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

And so we read in **Psalms 110 (KJV):4** The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

This was a psalm of David and therefore was written over 1,000 years before Christ came.

We continue to read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):18** For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

The word “testament” in the Greek is **διαθήκη** (pronounced dee-ath-ay'-kay); from G1303; properly, a disposition, i.e. (specially) a contract (especially a devisory will):—covenant, testament. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G1242**

This is the same Greek word translated “covenant” in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):8** For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

We continue to read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):23** And they truly were many priests,

because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

And so Jesus was made our great High Priest, as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):**14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We have no need for any other priest, for we “have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God”. And so we “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”.

Cyprian continues, and says, “Besides, what prayer can a priest who is impious and a sinner offer for a baptized person? since it is written, “God heareth not a sinner; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth.” (John 9:31)”

He refers to **John 9 (KJV):**31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Jesus is saying that we don't have to be a priest for him to hear us, for he said, “if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth”. But Cyprian didn't read it that way. To Cyprian, a priest had to offer a prayer for a baptized person.

Cyprian continues, and says, “Who, moreover, can give what he himself has not? or how can he discharge spiritual functions who himself has lost the Holy Spirit? And therefore he must be baptized and renewed who comes untrained to the Church, that he may be sanctified within by those who are holy, since it is written, “Be ye holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord.” (Leviticus 19:2) So that he who has been seduced into error, and baptized outside *of the Church*, should lay aside even this very thing in the true and ecclesiastical baptism, viz., that he a man coming to God, while he seeks for a priest, fell by the deceit of error upon a profane one.”

He refers to **Leviticus 19 (KJV):**2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.

This verse is speaking to “all the congregation of the children of Israel”, and not just the priests. But if someone is baptized by a heretic, they probably should be baptized again. And so we read in **Acts 19 (KJV):**1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

The baptism of John the Baptist was not the baptism of a heretic. John was simply pointing to Christ Jesus. So Paul then baptized the disciples in Ephesus “in the name of the Lord Jesus”. If this was true for the disciples in Ephesus, it would be true for those who were baptized by a heretic, that is, an unbeliever. So those baptized by a heretic should be baptized again by believers.

Then in paragraph 3, Cyprian says, “But it is to approve the baptism of heretics and schismatics, to admit that they have truly baptized. For therein a part cannot be void, and part be valid. If one could baptize, he could also give the Holy Spirit.”

Cyprian does not understand what happens when one believes in Jesus Christ. It is when we believe in Jesus Christ that we pass from death to life, as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

It is not by baptism that one is born again, but by believing in His name, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And in **John 7 (KJV):38** He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

And the Holy Spirit is given by the Lord to those who obey Him, as Peter taught in **Acts 5 (KJV):32** And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Cyprian continues, and says, **“But if he cannot give the Holy Spirit, because he that is appointed without is not endowed with the Holy Spirit, he cannot baptize those who come; since both baptism is one and the Holy Spirit is one, and the Church founded by Christ the Lord upon Peter, by a source and principle of unity, is one also.”**

Man does not give the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given by God to those who believe in Jesus Christ, and obey Him. And the Church was not **“founded by Christ the Lord upon Peter”**. Even Peter taught that Jesus is the chief corner stone, as we read in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):1** Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

And Peter is referring to **Isaiah 8 (KJV):13** Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

But this stone of stumbling will be taken away from Israel when Jesus comes, as we read in **Isaiah 57 (KJV):14** And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.

Cyprian continues, and says, “Hence it results, that since with them all things are futile and false, nothing of that which they have done ought to be approved by us. For what can be ratified and established by God which is done by them whom the Lord calls His enemies and adversaries? setting forth in His Gospel, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth.” (Luke 11:23) And the blessed Apostle John also, keeping the commandments and precepts of the Lord, has laid it down in his epistle, and said, “Ye have heard that antichrist shall come: even now there are many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us.” (1 John 2:18-19)”

He refers to **Luke 11 (KJV):23** He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

And to **1 John 2 (KJV):18** Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Cyprian continues, “Whence we also ought to gather and consider whether they who are the Lord’s adversaries, and are called antichrists, can give the grace of Christ. Wherefore we who are with the Lord, and maintain the unity of the Lord, and according to His condescension administer His priesthood in the Church, ought to repudiate and reject and regard as profane whatever His adversaries and the antichrists do; and to those who, coming out of error and wickedness, acknowledge the true faith of the one Church, we should give the truth both of unity and faith, by means of all the sacraments of divine grace. We bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell.”

Cyprian is claiming that he “can give the grace of Christ” while “the Lord’s adversaries, and are called antichrists” cannot. But only God can give grace. Cyprian does not understand that the Holy Spirit is the one who guides all believers into all truth, as we read in **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The promise of the Holy Spirit is for all believers, as Peter taught in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The apostle John also taught as in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

John speaks of the “anointing which ye have received of him”. He is not speaking of the anointing of a priest but the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And it is the same anointing that “teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him”. He is the one who guides us into all truth. Cyprian did not understand this.

### **Epistle LXX, To Quintus, paragraphs 1-3**

#### **Epistle LXX.**

#### **To Quintus, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 377-378, col. 1-2, Page 896-898 (pdf)**

1. Cyprian to Quintus his brother, greeting. Lucian, our co-presbyter, has reported to me, dearest brother, that you have wished me to declare to you what I think concerning those who seem to have been baptized by heretics and schismatics; of which matter, that you may know what several of us fellow-bishops, with the brother presbyters who were present, lately determined in council, I have sent you a copy of the same epistle. For I know not by what presumption some of our colleagues are led to think that they who have been dipped by heretics ought not to be baptized when they come to us, for the reason that they say that there is one baptism which indeed is therefore one, because the Church is one, and there cannot be any baptism out of the Church. For since there cannot be two baptisms, if heretics truly baptize, they themselves have this baptism. And he who of his own authority grants this advantage to them yields and consents to them, that the enemy and adversary of Christ should seem to have the power of washing, and purifying, and sanctifying a man. But we say that those who come thence are not re-baptized among us, but are baptized. For indeed they do not receive anything there, where there is nothing; but they come to us, that here they may receive where there is both grace and all truth, because both grace and truth are one. But again some of our colleagues would rather give honour to heretics than agree with us; and while by the assertion of one baptism they are unwilling to baptize those that come, they thus either themselves make two baptisms in saying that there is a baptism among heretics; or certainly, which is a matter of more importance, they strive to set before and prefer the sordid and profane washing of heretics **to the true and only and legitimate baptism of the Catholic Church, not considering that it is written, “He who is baptized by one dead, what availeth his washing?” (Ecclesiasticus 34:25) Now it is manifest that they who are not in the Church of Christ are reckoned among the dead; and another cannot be made alive by him who himself is not alive, since there is one Church which, having attained the grace of eternal life, both lives for ever and quickens the people of God.**

2. And they say that in this matter they follow ancient custom; although among the ancients these were as yet the first beginnings of heresy and schisms, so that those were involved in them who departed from the Church, having first been baptized therein; and these, therefore, when they returned to the Church and repented, it was not necessary to baptize.



Which also we observe in the present day, that it is sufficient to lay hands for repentance upon those who are known to have been baptized in the Church, and have gone over from us to the heretics, if, subsequently acknowledging their sin and putting away their error, they return to the truth and to their parent; so that, because it had been a sheep, the Shepherd may receive into His fold the estranged and vagrant sheep. But if he who comes from the heretics has not previously been baptized in the Church, but comes as a stranger and entirely profane, he must be baptized, that he may become a sheep, because in the holy Church is the one water which makes sheep. And therefore, because there can be nothing common to falsehood and truth, to darkness and light, to death and immortality, to Antichrist and Christ, we ought by all means to maintain the unity of the Catholic Church, and not to give way to the enemies of faith and truth in any respect.

3. Neither must we prescribe this from custom, but overcome *opposite custom* by reason. **For neither did Peter, whom first the Lord chose, and upon whom He built His Church, when Paul disputed with him afterwards about circumcision, claim anything to himself insolently, nor arrogantly assume anything; so as to say that he held the primacy, and that he ought rather to be obeyed by novices and those lately come.** Nor did he despise Paul because he had previously been a persecutor of the Church, but admitted the counsel of truth, and easily yielded to the lawful reason which Paul asserted, furnishing thus an illustration to us both of concord and of patience, that we should not obstinately love our own opinions, but should rather adopt as our own those which at any time are usefully and wholesomely suggested by our brethren and colleagues, if they be true and lawful. Paul, moreover, looking forward to this, and consulting faithfully for concord and peace, has laid down in his epistle this rule: “Moreover, let the prophets speak two or three, and let the rest judge. But if anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:29-30) In which place he has taught and shown that many things are revealed to individuals for the better, and that each one ought not obstinately to contend for that which he had once imbibed and held; but if anything has appeared better and more useful, he should gladly embrace it. **For we are not overcome when better things are presented to us, but we are instructed, especially in those matters which pertain to the unity of the Church and the truth of our hope and faith; so that we, priests of God and prelates of His Church, by His condescension, should know that remission of sins cannot be given save in the Church, nor can the adversaries of Christ claim to themselves anything belonging to His grace.**

**Comment:** In paragraph 1, Cyprian says, “Cyprian to Quintus his brother, greeting. Lucian, our co-presbyter, has reported to me, dearest brother, that you have wished me to declare to you what I think concerning those who seem to have been baptized by heretics and schismatics; of which matter, that you may know what several of us fellow-bishops, with the brother presbyters who were present, lately determined in council, I have sent you a copy of the same epistle. For I know not by what presumption some of our colleagues are led to think that they who have been dipped by heretics ought not to be baptized when they come to us, for the reason that they say that there is one baptism which indeed is therefore one, because the Church is one, and there cannot be any baptism out of the Church. For since there cannot be two baptisms, if heretics truly baptize, they themselves have this baptism. And he who of his own authority grants this

advantage to them yields and consents to them, that the enemy and adversary of Christ should seem to have the power of washing, and purifying, and sanctifying a man.”

When Cyprian says, “because the Church is one, and there cannot be any baptism out of the Church”, he is making the Church a human institution. Our membership in the Church is because of our faith in Jesus Christ. It is our faith in Jesus Christ that makes us alive spiritually. When we are made alive spiritually by God, we become members of a spiritual body, the Church. To Cyprian and the early Church, it was the ritual of baptism that made one spiritually alive. But baptism is only a sign that one has believed in Jesus Christ.

Cyprian continues, and says, “But we say that those who come thence are not re-baptized among us, but are baptized. For indeed they do not receive anything there, where there is nothing; but they come to us, that here they may receive where there is both grace and all truth, because both grace and truth are one. But again some of our colleagues would rather give honour to heretics than agree with us; and while by the assertion of one baptism they are unwilling to baptize those that come, they thus either themselves make two baptisms in saying that there is a baptism among heretics; or certainly, which is a matter of more importance, they strive to set before and prefer the sordid and profane washing of heretics **to the true and only and legitimate baptism of the Catholic Church**, not considering that it is written, “He who is baptized by one dead, what availeth his washing?” (Ecclesiasticus 34:25)”

He refers to a verse in an apochryphal book, and quotes it out of context, as we read in **Ecclesiasticus 34 (KJV):25** He that washeth himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?”

In the Old Testament, it is written of priests in **Leviticus 21 (KJV):1** And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people: 2 But for his kin, that is near unto him, that is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother. 3 And for his sister a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath had no husband; for her may he be defiled. 4 But he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself.

And in **Leviticus 21 (KJV):10** And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes; 11 Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother; 12 Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the Lord.

But we are not under the law now in the New Testament, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

And in **Romans 6 (KJV):14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Cyprian is making the Catholic Church out to be the one true Church. This is to make the Church out to be a human institution when in fact it is a spiritual one. It is not our faith in a church that saves us, but our faith in Jesus Christ that saves us.

Cyprian continues, and says, “**Now it is manifest that they who are not in the Church of Christ are reckoned among the dead; and another cannot be made alive by him who**

**himself is not alive, since there is one Church which, having attained the grace of eternal life, both lives for ever and quickens the people of God.”**

Cyprian did not understand how one is born again. He is making the spiritual birth of a believer out to be something the Church does. But Jesus taught as in **John 3 (KJV):7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Jesus said that the new birth is like the wind blowing “where it listeth”, that is, where it wishes. Then we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Church doesn’t quicken the people of God. The work of regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus compares the Holy Spirit to the wind that blows where it wishes. We can’t tell where it comes from or where it will go next. “So is every one that is born of the Spirit”, as we read in John 3:8 above.

Then in paragraph 2, Cyprian says, “And they say that in this matter they follow ancient custom; although among the ancients these were as yet the first beginnings of heresy and schisms, so that those were involved in them who departed from the Church, having first been baptized therein; and these, therefore, when they returned to the Church and repented, it was not necessary to baptize. Which also we observe in the present day, that it is sufficient to lay hands for repentance upon those who are known to have been baptized in the Church, and have gone over from us to the heretics, if, subsequently acknowledging their sin and putting away their error, they return to the truth and to their parent; so that, because it had been a sheep, the Shepherd may receive into His fold the estranged and vagrant sheep. But if he who comes from the heretics has not previously been baptized in the Church, but comes as a stranger and entirely profane, he must be baptized, that he may become a sheep, because in the holy Church is the one water which makes sheep. And therefore, because there can be nothing common to falsehood and truth, to darkness and light, to death and immortality, to Antichrist and Christ, we ought by all means to maintain the unity of the Catholic Church, and not to give way to the enemies of faith and truth in any respect.”

And we can agree with Cyprian here in that he says, “it is sufficient to lay hands for repentance upon those who are known to have been baptized in the Church, and have gone over from us to the heretics”. One who has confessed faith in Jesus Christ and has been baptized does not need to be baptized again. But Cyprian is making unity with the “Catholic Church” a requirement for salvation. However, all who are believers in Jesus Christ have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, the Church.

Cyprian continues in paragraph 3, and says, “Neither must we prescribe this from custom, but overcome *opposite custom* by reason. **For neither did Peter, whom first the Lord chose, and upon whom He built His Church, when Paul disputed with him afterwards about circumcision, claim anything to himself insolently, nor arrogantly assume anything; so as to say that he held the primacy, and that he ought rather to be obeyed by novices and those lately come.”**

But The Lord did not choose Peter first. In Matthew’s account, the Lord “saw two

brethren”, as we read in **Matthew 4 (KJV):17** From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

And Mark’s account is the same, as we read in **Mark 1 (KJV):16** Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

But in John’s account, it was Andrew who was first, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):35** Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! 37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. 42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

So when Jesus called “Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother” in Matthew 4:18 above, it must have been some time after John’s account. And the Lord did not build “His Church” on Peter. That was a misinterpretation of the early church of **Matthew 16:18**, as we noted in the **Comment after Epistle XXVI., paragraph 1**. Cyprian mentions several times that the Lord built His Church on Peter, but that Peter did not claim that “**he held the primacy**”.

While we can agree with Cyprian that Peter did not claim that “**he held the primacy**”, the “primacy of Peter” is what the Catholic Church will claim later in the early Church.

Now Paul did not dispute with Peter “**afterwards about circumcision**”, as Cyprian says. Actually, it was some brethren “which came down from Judaea” to Antioch that were disputing with Paul and Barnabas in Antioch. And Peter stood up for Paul when he came with Barnabas to Jerusalem to resolve the issue, as we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):1** And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. 6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the

hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. 12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

And we read in **Galatians 2 (KJV)**:1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. 3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. 6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

But there was a dispute between Paul and Peter when Peter later came to Antioch and would not eat with the Gentiles, as we continue in **Galatians 2 (KJV)**:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

But Cyprian is correct when he said that Peter did not “**say that he held the primacy,**

**and that he ought rather to be obeyed by novices and those lately come.”** But because Cyprian and others continued to believe that Jesus said that He was building His church on Peter in Matthew 16:18, the primacy of Peter would one day be held by the Catholic Church.

Cyprian then continues, and says, “Nor did he despise Paul because he had previously been a persecutor of the Church, but admitted the counsel of truth, and easily yielded to the lawful reason which Paul asserted, furnishing thus an illustration to us both of concord and of patience, that we should not obstinately love our own opinions, but should rather adopt as our own those which at any time are usefully and wholesomely suggested by our brethren and colleagues, if they be true and lawful.”

And God had to give Peter a vision to give him an understanding that the Gentiles were to be accepted into the Church, as he recounts in **Acts 11 (KJV):**1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. 4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: 6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. 8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: 13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? 18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Cyprian continues, as he then says, “Paul, moreover, looking forward to this, and consulting faithfully for concord and peace, has laid down in his epistle this rule: “Moreover, let the prophets speak two or three, and let the rest judge. But if anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:29-30)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):**29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

But Paul is giving us the rule of prophecy here. The purpose of prophecy was given in

**1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Prophecy is now to be judged by the word of God. We are not to add to the Scripture. The Scripture is complete now. But prophecy now speaks “to edification, and exhortation, and comfort”.

Cyprian then continues, and says, “In which place he has taught and shown that many things are revealed to individuals for the better, and that each one ought not obstinately to contend for that which he had once imbibed and held; but if anything has appeared better and more useful, he should gladly embrace it. **For we are not overcome when better things are presented to us, but we are instructed, especially in those matters which pertain to the unity of the Church and the truth of our hope and faith; so that we, priests of God and prelates of His Church, by His condescension, should know that remission of sins cannot be given save in the Church, nor can the adversaries of Christ claim to themselves anything belonging to His grace.**”

Having a priesthood as “**prelates of His Church**” is stepping outside of the bounds of Scripture. Then saying that “**remission of sins cannot be given save in the Church**” is making the believer dependent on the priest for forgiveness of sins. But we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

And in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):6** But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

And in **Hebrews 9 (NASB):15** For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the violations that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

And we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

There is “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”, and one “advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” because “he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”.

The blood of Jesus is the only thing that cleanses us “from all sin”, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

The early Church was walking down a dark path that would get darker before it got lighter.

**Epistle LXXI, To Stephen, paragraph 1**

**Epistle LXXI.**

**To Stephen, Concerning a Council.**

1. Cyprian and others, to Stephen their brother, greeting. We have thought it necessary for the arranging of certain matters, dearest brother, and for their investigation by the examination of a common council, to gather together and to hold a council, at which many priests were assembled at once; at which, moreover, many things were brought forward and transacted. But the subject in regard to which we had chiefly to write to you, and to confer with your gravity and wisdom, is one that more especially pertains both to the priestly authority and to the unity, as well as the dignity, of the Catholic Church, arising as these do from the ordination of the divine appointment; to wit, that those who have been dipped abroad outside the Church, and have been stained among heretics and schismatics with the taint of profane water, when they come to us and to the Church which is one, ought to be baptized, for the reason that it is a small matter (Acts 8:17) to “lay hands on them that they may receive the Holy Ghost,” unless they receive also the baptism of the Church. **For then finally can they be fully sanctified, and be the sons of God, if they be born of each sacrament; since it is written, “Except a man be born again of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)** For we find also, in the Acts of the Apostles, that this is maintained by the apostles, and kept in the truth of the saving faith, so that when, in the house of Cornelius the centurion, the Holy Ghost had descended upon the Gentiles who were there, fervent in the warmth of their faith, and believing in the Lord with their whole heart; and when, filled with the Spirit, they blessed God in divers tongues, still none the less the blessed Apostle Peter, mindful of the divine precept and the Gospel, commanded that those same men should be baptized who had already been filled with the Holy Spirit, that nothing might seem to be neglected to the observance by the apostolic instruction in all things of the law of the divine precept and Gospel. (Acts 10:47) But that that is not baptism which the heretics use; and that none of those who oppose Christ can profit by the grace of Christ; has lately been set forth with care in the letter which was written on that subject to Quintus, our colleague, established in Mauritania; as also in a letter which our colleagues previously wrote to our fellow-bishops presiding in Numidia, of both which letters I have subjoined copies.

**Comment:** Cyprian begins, as he says, “Cyprian and others, to Stephen their brother, greeting. We have thought it necessary for the arranging of certain matters, dearest brother, and for their investigation by the examination of a common council, to gather together and to hold a council, at which many priests were assembled at once; at which, moreover, many things were brought forward and transacted. But the subject in regard to which we had chiefly to write to you, and to confer with your gravity and wisdom, is one that more especially pertains both to the priestly authority and to the unity, as well as the dignity, of the Catholic Church, arising as these do from the ordination of the divine appointment; to wit, that those who have been dipped abroad outside the Church, and have been stained among heretics and schismatics with the taint of profane water, when they come to us and to the Church which is one, ought to be baptized, for the reason that it is a small matter (Acts 8:17) to “lay hands on them that they may receive the Holy Ghost,” unless they receive also the baptism of the Church.”

Stephen was the bishop of Rome from a.d. 254 to a.d. 257. Cyprian is writing to him



about the baptism of “heretics and schismatics”. Cyprian claims “the ordination of the divine appointment” for the “priestly authority” of the “Catholic Church”.

He then refers in context to **Acts 8 (KJV):**12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. 14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Cyprian then says, **“For then finally can they be fully sanctified, and be the sons of God, if they be born of each sacrament; since it is written, “Except a man be born again of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)”**

Cyprian believed there were two spiritual births, one of “water” referring to water baptism, and one of the “Spirit” when hands are laid on to “receive the Holy Spirit”. In the thinking of the early Church, these were two “sacraments”.

And Cyprian refers in context to **John 3 (KJV):**1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Jesus tells Nicodemus in verse 3 that, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

The word “again” in the Greek is **ἄνωθεν** (pronounced an'-o-then); from G507; from above; by analogy, from the first; by implication, anew:—from above, again, from the beginning (very first), the top. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G509**

And this Greek word is derived from **ἄνω** (pronounced an'-o); adverb from G473; upward or on the top:—above, brim, high, up. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G507**

So verse 3 could be translated as, “Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

In verse 4, Nicodemus doesn’t understand. So he asks, “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?”

Then Jesus explains in verse 5 that, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” And in verse 6 He adds, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

So the two births Jesus is speaking of here are the one of water, that is, speaking of the water surrounding the fetus, which is the birth of the flesh, and the spiritual birth which is of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus says, “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”. So the spiritual birth

occurs in our spirit. That we have a spirit is revealed in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Before this spiritual birth of the Holy Spirit, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the boundless riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

So in verse 5 above, “even when we were dead in our wrongdoings”, He “made us alive together with Christ” when we were born of the Spirit of God.

Now we continue to read in **John 3 (KJV):7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

In verse 7, Jesus says, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again,” speaking of the birth of the Holy Spirit.

Then in verse 8, Jesus explains how this birth happens, and says, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

So the wind blows where it “listeth”, which is old English for “wishes”. We hear the sound of the wind but we cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going next. Jesus says the spiritual birth is just like that. The reason this is so is because the one who is born of the Holy Spirit is born of God, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

So Jesus is acknowledging two births here, the one of the flesh, and the one of the Holy Spirit.

Cyprian thought that there were two spiritual births, the second being when hands are laid on to receive the Holy Spirit.

And so he continues and says, “For we find also, in the Acts of the Apostles, that this is maintained by the apostles, and kept in the truth of the saving faith, so that when, in the house of Cornelius the centurion, the Holy Ghost had descended upon the Gentiles who were there, fervent in the warmth of their faith, and believing in the Lord with their whole heart; and when, filled with the Spirit, they blessed God in divers tongues, still none the less the blessed Apostle Peter, mindful of the divine precept and the Gospel, commanded that those same men should be

baptized who had already been filled with the Holy Spirit, that nothing might seem to be neglected to the observance by the apostolic instruction in all things of the law of the divine precept and Gospel. (Acts 10:47)”

He is referring in context to **Acts 10 (KJV)**:1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. 3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. 7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; 8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

Cornelius was a Gentile, and not a Jew. In order to get Peter to go speak to a Gentile, the Lord gave Peter a vision, as we continue in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. 17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, 18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. 20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. 21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. 23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

So because of the vision, Peter went with these Gentiles.

We continue to read in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and he had called together his kinsmen and near friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. 27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. 28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company,

or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

So the Lord was showing Peter that he “should not call any man common or unclean”.

We continue in **Acts 10 (KJV):29** Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? 30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. 33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. 34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Peter now realized that “in every nation” there will be believers. Peter will now preach the Gospel, as we continue in **Acts 10 (KJV):36** The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. 44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

God had a reason for having Cornelius send for Peter. The Lord had to make Peter know for certain that the Gospel was now to be preached also to the Gentiles. Now the receiving of the Holy Spirit is not the second birth. The second birth happens as soon as we believe, as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Water baptism is only the first step in the obedience of a believer. It is not a condition of salvation, or a second birth. We are baptized in water because we have believed in Jesus Christ and confessed Him as Lord. The early Church did not fully understand the new birth as Jesus taught it.

Cyprian continues, and says, “But that that is not baptism which the heretics use; and that none of those who oppose Christ can profit by the grace of Christ; has lately been set forth with care in the letter which was written on that subject to Quintus, our colleague, established in Mauritania; as also in a letter which our colleagues previously wrote to our fellow-bishops presiding in Numidia, of both which letters I have subjoined copies.”

It is true that “none of those who oppose Christ can profit by the grace of Christ”. But the early Church did not have good doctrine. To the early Church, you opposed Christ if you were not a member in good standing of the Catholic Church.

## **Epistle LXXII, To Jubaianus, paragraphs 2-5**

### **Epistle LXXII.**

#### **To Jubaianus, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 380-381, col. 1-2, Page 902-904 (pdf)**

2. Nor does what you have described in your letters disturb us, dearest brother, that the Novatians re-baptize those whom they entice from us, since it does not in any wise matter to us what the enemies of the Church do, so long as we ourselves hold a regard for our power, and the stedfastness of reason and truth. For Novatian, after the manner of apes—which, although they are not men, yet imitate human doings—wishes to claim to himself the authority and truth of the Catholic Church, while he himself is not in the Church; nay, moreover, has stood forth hitherto as a rebel and enemy against the Church. For, knowing that there is one baptism, he arrogates to himself this one, so that he may say that the Church is with him, and make us heretics. But we who hold the head and root of the one Church know, and trust for certain, that nothing is lawful there outside the Church, and that the baptism which is one is among us, where he himself also was formerly baptized, when he maintained both the wisdom and truth of the divine unity. But if Novatian thinks that those who have been baptized in the Church are to be re-baptized outside—without the Church—he ought to begin by himself, that he might first be re-baptized with an extraneous and heretical baptism, since he thinks that after the Church, yea, and contrary to the Church, people are to be baptized without. But what sort of a thing is this, that, because Novatian dares to do this thing, we are to think that we must not do it! What then? **Because Novatian also usurps the honour of the priestly throne, ought we therefore to renounce our throne?** Or because Novatian endeavours wrongfully to set up an altar and to offer sacrifices, does it behoove us to cease from our altar and sacrifices, lest we should appear to be celebrating the same or like things with him? Utterly vain and foolish is it, that because Novatian arrogates to himself outside the Church the image of the truth, we should forsake the truth of the Church.

3. But among us it is no new or sudden thing for us to judge that those are to be baptized who come to the Church from among the heretics, since it is now many years and a long time ago, that, under Agrippinus—a man of worthy memory—very many bishops assembling together have decided this; **and thenceforward until the present day, so many thousands of heretics in our provinces have been converted to the Church, and have neither despised nor delayed, nay, they have both reasonably and gladly embraced, the opportunity to attain the grace of the life-giving laver and of saving baptism.** For it is not difficult for a

teacher to insinuate true and lawful things into his mind, who, having condemned heretical pravity, and discovered the truth of the Church, comes for this purpose, that he may learn, and learns for the purpose that he may live. We ought not to increase the stolidity of heretics by the patronage of our consent, when they gladly and readily obey the truth.

4. Certainly, since I found in the letter the copy of which you transmitted to me, that it was written, "That it should not be asked who baptized, since he who is baptized might receive remission of sins according to what he believed," I thought that this topic was not to be passed by, especially since I observed in the same epistle that mention was also made of Marcion, saying that "even those that came from him did not need to be baptized, because they seemed to have been already baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." Therefore we ought to consider their faith who believe without, whether in respect of the same faith they can obtain any grace. For if we and heretics have one faith, we may also have one grace. If the Patripassians, Anthropians, Valentinians, Apelletians, Ophites, Marcionites, and other pests, and swords, and poisons of heretics for subverting the truth, confess the same Father, the same Son, the same Holy Ghost, the same Church with us, they may also have one baptism if they have also one faith.

5. And lest it should be wearisome to go through all the heresies, and to enumerate either the follies or the madness of each of them, because it is no pleasure to speak of that which one either dreads or is ashamed to know, let us examine in the meantime about Marcion alone, the mention of whom has been made in the letter transmitted by you to us, whether the ground of his baptism can be made good. For the Lord after His resurrection, sending His disciples, instructed and taught them in what manner they ought to baptize, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:18-19) He suggests the Trinity, in whose sacrament the nations were to be baptized. Does Marcion then maintain the Trinity? Does he then assert the same Father, the Creator, as we do? **Does he know the same Son, Christ born of the Virgin Mary, who as the Word was made flesh, who bare our sins, who conquered death by dying, who by Himself first of all originated the resurrection of the flesh, and showed to His disciples that He had risen in the same flesh?** Widely different is the faith with Marcion, and, moreover, with the other heretics; nay, with them there is nothing but perfidy, and blasphemy, and contention, which is hostile to holiness and truth. How then can one who is baptized among them seem to have obtained remission of sins, and the grace of the divine mercy, by his faith, when he has not the truth of the faith itself? For if, as some suppose, one could receive anything abroad out of the Church according to his faith, certainly he has received what he believed; but if he believes what is false, he could not receive what is true; but rather he has received things adulterous and profane, according to what he believed.

**Comment:** In paragraph 2, to summarize, Cyprian mentions Novatian who held that those who failed to maintain their confession of faith under persecution would not be received again into communion with the church. Novatian thought "that after the Church, yea, and contrary to the Church, people are to be baptized without," that is, outside the Church. So Cyprian says, **"Because Novatian also usurps the honour of the priestly throne, ought we therefore to renounce our throne?"**

Cyprian thought that the priesthood sat on a throne. But a throne speaks of a ruling or governing authority. This should remind us of the church which held the “doctrine of the Nicolaitanes” which was Pergamos, as we read in **Revelation 2 (KJV):12** And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

In the Greek, the word “Nicolaitanes” is **Νικολαῖτης** (pronounced nik-ol-ah-ee'-tace); from G3532; a Nicolaite, i.e. adherent of Nicolaus:—Nicolaitane. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G4074**

And this Greek word is derived from **Νικόλαος** (pronounced nik-ol'-ah-os); from G3534 and G2994; victorious over the people; Nicolaus, a heretic:—Nicolaus. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G3532**

And this Greek word is derived first from **νῖκος** (pronounced nee'-kos); from G3529; a conquest (concretely), i.e. (by implication) triumph:—victory. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G3534**

And second from **Λαοδικεύς** (pronounced lah-od-ik-yooce'); from G2993; a Laodicean, i.e. inhabitant of Laodicia:—Laodicean. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G4074**

And this Greek word is derived from **Λαοδίκεια** (pronounced lah-od-ik'-i-ah); from a compound of G2992 and G1349; Laodicia, a place in Asia Minor:—Laodicea. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G2994**

And this Greek word is derived first from **λαός** (pronounced lah-os'); apparently a primary word; a people (in general; thus differing from G1218, which denotes one's own populace):—people. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G2992**

And second from **δίκη** (pronounced dee'-kay); probably from G1166; right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution):—judgment, punish, vengeance. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G1349**

All this is to show that the word “Nicolaitanes” means “rulers of the people”. This began to be a “doctrine” or teaching in the early Church.

Those in the church at Ephesus hated the “deeds of the Nicolaitanes”, as we read in **Revelation 2 (KJV):6** But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

This progressed to be a doctrine in the church at Pergamos, as we read before in Revelation 2:15.

It is evident that it had become a doctrine in the Catholic Church in Cyprian's time as well.

Then in paragraph 3, Cyprian says, “But among us it is no new or sudden thing for us to judge that those are to be baptized who come to the Church from among the heretics, since it

is now many years and a long time ago, that, under Agrippinus—a man of worthy memory—very many bishops assembling together have decided this; **and thenceforward until the present day, so many thousands of heretics in our provinces have been converted to the Church, and have neither despised nor delayed, nay, they have both reasonably and gladly embraced, the opportunity to attain the grace of the life-giving laver and of saving baptism.**”

The word “attain” means “to come into possession of : **OBTAIN**”.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attain>

Cyprian and the early Church believed that one attained or obtained the **“grace of the life-giving laver and of saving baptism.”** That is, when someone was baptized, they obtained the grace of salvation. In the thinking of the early Church, this grace could be lost.

Cyprian continues, “For it is not difficult for a teacher to insinuate true and lawful things into his mind, who, having condemned heretical pravity, and discovered the truth of the Church, comes for this purpose, that he may learn, and learns for the purpose that he may live. We ought not to increase the stolidity of heretics by the patronage of our consent, when they gladly and readily obey the truth.”

The word “stolidity” means “having or expressing little or no sensibility; **UNEMOTIONAL**”. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stolidity>

In paragraph 4, Cyprian says, “Certainly, since I found in the letter the copy of which you transmitted to me, that it was written, “That it should not be asked who baptized, since he who is baptized might receive remission of sins according to what he believed,” I thought that this topic was not to be passed by, especially since I observed in the same epistle that mention was also made of Marcion, saying that “even those that came from him did not need to be baptized, because they seemed to have been already baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” Therefore we ought to consider their faith who believe without, whether in respect of the same faith they can obtain any grace. For if we and heretics have one faith, we may also have one grace. If the Patripassians, Anthropians, Valentinians, Apelletians, Ophites, Marcionites, and other pests, and swords, and poisons of heretics for subverting the truth, confess the same Father, the same Son, the same Holy Ghost, the same Church with us, they may also have one baptism if they have also one faith.”

Cyprian was writing to **Jubaianus, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics**. And yes, just as Jubaianus apparently wrote, one receives “remission of sins according to what he believed”. This is according to Scripture. But because someone may fail in one point, as the Corinthians did, this did not invalidate their salvation. Paul called the Corinthians “babes in Christ”, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

In verse 1, Paul calls the Corinthians “brethren”, and “babes in Christ”. These were believers. But they were carnal. They were still saved, but needed correction, and they needed



to grow in grace and knowledge. But to Cyprian, if one was not a member of the Catholic Church, he was a heretic and not in the Church of Christ.

Cyprian continues in paragraph 5, and says, “And lest it should be wearisome to go through all the heresies, and to enumerate either the follies or the madness of each of them, because it is no pleasure to speak of that which one either dreads or is ashamed to know, let us examine in the meantime about Marcion alone, the mention of whom has been made in the letter transmitted by you to us, whether the ground of his baptism can be made good. For the Lord after His resurrection, sending His disciples, instructed and taught them in what manner they ought to baptize, saying, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 28:18-19) He suggests the Trinity, in whose sacrament the nations were to be baptized.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 28 (KJV):**18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Cyprian continues, and then says, “Does Marcion then maintain the Trinity? Does he then assert the same Father, the Creator, as we do? **Does he know the same Son, Christ born of the Virgin Mary, who as the Word was made flesh, who bare our sins, who conquered death by dying, who by Himself first of all originated the resurrection of the flesh, and showed to His disciples that He had risen in the same flesh?**”

It is certain that Cyprian was a believer, though he was not perfect in his teaching.

Cyprian continues, and says, “Widely different is the faith with Marcion, and, moreover, with the other heretics; nay, with them there is nothing but perfidy, and blasphemy, and contention, which is hostile to holiness and truth. How then can one who is baptized among them seem to have obtained remission of sins, and the grace of the divine mercy, by his faith, when he has not the truth of the faith itself?”

Cyprian refers to Marcion.

“**Marcionism** was an early Christian dualistic belief system that originated with the teachings of Marcion of Sinope in Rome around the year 144. Marcion was an early Christian theologian, evangelist, and an important figure in early Christianity. He was the son of a bishop of Sinope in Pontus. About the middle of the 2nd century (140–155) he traveled to Rome, where he joined the Syrian Gnostic Cerdo.

Marcion preached that the benevolent God of the Gospel who sent Jesus Christ into the world as the savior was the true Supreme Being, different and opposed to the malevolent Demiurge or creator god, identified with the Hebrew God of the Old Testament. He considered himself a follower of Paul the Apostle, whom he believed to have been the only true apostle of Jesus Christ.

Marcion's canon, possibly the first Christian canon ever compiled, consisted of eleven books: a gospel, which was a shorter version of the Gospel of Luke, and ten Pauline epistles. Marcion's canon rejected the entire Old Testament, along with all other epistles and gospels of what would become the 27-book New Testament canon, which during his life had yet to be

compiled. Pauline epistles enjoy a prominent position in the Marcionite canon, since Paul was considered by Marcion to be Christ's only true apostle.

Marcionism was denounced by its opponents as heresy and written against by the early Church Fathers – notably by Tertullian in his five-book treatise *Adversus Marcionem* (*Against Marcion*), in about 208. Marcion's writings are lost, though they were widely read and numerous manuscripts must have existed. Even so, many scholars claim it is possible to reconstruct and deduce a large part of ancient Marcionism through what later critics, especially Tertullian, said concerning Marcion.”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcionism>

Marcion was definitely in error but whether he was saved or not, God only knows.

But Cyprian then says “For if, as some suppose, one could receive anything abroad out of the Church according to his faith, certainly he has received what he believed; but if he believes what is false, he could not receive what is true; but rather he has received things adulterous and profane, according to what he believed.”

Cyprian here says that even if one is “out of the Church”, then “certainly he has received what he believed”. But Cyprian did not believe that anything outside of the Church was true.

## **Epistle LXXII, To Jubaianus, paragraphs 7-10**

### **Epistle LXXII.**

#### **To Jubaianus, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 381-382, col. 1-2, Page 905-906 (pdf)**

7. But it is manifest where and by whom remission of sins can be given; to wit, that which is given in baptism. **For first of all the Lord gave that power to Peter, upon whom He built the Church, and whence He appointed and showed the source of unity—the power, namely, that whatsoever he loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven.** And after the resurrection, also, He speaks to the apostles, saying, “As the Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith, unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” (John 20:21-23) Whence we perceive that only they who are set over the Church and established in the Gospel law, and in the ordinance of the Lord, are allowed to baptize and to give remission of sins; but that without, nothing can either be bound or loosed, where there is none who can either bind or loose anything.

8. Nor do we propose this, dearest brother, without the authority of divine Scripture, when we say that all things are arranged by divine direction by a certain law and by special ordinance, and that none can usurp to himself, in opposition to the bishops and priests, anything which is not of his own right and power. For Korah, Dathan, and Abiram endeavoured to usurp, in opposition to Moses and Aaron the priest, the power of sacrificing; and they did not do without punishment what they unlawfully dared. The sons of Aaron also, who placed strange fire upon the altar, were at once consumed in the sight of an angry Lord; which punishment remains to those who introduce strange water by a false baptism, that the divine vengeance may avenge and chastise when heretics do that in opposition to the Church, which the Church alone is allowed to do.

9. But in respect of the assertion of some concerning those who had been baptized in Samaria, that when the Apostles Peter and John came, only hands were imposed on them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, yet that they were not re-baptized; we see that that place does not, dearest brother, touch the present case. For they who had believed in Samaria had believed with a true faith; and within, in the Church which is one, and to which alone it is granted to bestow the grace of baptism and to remit sins, had been baptized by Philip the deacon, whom the same apostles had sent. **And therefore, because they had obtained a legitimate and ecclesiastical baptism, there was no need that they should be baptized any more, but only that which was needed was performed by Peter and John; viz., that prayer being made for them, and hands being imposed, the Holy Spirit should be invoked and poured out upon them, which now too is done among us, so that they who are baptized in the Church are brought to the prelates of the Church, and by our prayers and by the imposition of hands obtain the Holy Spirit, and are perfected with the Lord's seal.**

10. There is no ground, therefore, dearest brother, for thinking that we should give way to heretics so far as to contemplate the betrayal to them of that baptism, which is only granted to the one and only Church. It is a good soldier's duty to defend the camp of his general against rebels and enemies. It is the duty of an illustrious leader to keep the standards entrusted to him. It is written, "The Lord thy God is a jealous God." (Deuteronomy 4:24) We who have received the Spirit of God ought to have a jealousy for the divine faith; with such a jealousy as that wherewith Phineas both pleased God and justly allayed His wrath when He was angry, and the people were perishing. Why do we receive as allowed an adulterous and alien church, a foe to the divine unity, when we know only one Christ and His one Church? **The Church, setting forth the likeness of paradise, includes within her walls fruit-bearing trees, whereof that which does not bring forth good fruit is cut off and is cast into the fire. These trees she waters with four rivers, that is, with the four Gospels, wherewith, by a celestial inundation, she bestows the grace of saving baptism. Can any one water from the Church's fountains who is not within the Church? Can one impart those wholesome and saving draughts of paradise to any one if he is perverted, and of himself condemned, and banished outside the fountains of paradise, and has dried up and failed with the dryness of an eternal thirst?**

**Comment:** In paragraph 7, Cyprian begins, and says, "But it is manifest where and by whom remission of sins can be given; to wit, that which is given in baptism."

Cyprian is making baptism by the Catholic Church the only way "remission of sins can be given".

Cyprian continues, as he then says, "**For first of all the Lord gave that power to Peter, upon whom He built the Church, and whence He appointed and showed the source of unity—the power, namely, that whatsoever he loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven.**"

But the Lord did not build "His Church" on Peter. That was a misinterpretation of the early church of **Matthew 16:18**, as noted in the **Comment** after **Epistle XXVI., paragraph 1.**

And in Matthew, chapter 18, Jesus is speaking to all the disciples, as we read in **Matthew 18 (KJV):1** At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the

greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

Then He gives the authority of binding and loosing to all the disciples in **Matthew 18 (KJV):18** Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

But this Scripture must be taken in context with all other Scriptures. All our binding and loosing must be in accordance with His will, as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):14** And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

And so we read in **Proverbs 3 (KJV):5** Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

We are to be led by the Spirit of God, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

We don't bind and loose according to our own will, but only as we are led by the Spirit of God. And the Holy Spirit leads us in agreement with the word of God, rightly divided.

Cyprian continues, and says, "And after the resurrection, also, He speaks to the apostles, saying, "As the Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith, unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20:21-23) Whence we perceive that only they who are set over the Church and established in the Gospel law, and in the ordinance of the Lord, are allowed to baptize and to give remission of sins; but that without, nothing can either be bound or loosed, where there is none who can either bind or loose anything."

Cyprian says that Jesus, "after the resurrection...speaks to the apostles". But the Scripture says He spoke to "the disciples" as we read in context to **John 20 (KJV):19** Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

In the upper room, Peter stood up among the disciples, as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):13** And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. 15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

As a disciple of Jesus, we have authority to tell someone who has believed that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confessed Him as Lord, that they will be saved, and that God has forgiven their sins. And so we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is

nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

There is no “Gospel law” that made priests as mediators between God and men and women. We do not “give remission of sins” to anyone. God alone can forgive sins. But we can tell anyone who confesses the Scripture and has believed in Jesus Christ that their sins have been forgiven, just as the Scripture says in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Then in paragraph 8, Cyprian says, “Nor do we propose this, dearest brother, without the authority of divine Scripture, when we say that all things are arranged by divine direction by a certain law and by special ordinance, and that none can usurp to himself, in opposition to the bishops and priests, anything which is not of his own right and power.”

There is no such Scripture that has arranged a special priesthood in the Church. Cyprian himself has not quoted any such Scripture because it is not there. We abide in Him as we pay attention to the anointing we have received of Him, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Cyprian continues, and says, “For Korah, Dathan, and Abiram endeavoured to usurp, in opposition to Moses and Aaron the priest, the power of sacrificing; and they did not do without punishment what they unlawfully dared.”

He refers to **Numbers 16 (KJV):1** Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? 4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: 5 And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the Lord will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. 6 This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; 7 And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. 8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? 11 For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

So in verse 1 we read that Korah was a grandson of Levi, so he was a Levite. But he was not a priest, for to be a priest you had to be a descendant of Aaron, as we read in the **Comment**

for **Epistle LXIII, paragraph 2.**

So part of Korah's rebellion was that he sought the "priesthood also" as in verse 10 above.

Cyprian continues, and says, "The sons of Aaron also, who placed strange fire upon the altar, were at once consumed in the sight of an angry Lord; which punishment remains to those who introduce strange water by a false baptism, that the divine vengeance may avenge and chastise when heretics do that in opposition to the Church, which the Church alone is allowed to do."

Cyprian refers to Nadab and Abihu in **Leviticus 10 (KJV):1** And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. **2** And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

But since there is no special priesthood in the Church, there is no such punishment either.

Cyprian continues in paragraph 9, and says, "But in respect of the assertion of some concerning those who had been baptized in Samaria, that when the Apostles Peter and John came, only hands were imposed on them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, yet that they were not re-baptized; we see that that place does not, dearest brother, touch the present case. For they who had believed in Samaria had believed with a true faith; and within, in the Church which is one, and to which alone it is granted to bestow the grace of baptism and to remit sins, had been baptized by Philip the deacon, whom the same apostles had sent. **And therefore, because they had obtained a legitimate and ecclesiastical baptism, there was no need that they should be baptized any more, but only that which was needed was performed by Peter and John; viz., that prayer being made for them, and hands being imposed, the Holy Spirit should be invoked and poured out upon them, which now too is done among us, so that they who are baptized in the Church are brought to the prelates of the Church, and by our prayers and by the imposition of hands obtain the Holy Spirit, and are perfected with the Lord's seal.**"

The Holy Spirit is the seal of the believer, as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):13** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, **14** Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

This is also stated in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):29** Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. **30** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

This sealing happens after we believed, as in Ephesians 1:13 above. This is done sovereignly by the Lord, and not by the "**imposition of hands**".

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a filling of the believer with the Holy Spirit, and is an empowering of the Lord, as Jesus said in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This empowering may be done sovereignly by God as in **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. **2** And suddenly

there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This was also done sovereignly by God in **Acts 10 (KJV):44** While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Peter calls the Holy Ghost a gift in verse 45.

Now the baptism with the Holy Spirit is also done with the laying of hands, as in **Acts 8 (KJV):12** But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. 14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

In verse 20 above, Peter again calls the receiving of the Holy Spirit the “gift of God”.

Then Paul also laid hands on the disciples in Ephesus after they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, as we read in **Acts 19 (KJV):1** And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Cyprian then continues in paragraph 10, and says, “There is no ground, therefore, dearest brother, for thinking that we should give way to heretics so far as to contemplate the betrayal to them of that baptism, which is only granted to the one and only Church. It is a good soldier’s duty to defend the camp of his general against rebels and enemies. It is the duty of an illustrious leader to keep the standards entrusted to him. It is written, “The Lord thy God is a jealous God.” (Deuteronomy 4:24)”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 4 (KJV):24** For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even

a jealous God.

Cyprian continues, and says, “We who have received the Spirit of God ought to have a jealousy for the divine faith; with such a jealousy as that wherewith Phineas both pleased God and justly allayed His wrath when He was angry, and the people were perishing. Why do we receive as allowed an adulterous and alien church, a foe to the divine unity, when we know only one Christ and His one Church? **The Church, setting forth the likeness of paradise, includes within her walls fruit-bearing trees, whereof that which does not bring forth good fruit is cut off and is cast into the fire. These trees she waters with four rivers, that is, with the four Gospels, wherewith, by a celestial inundation, she bestows the grace of saving baptism. Can any one water from the Church’s fountains who is not within the Church?** Can one impart those wholesome and saving draughts of paradise to any one if he is perverted, and of himself condemned, and banished outside the fountains of paradise, and has dried up and failed with the dryness of an eternal thirst?”

Cyprian makes it sound as if one should just trust in the Church for salvation. To Cyprian, it was the Church, through the **“four Gospels, wherewith, by a celestial inundation, she bestows the grace of saving baptism”**. The Church in Cyprian’s time began to make a distance between God and the believer by making the one who believes in Jesus Christ dependent on the priest. The believer had to obey the prelates of the Church if they wanted to be right with God. But there is only one mediator between God and man, as we read again in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

The word “mediator” in the Greek is **μεσίτης** (pronounced mes-ee'-tace); from G3319; a go-between, i.e. (simply) an internunciator, or (by implication) a reconciler (intercessor):—mediator.

And this Greek word is derived from **μέσος** (pronounced mes'-os); from G3326; middle (as an adjective or (neuter) noun):—among, × before them, between, + forth, mid(-day, -night), midst, way.

There is one go-between for the believer and God, and that is the man, Christ Jesus. We do not have to go to God through the Church or through prelates or priests or bishops.

And so we can come boldly before the throne of grace, as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):14** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. **15** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. **16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

## **Epistle LXXIII, To Pompey, paragraph 2**

### **Epistle LXXIII.**

#### **To Pompey, Against the Epistle of Stephen About the Baptism of Heretics.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 386-387, col. 1, Page 916 (pdf)**

2. He forbade one coming from any heresy to be baptized in the Church; that is, he judged the baptism of all heretics to be just and lawful. And although special heresies have



special baptisms and different sins, he, holding communion with the baptism of all, gathered up the sins of all, heaped together into his own bosom. And he charged that nothing should be innovated except what had been handed down; as if he were an innovator, who, holding the unity, claims for the one Church one baptism; and not manifestly he who, forgetful of unity, adopts the lies and the contagions of a profane washing. Let nothing be innovated, say she, *nothing maintained*, except what has been handed down. Whence is that tradition? Whether does it descend from the authority of the Lord and of the Gospel, or does it come from the commands and the epistles of the apostles? For that those things which are written must be done, God witnesses and admonishes, saying to Joshua the son of Nun: “The book of this law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate in it day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.” (Joshua 1:8) Also the Lord, sending His apostles, commands that the nations should be baptized, and taught to observe all things which He commanded. If, therefore, it is either prescribed in the Gospel, or contained in the epistles or Acts of the Apostles, that those who come from any heresy should not be baptized, but only hands laid upon them to repentance, let this divine and holy tradition be observed. But if everywhere heretics are called nothing else than adversaries and antichrists, if they are pronounced to be people to be avoided, and to be perverted and condemned of their own selves, wherefore is it that they should not be thought worthy of being condemned by us, since it is evident from the apostolic testimony that they are of their own selves condemned? So that no one ought to defame the apostles as if they had approved of the baptisms of heretics, or had communicated with them without the Church’s baptism, when they, the apostles, wrote such things of the heretics. And this, too, while as yet the more terrible plagues of heresy had not broken forth; while Marcion of Pontus had not yet emerged from Pontus, whose master Cerdon came to Rome,—while Hyginus was still bishop, who was the ninth bishop in that city,—whom Marcion followed, and with greater impudence adding other enhancements to his crime, and more daringly set himself to blaspheme against God the Father, the Creator, and armed with sacrilegious arms the heretical madness that rebelled against the Church with greater wickedness and determination.

**Comment:** Cyprian is writing to Pompey against the **Epistle of Stephen**. In this paragraph, he describes what he believes is Stephen’s error.

He begins in paragraph 2, and says, “He forbade one coming from any heresy to be baptized in the Church; that is, he judged the baptism of all heretics to be just and lawful. And although special heresies have special baptisms and different sins, he, holding communion with the baptism of all, gathered up the sins of all, heaped together into his own bosom.”

Cyprian is saying that Stephen didn’t think it necessary to re-baptize heretics, that is, those who were outside the Catholic Church. And so, since Stephen was holding the baptism of heretics as valid, Cyprian believed he then “gathered up the sins of all” and “heaped” them “together into his own bosom.”

Cyprian continues, and says, “And he charged that nothing should be innovated except what had been handed down; as if he were an innovator, who, holding the unity, claims for the one Church one baptism; and not manifestly he who, forgetful of unity, adopts the lies and the contagions of a profane washing. Let nothing be innovated, say she, *nothing maintained*, except

what has been handed down. Whence is that tradition? Whether does it descend from the authority of the Lord and of the Gospel, or does it come from the commands and the epistles of the apostles? For that those things which are written must be done, God witnesses and admonishes, saying to Joshua the son of Nun: “The book of this law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate in it day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.” (Joshua 1:8)”

He refers to **Joshua 1 (KJV):8** This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Cyprian continues, and says, “Also the Lord, sending His apostles, commands that the nations should be baptized, and taught to observe all things which He commanded. If, therefore, it is either prescribed in the Gospel, or contained in the epistles or Acts of the Apostles, that those who come from any heresy should not be baptized, but only hands laid upon them to repentance, let this divine and holy tradition be observed. But if everywhere heretics are called nothing else than adversaries and antichrists, if they are pronounced to be people to be avoided, and to be perverted and condemned of their own selves, wherefore is it that they should not be thought worthy of being condemned by us, since it is evident from the apostolic testimony that they are of their own selves condemned? So that no one ought to defame the apostles as if they had approved of the baptisms of heretics, or had communicated with them without the Church’s baptism, when they, the apostles, wrote such things of the heretics.”

The battle with heresy must be fought with sound doctrine. In Cyprian’s time, the Church had already gone off track with the assumption that the bishop had taken the apostle’s place in the Church, and that all of the tradition they were following was the doctrine of the apostles.

Paul does say to avoid those who “cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned”, as we read in **Romans 16 (KJV):17** Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

The doctrine they had learned was what is in the Scriptures we have today. In order for us to know good and sound doctrine, the word of God must be rightly divided. In order for the word of God to be rightly divided, we must “study” to show ourselves “approved unto God”, as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

We must be careful that we do not transgress the commandment of God by the tradition we are following, as Jesus warned in **Matthew 15 (KJV):1** Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7 Ye

hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Cyprian continues, as he says, “And this, too, while as yet the more terrible plagues of heresy had not broken forth; while Marcion of Pontus had not yet emerged from Pontus, whose master Cerdon came to Rome,—while Hyginus was still bishop, who was the ninth bishop in that city,—whom Marcion followed, and with greater impudence adding other enhancements to his crime, and more daringly set himself to blaspheme against God the Father, the Creator, and armed with sacrilegious arms the heretical madness that rebelled against the Church with greater wickedness and determination.”

Marcion was definitely in error, as we read before in the **Comment** under **Epistle LXXII., paragraph 5**, that “Marcion preached that the benevolent God of the Gospel who sent Jesus Christ into the world as the savior was the true Supreme Being, different and opposed to the malevolent Demiurge or creator god, identified with the Hebrew God of the Old Testament. He considered himself a follower of Paul the Apostle, whom he believed to have been the only true apostle of Jesus Christ.”

Marcion rejected the entire Old Testament, and accepted in his canon only ten of the epistles of Paul, and one Gospel like Luke’s. So Cyprian had some understanding of the truth in the word of God, but he strictly followed the traditions of the early Church in his time.

### **Epistle LXXIII, To Pompey, paragraphs 5-7**

#### **Epistle LXXIII.**

#### **To Pompey, Against the Epistle of Stephen About the Baptism of Heretics.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 387-388, col. 1, Page 917-919 (pdf)**

5. Or if they attribute the effect of baptism to the majesty of the name, so that they who are baptized anywhere and anyhow, in the name of Jesus Christ, are judged to be renewed and sanctified; wherefore, in the name of the same Christ, are not hands laid upon the baptized persons among them, for the reception of the Holy Spirit? Why does not the same majesty of the same name avail in the imposition of hands, which, they contend, availed in the sanctification of baptism? For if any one born out of the Church can become God’s temple, why cannot the Holy Spirit also be poured out upon the temple? For he who has been sanctified, his sins being put away in baptism, and has been spiritually reformed into a new man, has become fitted for receiving the Holy Spirit; since the apostle says, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Galatians 3:27) He who, having been baptized among the heretics, is able to put on Christ, may much more receive the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent. **Otherwise He who is sent will be greater than Him who sends; so that one baptized without may begin indeed to put on Christ, but not to be able to receive the Holy Spirit, as if Christ could either be put on without the Spirit, or the Spirit be separated from Christ. Moreover, it is silly to say, that although the second birth is spiritual, by which we are born in Christ through the laver of regeneration, one may be born spiritually among the heretics, where they say that the Spirit is not.** For water alone is not able to cleanse away sins, and to sanctify a man, unless he have also the Holy Spirit. Wherefore it is necessary that

they should grant the Holy Spirit to be there, where they say that baptism is; or else there is no baptism where the Holy Spirit is not, because there cannot be baptism without the Spirit.

**6. But what a thing it is, to assert and contend that they who are not born in the Church can be the sons of God! For the blessed apostle sets forth and proves that baptism is that wherein the old man dies and the new man is born, saying, “He saved us by the washing of regeneration.” (Titus 3:5)** But if regeneration is in the washing, that is, in baptism, how can heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ, generate sons to God by Christ? **For it is the Church alone which, conjoined and united with Christ, spiritually bears sons;** as the same apostle again says, “Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it with the washing of water.” (Ephesians 5:25-26) If, then, she is the beloved and spouse who alone is sanctified by Christ, and alone is cleansed by His washing, it is manifest that heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ, nor can be cleansed nor sanctified by His washing, cannot bear sons to God.

**7. But further, one is not born by the imposition of hands when he receives the Holy Ghost, but in baptism, that so, being already born, he may receive the Holy Spirit, even as it happened in the first man Adam. For first God formed him, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. For the Spirit cannot be received, unless he who receives first have an existence. But as the birth of Christians is in baptism, while the generation and sanctification of baptism are with the spouse of Christ alone, who is able spiritually to conceive and to bear sons to God, where and of whom and to whom is he born, who is not a son of the Church, so as that he should have God as his Father, before he has had the Church for his Mother?** But as no heresy at all, and equally no schism, being without, can have the sanctification of saving baptism, why has the bitter obstinacy of our brother Stephen broken forth to such an extent, as to contend that sons are born to God from the baptism of Marcion; moreover, of Valentinus and Apelles, and of others who blaspheme against God the Father; and to say that remission of sins is granted in the name of Jesus Christ where blasphemy is uttered against the Father and against Christ the Lord God?

**Comment:** Cyprian is writing an epistle against the **Epistle of Stephen**, bishop of Rome, who, as we read before under paragraph 2, had accepted the lapsed back into the Church without having to be baptized again.

Cyprian begins here in paragraph 5, and says, “Or if they attribute the effect of baptism to the majesty of the name, so that they who are baptized anywhere and anyhow, in the name of Jesus Christ, are judged to be renewed and sanctified; wherefore, in the name of the same Christ, are not hands laid upon the baptized persons among them, for the reception of the Holy Spirit? Why does not the same majesty of the same name avail in the imposition of hands, which, they contend, availed in the sanctification of baptism? For if any one born out of the Church can become God’s temple, why cannot the Holy Spirit also be poured out upon the temple?”

Cyprian believed that water baptism was how one was born again, and that this baptism was only valid in the Catholic Church. He did not understand that one who was born again was “born of God”, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born,

not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

It is a spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit who goes about like the wind, as we read again in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

And so it is the Lord who adds to the Church “such as should be saved”, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):47** Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Cyprian continues, and then says, “For he who has been sanctified, his sins being put away in baptism, and has been spiritually reformed into a new man, has become fitted for receiving the Holy Spirit; since the apostle says, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Galatians 3:27)”

He refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

But we read also in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

It is God who sets the members in His body, as we read also in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

God uses all believers to preach the Gospel, but it is the Lord working in the word that is preached that brings about the new birth. And so we read in **James 1 (KJV):18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Cyprian continues, and says, “He who, having been baptized among the heretics, is able to put on Christ, may much more receive the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent. **Otherwise He who is sent will be greater than Him who sends; so that one baptized without may begin indeed to put on Christ, but not to be able to receive the Holy Spirit, as if Christ could either be put on without the Spirit, or the Spirit be separated from Christ. Moreover, it is silly to say, that although the second birth is spiritual, by which we are born in Christ through the laver of regeneration, one may be born spiritually among the heretics, where they say that the Spirit is not.** For water alone is not able to cleanse away sins, and to sanctify a man, unless he have also the Holy Spirit. Wherefore it is necessary that they should grant the Holy Spirit to be there, where they say that baptism is; or else there is no baptism where the Holy Spirit is not, because there cannot be baptism without the Spirit.”

Cyprian recognized that “**the second birth is spiritual**” but he believed that this happens “**through the laver of regeneration**”. And to Cyprian, the laver had to be in the Catholic Church to be functional. But it is the validity of the message preached that God uses to save those who receive it. It is not valid simply because of the church you attend. We must remember who was crucified for us, as Paul taught in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying,

and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

Paul wanted the Corinthians to be joined together under one head, the Lord Jesus Christ, as he wrote in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV)**:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

If we were saved by water baptism, Paul would never “thank God that I baptized none of you” in verse 14.

Then in paragraph 6, Cyprian says, **“But what a thing it is, to assert and contend that they who are not born in the Church can be the sons of God! For the blessed apostle sets forth and proves that baptism is that wherein the old man dies and the new man is born, saying, “He saved us by the washing of regeneration.” (Titus 3:5) But if regeneration is in the washing, that is, in baptism, how can heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ, generate sons to God by Christ? For it is the Church alone which, conjoined and united with Christ, spiritually bears sons; as the same apostle again says, “Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it with the washing of water.” (Ephesians 5:25-26) If, then, she is the beloved and spouse who alone is sanctified by Christ, and alone is cleansed by His washing, it is manifest that heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ, nor can be cleansed nor sanctified by His washing, cannot bear sons to God.”**

Cyprian refers first in context to **Titus 3 (KJV)**:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The “washing of regeneration” refers to the cleansing of our sins that happens when we are born again. Regeneration happens when we believe in Jesus Christ, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV)**:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Cyprian also refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV)**:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the

washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

The “word” is the water by which we are cleansed, as Jesus said in **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Heresy “cannot bear sons to God”, as Cyprian correctly says. But the Church does not bear sons to God either. The Holy Spirit is the one who, through the word preached, gives birth to the believers, as we read in **James 1 (KJV):18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Cyprians continues in paragraph 7, and says, **“But further, one is not born by the imposition of hands when he receives the Holy Ghost, but in baptism, that so, being already born, he may receive the Holy Spirit, even as it happened in the first man Adam. For first God formed him, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. For the Spirit cannot be received, unless he who receives first have an existence. But as the birth of Christians is in baptism, while the generation and sanctification of baptism are with the spouse of Christ alone, who is able spiritually to conceive and to bear sons to God, where and of whom and to whom is he born, who is not a son of the Church, so as that he should have God as his Father, before he has had the Church for his Mother?”**

Cyprian is using a human analogy to explain what he believes is what happens spiritually. Cyprian and the early Church did not understand the context of the Scriptures regarding regeneration. He refers to **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

When the “Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground”, He then “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”. The breath of life is man’s spirit. Man’s spirit united with the body makes man a living soul. God created man in His own image, as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):26** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

As God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so man is spirit, soul, and body as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before we accept Christ, we are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the boundless riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not a result of

works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

God created us without a mother. And He regenerates us without a mother. We are saved by grace, and not by works, or anything we do. Baptism is an outward sign of what happened to us when we believe. It is our testimony to the world that we have truly believed that God raised Jesus from the dead, and that He is Lord of our lives. The early Church did not understand this.

Cyprian continues, and says, “But as no heresy at all, and equally no schism, being without, can have the sanctification of saving baptism, why has the bitter obstinacy of our brother Stephen broken forth to such an extent, as to contend that sons are born to God from the baptism of Marcion; moreover, of Valentinus and Apelles, and of others who blaspheme against God the Father; and to say that remission of sins is granted in the name of Jesus Christ where blasphemy is uttered against the Father and against Christ the Lord God?”

Cyprian was right about the baptism of heretics. But he misunderstood the meaning of water baptism in the Scriptures.

#### **Epistle LXXIV, Firmilian to Cyprian, paragraph 4**

#### **Epistle LXXIV.**

**Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, to Cyprian, Against the Letter of Stephen. a.d. 256.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 391, col. 1, Page 924-925 (pdf)**

4. But we receive those things which you have written as if they were our own; nor do we read them cursorily, but by frequent repetition have committed them to memory. Nor does it hinder saving usefulness, either to repeat the same things for the confirmation of the truth, or, moreover, to add some things for the sake of accumulating proof. But if anything has been added by us, it is not added as if there had been too little said by you; but since the divine discourse surpasses human nature, and the soul cannot conceive or grasp the whole and perfect word, therefore also the number of prophets is so great, that the divine wisdom in its multiplicity may be distributed through many. Whence also he who first speaks in prophecy is bidden to be silent if a revelation be made to a second. For which reason it happens of necessity among us, that year by year we, the elders and prelates, assemble together to arrange those matters which are committed to our care, so that if any things are more serious they may be directed by the common counsel. Moreover, *we do this* that some remedy may be sought for by repentance for lapsed brethren, and for those wounded by the devil after **the saving laver**, not as though they obtained remission of sins from us, but that by our means they may be converted to the understanding of their sins, and may be compelled to give fuller satisfaction to the Lord.

**Comment:** In this epistle, **Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia**, is writing “**to Cyprian, Against the Letter of Stephen**”.

**Firmilian** begins as he says, “But we receive those things which you have written as if they were our own; nor do we read them cursorily, but by frequent repetition have committed them to memory. Nor does it hinder saving usefulness, either to repeat the same things for the confirmation of the truth, or, moreover, to add some things for the sake of accumulating proof.



But if anything has been added by us, it is not added as if there had been too little said by you; but since the divine discourse surpasses human nature, and the soul cannot conceive or grasp the whole and perfect word, therefore also the number of prophets is so great, that the divine wisdom in its multiplicity may be distributed through many. Whence also he who first speaks in prophecy is bidden to be silent if a revelation be made to a second.”

And **Firmilian** refers in context to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

In the thinking of the early Church in Cyprian’s time, the word spoken by the prelate was a “revelation” in prophecy. They did not understand that the Holy Spirit was given to empower all believers, so that they “may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted”, as in verse 31 above. And this is why prophecy was given, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

The first apostles had a “more sure word of prophecy” since they were eyewitnesses, as Peter taught in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):16** For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Now that the first apostles are gone, there is nothing to be added to Scripture. All prophecy today is simply for “edification, and exhortation, and comfort”. And it is to be judged by the Scripture.

**Firmilian** continues, and says, “For which reason it happens of necessity among us, that year by year we, the elders and prelates, assemble together to arrange those matters which are committed to our care, so that if any things are more serious they may be directed by the common counsel. Moreover, *we do this* that some remedy may be sought for by repentance for lapsed brethren, and for those wounded by the devil after **the saving laver**, not as though they obtained remission of sins from us, but that by our means they may be converted to the understanding of their sins, and may be compelled to give fuller satisfaction to the Lord.”

The “**saving laver**” of course refers to water baptism. It is evident that **Firmilian** was in complete agreement with Cyprian and the early Church about baptism.

**Epistle LXXIV, Firmilian to Cyprian, paragraph 14**

**Epistle LXXIV.**

**Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, to Cyprian, Against the Letter of Stephen.**

a.d. 256.

ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 393-394, col. 2, Page 929-930 (pdf)

14. But if the baptism of heretics can have the regeneration of the second birth, those who are baptized among them must be counted not heretics, but children of God. For the second birth, which occurs in baptism, begets sons of God. **But if the spouse of Christ is one, which is the Catholic Church, it is she herself who alone bears sons of God.** For there are not many spouses of Christ, since the apostle says, “I have espoused you, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ;” (2 Corinthians 11:2) and, “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, for the King hath greatly desired thy beauty;” (Psalm 45:11) and, “Come with me, my spouse, from Lebanon; thou shalt come, and shalt pass over from the source of thy faith;” (Canticles 4:8) and, “I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse.” (Canticles 5:1) We see that one person is everywhere set forward, because also the spouse is one. But the synagogue of heretics is not one with us, because the spouse is not an adulteress and a harlot. Whence also she cannot bear children of God; unless, as appears to Stephen, heresy indeed brings them forth and exposes them, while the Church takes them up when exposed, and nourishes those for her own whom she has not born, although she cannot be the mother of strange children. And therefore Christ our Lord, setting forth that His spouse is one, and declaring the sacrament of His unity, says, “He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.” (Luke 11:23) For if Christ is with us, but the heretics are not with us, certainly the heretics are in opposition to Christ; and if we gather with Christ, but the heretics do not gather with us, doubtless they scatter.

**Comment:** In paragraph 14, **Firmilian** says, “But if the baptism of heretics can have the regeneration of the second birth, those who are baptized among them must be counted not heretics, but children of God. For the second birth, which occurs in baptism, begets sons of God. **But if the spouse of Christ is one, which is the Catholic Church, it is she herself who alone bears sons of God.** For there are not many spouses of Christ, since the apostle says, “I have espoused you, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ;” (2 Corinthians 11:2) and, “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, for the King hath greatly desired thy beauty;” (Psalm 45:11) and, “Come with me, my spouse, from Lebanon; thou shalt come, and shalt pass over from the source of thy faith;” (Canticles 4:8) and, “I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse.” (Canticles 5:1)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):2** For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

And to **Psalm 45 (KJV):10** Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; 11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

And to **Song of Solomon 4 (KJV):8** Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

And to **Song of Solomon 5 (KJV):1** I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have

drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

Because the Catholic Church in Cyprian's time believed that one was regenerated by baptism, it was logical to believe that the Church "**alone bears sons of God**". However, regeneration occurs when one is born of the Spirit. This birth happens when someone believes in Jesus Christ. That is when they pass from death to life, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

**Firmilian** continues, and then says, "We see that one person is everywhere set forward, because also the spouse is one. But the synagogue of heretics is not one with us, because the spouse is not an adulteress and a harlot. Whence also she cannot bear children of God; unless, as appears to Stephen, heresy indeed brings them forth and exposes them, while the Church takes them up when exposed, and nourishes those for her own whom she has not born, although she cannot be the mother of strange children. And therefore Christ our Lord, setting forth that His spouse is one, and declaring the sacrament of His unity, says, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." (Luke 11:23) For if Christ is with us, but the heretics are not with us, certainly the heretics are in opposition to Christ; and if we gather with Christ, but the heretics do not gather with us, doubtless they scatter."

He refers to **Luke 11 (KJV):23** He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

The assumption of **Firmilian**, and Cyprian, was that the Catholic Church had inherited all that the apostles had planted and taught. As long as a church could show their succession of bishops back to an apostle, all of their traditions were valid, and they were part of the Catholic Church. So if one did not "gather" with the churches in the Catholic Church, then they "scattered", and they were "in opposition to Christ". There were heretics in the time of **Firmilian** and Cyprian. The problem was that the doctrine of **Firmilian** and Cyprian was not perfect. There had been a blending with the world. Many things were taken out of context in the Scriptures. There is no special priesthood or hierarchy of bishops mentioned in the Scriptures. The Church is not described as our mother "**who alone bears sons of God**". Jesus Christ was crucified for us. His blood alone is what cleanses us of sin. He is our head, and we are His body. As we walk in fellowship with Him, He will unite us in one body.

**Epistle LXXIV, Firmilian to Cyprian, paragraphs 16-18**

**Epistle LXXIV.**

**Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, to Cyprian, Against the Letter of Stephen. a.d. 256.**

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**16. But what is the greatness of his error, and what the depth of his blindness, who says that remission of sins can be granted in the synagogues of heretics, and does not abide on the foundation of the one Church which was once based by Christ upon the rock, may be perceived from this, that Christ said to Peter alone, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:19) And again, in the Gospel, when Christ breathed on the apostles**

alone, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained." (John 20:22-23) **Therefore the power of remitting sins was given to the apostles, and to the churches which they, sent by Christ, established, and to the bishops who succeeded to them by vicarious ordination.** But the enemies of the one Catholic Church in which we are, and the adversaries of us who have succeeded the apostles, asserting for themselves, in opposition to us, unlawful priesthoods, and setting up profane altars, what else are they than Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, profane with a like wickedness, and about to suffer the same punishments which they did, as well as those who agree with them, just as their partners and abettors perished with a like death to theirs?

17. **And in this respect I am justly indignant at this so open and manifest folly of Stephen, that he who so boasts of the place of his episcopate, and contends that he holds the succession from Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were laid, should introduce many other rocks and establish new buildings of many churches; maintaining that there is baptism in them by his authority.** For they who are baptized, doubtless, fill up the number of the Church. But he who approves their baptism maintains, of those baptized, that the Church is also with them. Nor does he understand that the truth of the Christian Rock is overshadowed, and in some measure abolished, by him when he thus betrays and deserts unity. The apostle acknowledges that the Jews, although blinded by ignorance, and bound by the grossest wickedness, have yet a zeal for God. Stephen, who announces that he holds by succession the throne of Peter, is stirred with no zeal against heretics, when he concedes to them, not a moderate, but the very greatest power of grace: so far as to say and assert that, by the sacrament of baptism, the filth of the old man is washed away by them, that they pardon the former mortal sins, that they make sons of God by heavenly regeneration, and renew to eternal life by the sanctification of the divine laver. He who concedes and gives up to heretics in this way the great and heavenly gifts of the Church, what else does he do but communicate with them for whom he maintains and claims so much grace? And now he hesitates in vain to consent to them, and to be a partaker with them in other matters also, to meet together with them, and equally with them to mingle their prayers, and appoint a common altar and sacrifice.

18. But, says he, "the name of Christ is of great advantage to faith and the sanctification of baptism; so that whosoever is anywhere so-ever baptized in the name of Christ, immediately obtains the grace of Christ:" although this position may be briefly met and answered, that if baptism without in the name of Christ availed for the cleansing of man; in the name of the same Christ, the imposition of hands might avail also for the reception of the Holy Spirit; and the other things also which are done among heretics will begin to seem just and lawful when they are done in the name of Christ; as you have maintained in your letter that the name of Christ could be of no avail except in the Church alone, to which alone Christ has conceded the power of heavenly grace.

**Comment:** In paragraph 16, Firmilian says, "But what is the greatness of his error, and what the depth of his blindness, who says that remission of sins can be granted in the synagogues of heretics, and does not abide on the foundation of the one Church which was once based by Christ upon the rock, may be perceived from this, that Christ said to Peter

alone, “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19)”

**Firmilian** refers in context to **Matthew 16 (KJV):15** He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

But Jesus also spoke to all the disciples, as in **Matthew 18 (KJV):18** Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

And as we explained in the **Comment on Epistle XXVI, paragraph 1**, Peter means piece of rock. In Matthew 16:18, when Jesus said “upon this rock”, the Greek word means “mass of rock”. Jesus Christ, and not Peter, is the foundation of the Church. All of the binding and loosing is done according to the Scriptures, and according to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and not according to man’s judgment.

**Firmilian** continues, and says, “And again, in the Gospel, when Christ breathed on the apostles alone, saying, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.” (John 20:22-23) **Therefore the power of remitting sins was given to the apostles, and to the churches which they, sent by Christ, established, and to the bishops who succeeded to them by vicarious ordination.”**

He refers in context to **John 20 (KJV):18** Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. 19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. 24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

When Jesus spoke in verse 23, saying “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained”, he was speaking to the disciples and not just the apostles. In order to understand what Jesus is saying in verse 23, we must read in **Mark 2 (KJV):1** And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. 2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. 3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. 4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

6 But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? 8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? 10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) 11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. 12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

In verse 5 Jesus “saw their faith”, and so He “said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.”

The words “be forgiven” in this verse in the Greek is the word **ἀφίημι** (pronounced af-ee'-ay-mee); from G575 and ἵημι hīēmi (to send; an intensive form of εἶμι eīmi, to go); to send forth, in various applications (as follow):—cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G863**

The words “remit” and “remitted” in John 20:23 above in the Greek are also **ἀφίημι** (pronounced af-ee'-ay-mee).

Then in verse 10, the Greek word translated “power” is **ἐξουσία** (pronounced ex-oo-see'-ah); from G1832 (in the sense of ability); privilege, i.e. (subjectively) force, capacity, competency, freedom, or (objectively) mastery (concretely, magistrate, superhuman, potentate, token of control), delegated influence:—authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, strength. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G1849**

The primary meaning of this Greek word is “authority”. Jesus was giving the disciples authority, the authority which He had, to tell anyone who believes in Him that their sins are forgiven.

Now it is by faith that we are saved, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

As a believer, when we see a person’s faith, we also have authority to tell them that their sins are forgiven. We do not remit sins, but we can tell those who believe in Jesus Christ that they are forgiven of their sins. The early Church misunderstood the Scripture.

**Firmilian** continues, and says, “But the enemies of the one Catholic Church in which we are, and the adversaries of us who have succeeded the apostles, asserting for themselves, in opposition to us, unlawful priesthoods, and setting up profane altars, what else are they than Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, profane with a like wickedness, and about to suffer the same punishments which they did, as well as those who agree with them, just as their partners and abettors perished with a like death to theirs?”

Korah was a Levite, but not a descendent of Aaron. So Korah could not be a priest. **Firmilian** is comparing the priesthood of the “one Catholic Church” to the Old Testament priesthood as if the Old Testament priesthood had continued in a modified form in the New Testament.

Under the Old Testament priesthood, only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies part of the Tabernacle once a year on the day of atonement. And so we read in **Leviticus 16 (KJV)**:1 And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died; 2 And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

And then in **Leviticus 16 (KJV)**:17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

And this day of atonement was only to be celebrated on one day of each year, as in **Leviticus 16 (KJV)**:29 And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: 30 For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. 31 It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

Before the high priest died, he was to anoint his replacement, as we continue in **Leviticus 16 (KJV)**:32 And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: 33 And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. 34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the Lord commanded Moses.

But this priesthood has been changed, as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV)**:11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

And so the “holy place” in the tabernacle on earth was a figure or symbol of the “holiest of all” in heaven, as we read in **Hebrews 8 (KJV)**:6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

So in verse 12, it was Christ who “by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us”. Therefore, in verse 15, He is our “mediator of the new testament” in order that “they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance”.

The priests in the priesthood of the Catholic Church still die. But our great High Priest lives forever, and so He is now “in the presence of God for us”, as we read in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):**23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

In verse 24, Christ entered “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us”.

And so “where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin” as he explained in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily



ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

In verse 9, he said, “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” And in verse 10, he said, “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” And in verse 18, he said, “Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”

So now the believer has “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus”, as we continue in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**: 19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

There is no need for any other priesthood to represent the believer before God. We already have a “high priest over the house of God” in verse 21, so that we can “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” in verse 22. Our God is a personal God who wants relationship with every believer. There is no one we have to go through to get to our God. In verse 20, He has made a “new and living way” for us, that is, for all believers in Jesus Christ.

Then in paragraph 17, **Firmilian** says, “**And in this respect I am justly indignant at this so open and manifest folly of Stephen, that he who so boasts of the place of his episcopate, and contends that he holds the succession from Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were laid, should introduce many other rocks and establish new buildings of many churches; maintaining that there is baptism in them by his authority.**”

Stephen and the church in Rome assumed that they held “**the succession from Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were laid**”. But there is no evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. And they misunderstood Matthew 16:18. The Church is laid on the foundation of Jesus Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**: 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

**Firmilian** continues, and says, “For they who are baptized, doubtless, fill up the number of the Church. But he who approves their baptism maintains, of those baptized, that the Church is also with them. Nor does he understand that the truth of the Christian Rock is overshadowed, and in some measure abolished, by him when he thus betrays and deserts unity. The apostle acknowledges that the Jews, although blinded by ignorance, and bound by the grossest wickedness, have yet a zeal for God. Stephen, who announces that he holds by succession the

throne of Peter, is stirred with no zeal against heretics, when he concedes to them, not a moderate, but the very greatest power of grace: so far as to say and assert that, by the sacrament of baptism, the filth of the old man is washed away by them, that they pardon the former mortal sins, that they make sons of God by heavenly regeneration, and renew to eternal life by the sanctification of the divine laver. He who concedes and gives up to heretics in this way the great and heavenly gifts of the Church, what else does he do but communicate with them for whom he maintains and claims so much grace? And now he hesitates in vain to consent to them, and to be a partaker with them in other matters also, to meet together with them, and equally with them to mingle their prayers, and appoint a common altar and sacrifice.”

The early Church misunderstood the meaning of baptism in the Scriptures. Baptism is only a sign of what has been done to one’s sins when they believe in Jesus Christ. That is, when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord, our sins are washed away. We then take the next step to be baptized in obedience to our Lord whom we have believed in. This is the way we are to begin our walk of surrender to our Lord, and to grow in grace and knowledge.

**Firmilian** continues in paragraph 18, and says, “But, says he, “the name of Christ is of great advantage to faith and the sanctification of baptism; so that whosoever is anywhere soever baptized in the name of Christ, immediately obtains the grace of Christ:” although this position may be briefly met and answered, that if baptism without in the name of Christ availed for the cleansing of man; in the name of the same Christ, the imposition of hands might avail also for the reception of the Holy Spirit; and the other things also which are done among heretics will begin to seem just and lawful when they are done in the name of Christ; as you have maintained in your letter that the name of Christ could be of no avail except in the Church alone, to which alone Christ has conceded the power of heavenly grace.”

Where in the Scriptures does Christ concede “the power of heavenly grace”? This was a misinterpretation of the early Church, which had assumed that when one is baptized, they simply received the grace of Christ to be saved. The early Church then interpreted baptism as a sacrament, that is, a means of receiving grace. Then also there was the seal or anointing of the Holy Spirit which was thought to be another means of receiving grace. Then also the Lord’s Supper, or Communion, became another means of receiving grace, and therefore, became another sacrament. But this was only the beginning. Today, there are seven sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church.

The early Church misunderstood the grace of God. The Scriptures say that it is by the grace, or unmerited favor, of God that things happen. That is, it is by grace through faith that we are saved, as in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

It is not grace that is put down to our account when we are justified by our faith. It is the righteousness of God that is put down to our account. We are justified freely by His grace, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:

for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

This righteousness is given to us as a gift by grace, as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):15** But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

We receive the “gift of righteousness” in verse 17, “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe”, as in Romans 3:22 above.

The we read that eternal life is the gift of God in **Romans 6 (KJV):23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We receive this gift when we believe, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Eternal life is in our spirit, which has been born of the Spirit of God when we believe. So when we believe in Jesus Christ we then have eternal life in our spirit, and we then have a standing of righteousness. This was all given to us by the grace, or unmerited favor, of God. It is not grace that is in our account or in our spirit, but righteousness and eternal life. Grace refers to how these gifts were given. It was not by our works, but by His grace through faith that we have received these gifts. The early Church did not understand this.

## **Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church, paragraphs 5-6**

### **Treatise I.**

#### **On the Unity of the Church**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 423, col. 1, Page 982-983 (pdf)**

5. And this unity we ought firmly to hold and assert, especially those of us that are bishops who preside in the Church, that we may also prove the episcopate itself to be one and undivided. Let no one deceive the brotherhood by a falsehood: let no one corrupt the truth of the faith by perfidious prevarication. The episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole. The Church also is one, which is spread abroad far and wide into a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness. As there are many rays of the sun, but one light; and many branches of a tree, but one strength based in its tenacious root; and since from one spring flow many streams, although the multiplicity seems diffused in the liberality of an overflowing abundance, yet the unity is still preserved in the source. Separate a ray of the sun from its body of light, its unity does not allow a division of light; break a branch from a tree,—when broken, it will not be able to bud; cut off the stream from its fountain, and that which is cut off dries up. **Thus also the Church, shone over with the light of the Lord, sheds forth her rays over the whole**

world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body separated. Her fruitful abundance spreads her branches over the whole world. She broadly expands her rivers, liberally flowing, yet her head is one, her source one; and she is one mother, plentiful in the results of fruitfulness: from her womb we are born, by her milk we are nourished, by her spirit we are animated.

6. The spouse of Christ cannot be adulterous; she is uncorrupted and pure. She knows one home; she guards with chaste modesty the sanctity of one couch. She keeps us for God. She appoints the sons whom she has born for the kingdom. Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined to an adulteress, is separated from the promises of the Church; nor can he who forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger; he is profane; he is an enemy. **He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother.** If any one could escape who was outside the ark of Noah, then he also may escape who shall be outside of the Church. The Lord warns, saying, “He who is not with me is against me, and he who gathereth not with me scattereth.” (Matthew 12:30) He who breaks the peace and the concord of Christ, does so in opposition to Christ; he who gathereth elsewhere than in the Church, scatters the Church of Christ. The Lord says, “I and the Father are one;” (John 10:30) and again it is written of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, “And these three are one.” (1 John 5:7) And does any one believe that this unity which thus comes from the divine strength and coheres in celestial sacraments, can be divided in the Church, and can be separated by the parting asunder of opposing wills? **He who does not hold this unity does not hold God’s law, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation.**

**Comment:** In paragraph 5, Cyprian says, “And this unity we ought firmly to hold and assert, especially those of us that are bishops who preside in the Church, that we may also prove the episcopate itself to be one and undivided. Let no one deceive the brotherhood by a falsehood: let no one corrupt the truth of the faith by perfidious prevarication. The episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole. The Church also is one, which is spread abroad far and wide into a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness. As there are many rays of the sun, but one light; and many branches of a tree, but one strength based in its tenacious root; and since from one spring flow many streams, although the multiplicity seems diffused in the liberality of an overflowing abundance, yet the unity is still preserved in the source. Separate a ray of the sun from its body of light, its unity does not allow a division of light; break a branch from a tree,—when broken, it will not be able to bud; cut off the stream from its fountain, and that which is cut off dries up.”

Jesus told a parable in **Matthew 13 (KJV):31** Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

But the Church is a spiritual body composed of children who are born again by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was here showing how the kingdom of heaven would grow and spread throughout the world.

Cyprian continues, and says, “**Thus also the Church, shone over with the light of the Lord, sheds forth her rays over the whole world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body separated. Her fruitful abundance spreads her branches over the whole world. She broadly expands her rivers, liberally flowing, yet her head is one, her source one; and she is one mother, plentiful in the results of fruitfulness: from her womb we are born, by her milk we are nourished, by her spirit we are animated.**”

Cyprian is making the Church a human institution. The light in the believer is the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is not the Church which shines the light, and the Church is not our “mother”. We are not born from “her womb”, and we are not nourished by “her milk”, nor are we “animated” by her spirit. The Church is a spiritual body animated by the Holy Spirit in which Christ is the head.

Every believer is directed by the Spirit of God, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

It is by Christ that we “believe in God”, and it is by the “word of God” that we are born again, as Peter reveals in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):18** Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Our “faith and hope” are in God, as in verse 21. And so it is by the “word of God” that we are “born again” in verse 23, and it is by the “word of God” that grow, as Peter taught in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):1** Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

We are all hands and feet, eyes and ears, in one body, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

And we are “members in particular”, as we continue in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all

teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

According to where He has placed us in His body, God has given us a ministry gift in order to make increase in the body, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

It is according to the “effectual working in the measure of every part” that the body makes increase “unto the edifying of itself in love” in verse 16. And in verse 15, by “speaking the truth in love”, we “grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”.

As we surrender to the Holy Spirit, we will speak the truth in love.

Then in paragraph 6, Cyprian says, “The spouse of Christ cannot be adulterous; she is uncorrupted and pure. She knows one home; she guards with chaste modesty the sanctity of one couch. She keeps us for God. She appoints the sons whom she has born for the kingdom. Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined to an adulteress, is separated from the promises of the Church; nor can he who forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger; he is profane; he is an enemy. **He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother.**”

Again, Cyprian makes the Church a human institution. The “Church of Christ” is a spiritual body composed of all believers born again by the Spirit of God. The Church did not give us birth so the Church is not our mother. We were born of God, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We are born of the Spirit, as Jesus taught in **John 3 (KJV):8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Cyprian continues, and says, “If any one could escape who was outside the ark of Noah, then he also may escape who shall be outside of the Church. The Lord warns, saying, “He who is not with me is against me, and he who gathereth not with me scattereth.” (Matthew 12:30) He who breaks the peace and the concord of Christ, does so in opposition to Christ; he who gathereth elsewhere than in the Church, scatters the Church of Christ.”

Cyprian refers in context to **Matthew 12 (KJV):22** Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. 25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. 30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. 31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Jesus was speaking with the Pharisees who, after He had healed someone “possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb”, said that He cast out devils by “Beelzebub the prince of the devils”. These Pharisees were speaking “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost”. The whole context of these verses is not about the Church but about a warning to unbelievers who may speak “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost”, and never have forgiveness.

Cyprian continues, and then says, “The Lord says, “I and the Father are one;” (John 10:30) and again it is written of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, “And these three are one.” (1 John 5:7)”

Here he refers in context to **John 10 (KJV):**27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one.

Those who are in the “Father’s hand” cannot be plucked out.

Cyprian then refers to **1 John 5 (KJV):**7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Cyprian continues, and says, “And does any one believe that this unity which thus comes from the divine strength and coheres in celestial sacraments, can be divided in the Church, and can be separated by the parting asunder of opposing wills? **He who does not hold this unity does not hold God’s law, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation.**”

The unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is a given. But the unity in the Church has not been perfected yet. Jesus said that He would build His Church, as we read in **Matthew 16 (KJV):**18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The “rock” that He is building His Church on is the fact that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now the “unity of the faith” is a work in progress, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the

edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

We are not saved by holding the unity in the Church. The Church is growing “up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:”, as in verse 15. Unity in the Church will come with growth in grace and knowledge. We are not perfect yet, but when we see Him, we will be like Him, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

If we have truly believed in Jesus Christ, we have eternal life in our spirit, as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

The early Church thought that one could lose salvation, but that it could be regained. In effect, this would mean that one would lose eternal life and then it would be given back to him or her. But if we have truly been born again, we have eternal life. We cannot die again spiritually now. We will then be rewarded according to what we build on the foundation, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The fire relates to the bad choices in this life of one who builds only wood, hay, or stubble. We suffer in this life because of our bad choices.

## **Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church, paragraph 8**

### **Treatise I.**

#### **On the Unity of the Church**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 423-424, col. 1, Page 982-983 (pdf)**

8. Who, then, is so wicked and faithless, who is so insane with the madness of discord, that either he should believe that the unity of God can be divided, or should dare to rend it—the garment of the Lord—the Church of Christ? He Himself in His Gospel warns us, and teaches, saying, “And there shall be one flock and one shepherd.” (John 10:16) And does any one believe that in one place there can be either many shepherds or many flocks? The Apostle Paul, moreover, urging upon us this same unity, beseeches and exhorts, saying, “I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there



be no schisms among you; but that ye be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Corinthians 1:10) And again, he says, “Forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3) **Do you think that you can stand and live if you withdraw from the Church, building for yourself other homes and a different dwelling, when it is said to Rahab, in whom was prefigured the Church, “Thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all the house of thy father, thou shalt gather unto thee into thine house; and it shall come to pass, whosoever shall go abroad beyond the door of thine house, his blood shall be upon his own head?” (Joshua 2:19)** Also, the sacrament of the passover contains nothing else in the law of the Exodus than that the lamb which is slain in the figure of Christ should be eaten in one house. God speaks, saying, “In one house shall ye eat it; ye shall not send its flesh abroad from the house.” (Exodus 12:46) The flesh of Christ, and the holy of the Lord, cannot be sent abroad, nor is there any other home to believers but the one Church. This home, this household of unanimity, the Holy Spirit designates and points out in the Psalms, saying, “God, who maketh men to dwell with one mind in a house.” (Psalm 68:6) In the house of God, in the Church of Christ, men dwell with one mind, and continue in concord and simplicity.

**Comment:** In paragraph 8, Cyprian says, “Who, then, is so wicked and faithless, who is so insane with the madness of discord, that either he should believe that the unity of God can be divided, or should dare to rend it—the garment of the Lord—the Church of Christ? He Himself in His Gospel warns us, and teaches, saying, “And there shall be one flock and one shepherd.” (John 10:16)”

And he refers to **John 10 (KJV):16** And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

The sheep in “this fold” were all Jews. The “other sheep” were the Gentiles, which would be joined together with the Jews in the Church. And Jesus is the “shepherd”.

Cyprian continues, and says, “And does any one believe that in one place there can be either many shepherds or many flocks? The Apostle Paul, moreover, urging upon us this same unity, beseeches and exhorts, saying, “I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you; but that ye be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Corinthians 1:10) And again, he says, “Forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)”

And he refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):10** Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

And to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):3** Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Cyprian continues, and says, “**Do you think that you can stand and live if you withdraw from the Church, building for yourself other homes and a different dwelling, when it is said to Rahab, in whom was prefigured the Church, “Thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all the house of thy father, thou shalt gather unto thee into**

**thine house; and it shall come to pass, whosoever shall go abroad beyond the door of thine house, his blood shall be upon his own head?” (Joshua 2:19)”**

He refers in context to **Joshua 2 (KJV):17** And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. 18 Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. 19 And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.

But there is nothing in this Scripture that indicates that Rahab was prefiguring the Church. Cyprian is making it prefigure the Church to support his argument that if you withdraw from the Catholic Church, you will die spiritually.

Cyprian continues, and says, “Also, the sacrament of the passover contains nothing else in the law of the Exodus than that the lamb which is slain in the figure of Christ should be eaten in one house. God speaks, saying, “In one house shall ye eat it; ye shall not send its flesh abroad from the house.” (Exodus 12:46)”

He refers in context to **Exodus 12 (KJV):43** And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: 44 But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. 45 A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. 46 In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. 47 All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. 48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

All Israel was to keep the Passover, each in their own house. The Passover lamb was indeed a “figure of Christ” as Cyprian says.

Cyprian continues, and says, “The flesh of Christ, and the holy of the Lord, cannot be sent abroad, nor is there any other home to believers but the one Church. This home, this household of unanimity, the Holy Spirit designates and points out in the Psalms, saying, “God, who maketh men to dwell with one mind in a house.” (Psalm 68:6) In the house of God, in the Church of Christ, men dwell with one mind, and continue in concord and simplicity.”

He refers to **Psalms 68 (KJV):6** God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

And to **Psalms 67 (Septuagint):7** God settles the solitary in a house; leading forth prisoners mightily, also them that act provokingly, *even* them that dwell in tombs.

If we have truly believed in Jesus Christ, we are in the Church, which is His body, as we read in **Colossians 1 (KJV):24** Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

When we believe, we are baptized into one body by the Holy Spirit, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

We are not our own, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that

your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

But we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):25** Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

We do not lose our salvation because we forsake “the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is”, but we are encouraged to meet together to build each other up in love so that we grow up into him in all things, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

It is not about being a member of a church that keeps us saved. If we have truly believed in Jesus Christ and confessed Him as Lord, we will be saved.

## **Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church, paragraph 14**

### **Treatise I.**

#### **On the Unity of the Church**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 425-426, col. 1, Page 987-988 (pdf)**

14. Even if such men were slain in confession of the Name, that stain is not even washed away by blood: the inexpiable and grave fault of discord is not even purged by suffering. **He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church; he cannot attain unto the kingdom who forsakes that which shall reign there.** Christ gave us peace; He bade us be in agreement, and of one mind. He charged the bonds of love and charity to be kept uncorrupted and inviolate; he cannot show himself a martyr who has not maintained brotherly love. Paul the apostle teaches this, and testifies, saying, “And though I have faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity is magnanimous; charity is kind; charity envieth not; charity acteth not vainly, is not puffed up, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; loveth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.” (1 Corinthians 13:2-5,7,8) “Charity,” says he, “never faileth.” For she will ever be in the kingdom, she will endure for ever in the unity of a brotherhood linked to herself. Discord cannot attain to the kingdom of heaven; to the rewards of Christ, who said, “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.” (John 15:12) he cannot attain who has violated the love of Christ by faithless dissension. He who has not charity has not God. The word of the blessed Apostle John is: “God,” saith he, “is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God dwelleth in him.” (1 John 4:16) **They cannot dwell with God who would not be of one mind in God’s Church.** Although they burn, given up to flames and fires, or lay down their lives, thrown to the wild beasts, that will not be the

crown of faith, but the punishment of perfidy; nor will it be the glorious ending of religious valour, but the destruction of despair. Such a one may be slain; crowned he cannot be. He professes himself to be a Christian in such a way as the devil often feigns himself to be Christ, as the Lord Himself forewarns us, and says, “Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.” (Mark 13:6) As he is not Christ, although he deceives in respect of the name; so neither can he appear as a Christian who does not abide in the truth of His Gospel and of faith.

**Comment:** Cyprian begins in paragraph 14, and says, “Even if such men were slain in confession of the Name, that stain is not even washed away by blood: the inexpressible and grave fault of discord is not even purged by suffering. **He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church; he cannot attain unto the kingdom who forsakes that which shall reign there.** Christ gave us peace; He bade us be in agreement, and of one mind. He charged the bonds of love and charity to be kept uncorrupted and inviolate; he cannot show himself a martyr who has not maintained brotherly love. Paul the apostle teaches this, and testifies, saying, “And though I have faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity is magnanimous; charity is kind; charity envieth not; charity acteth not vainly, is not puffed up, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; loveth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.” (1 Corinthians 13:2-5,7,8)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):** 1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

The word “charity” in the Greek is *ἀγάπη* (pronounced ag-ah'-pay); from G25; love, i.e. affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love-feast:—(feast of) charity(-ably), dear, love.

But we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):** 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Charity, that is, love, makes what we do profitable for rewards. So if we build gold, silver, or precious stones, we shall receive a reward. If all we build on the foundation of Jesus Christ is wood, hay, or stubble, we will still be saved if we have confessed with our mouth the Lord Jesus, and believed in our heart that God raised him from the dead. We are not saved by

our works, but by His grace through faith, which is the gift of God.

Cyprian continues, and says, ““Charity,” says he, “never faileth.” For she will ever be in the kingdom, she will endure for ever in the unity of a brotherhood linked to herself. Discord cannot attain to the kingdom of heaven; to the rewards of Christ, who said, “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you:” (John 15:12) he cannot attain who has violated the love of Christ by faithless dissension.”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):12** This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

To Cyprian, this was one of the Gospel laws. If you don’t keep it, you “cannot attain to the kingdom of heaven”. But it is by grace that we are saved through faith, the gift of God.

Cyprian continues, and says, “He who has not charity has not God. The word of the blessed Apostle John is: “God,” saith he, “is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God dwelleth in him.” (1 John 4:16)”

He refers to **1 John 4 (KJV):16** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

And we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The message of the Gospel is that God “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

If we have believed in him, we dwell in love, and God dwells in us.

Cyprian continues, and says, “**They cannot dwell with God who would not be of one mind in God’s Church.** Although they burn, given up to flames and fires, or lay down their lives, thrown to the wild beasts, that will not be the crown of faith, but the punishment of perfidy; nor will it be the glorious ending of religious valour, but the destruction of despair. Such a one may be slain; crowned he cannot be. He professes himself to be a Christian in such a way as the devil often feigns himself to be Christ, as the Lord Himself forewarns us, and says, “Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.” (Mark 13:6) As he is not Christ, although he deceives in respect of the name; so neither can he appear as a Christian who does not abide in the truth of His Gospel and of faith.”

He refers to **Mark 13 (KJV):6** For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Paul does warn us in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

If we have truly believed, Jesus Christ is in us. But Cyprian is making salvation about works, or something we do after we have truly believed in Jesus Christ.

And so we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

We are saved by grace through faith, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

If all we produce after we have believed in Jesus Christ is wood, hay, and stubble, we will not get any rewards, but we will still be saved, “yet so as by fire”.

## **Treatise II, On the Dress of Virgins, paragraph 2**

### **Treatise II.**

#### **On the Dress of Virgins.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 430-431, col. 2, Page 997 (pdf)**

2. But if in Holy Scripture discipline is frequently and everywhere prescribed, and the whole foundation of religion and of faith proceeds from obedience and fear; what is more fitting for us urgently to desire, what more to wish for and to hold fast, than to stand with roots strongly fixed, and with our houses based with solid mass upon the rock unshaken by the storms and whirlwinds of the world, so that we may come by the divine precepts to the rewards of God? **considering as well as knowing that our members, when purged from all the filth of the old contagion by the sanctification of the laver of life, are God’s temples, and must not be violated nor polluted, since he who does violence to them is himself injured.** We are the worshippers and priests of those temples; let us obey Him whose we have already begun to be. Paul tells us in his epistles, in which he has formed us to a course of living by divine teaching, “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a great price; glorify and bear God in your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:19) Let us glorify and bear God in a pure and chaste body, and with a more complete obedience; and since we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, let us obey and give furtherance to the empire of our Redeemer by all the obedience of service, that nothing impure or profane may be brought into the temple of God, lest He should be offended, and forsake the temple which He inhabits. The words of the Lord giving health and teaching, as well curing as warning, are: “Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” (John 5:14) He gives the course of life, He gives the law of innocency after He has conferred health, nor suffers the man afterwards to wander with free and unchecked reins, but more severely threatens him who is again enslaved by those same things of which he had been healed, because it is doubtless a smaller fault to have sinned before, while as yet you had not known God’s discipline; **but there is no further pardon for sinning after you have begun to know God.** And, indeed, let as well men as women, as well boys as girls; let each sex and every age observe this, and take care in this respect, according to the religion and faith which they owe to God, that what is received holy and pure from the condescension of the Lord be preserved with a no less anxious fear.

**Comment:** In paragraph 2, Cyprian says, “But if in Holy Scripture discipline is frequently and everywhere prescribed, and the whole foundation of religion and of faith proceeds from obedience and fear; what is more fitting for us urgently to desire, what more to wish for and to hold fast, than to stand with roots strongly fixed, and with our houses based with solid mass

upon the rock unshaken by the storms and whirlwinds of the world, so that we may come by the divine precepts to the rewards of God? **considering as well as knowing that our members, when purged from all the filth of the old contagion by the sanctification of the laver of life, are God's temples, and must not be violated nor polluted, since he who does violence to them is himself injured.**" We are the worshippers and priests of those temples; let us obey Him whose we have already begun to be. Paul tells us in his epistles, in which he has formed us to a course of living by divine teaching, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a great price; glorify and bear God in your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19)"

And he refers in context to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):18** Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Again he refers to baptism as "**the sanctification of the laver of life**", but Jesus said that he who believes has passed from death to life, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Cyprian continues, and says, "Let us glorify and bear God in a pure and chaste body, and with a more complete obedience; and since we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, let us obey and give furtherance to the empire of our Redeemer by all the obedience of service, that nothing impure or profane may be brought into the temple of God, lest He should be offended, and forsake the temple which He inhabits. The words of the Lord giving health and teaching, as well curing as warning, are: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (John 5:14)"

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):14** Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

But He has promised to never leave us or forsake us in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

In the Greek there is a triple negative in this verse so that it could actually be translated as, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never, no never, not under any circumstances, leave thee, nor forsake thee."

And speaking of the Holy Spirit, we read in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Cyprian continues, and says, "He gives the course of life, He gives the law of innocency after He has conferred health, nor suffers the man afterwards to wander with free and unchecked reins, but more severely threatens him who is again enslaved by those same things of which he had been healed, because it is doubtless a smaller fault to have sinned before, while as yet you had not known God's discipline; **but there is no further pardon for sinning after you have begun to know God.** And, indeed, let as well men as women, as well boys as girls; let each sex and every age observe this, and take care in this respect, according to the religion and faith which they owe to God, that what is received holy and pure from the condescension of the

Lord be preserved with a no less anxious fear.”

But there is “**pardon for sinning after you have begun to know God**”, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

And then in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: **2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

God has made provision for us, his children. If we sin, we have an advocate with the Father. We need only to confess our sins, and the blood of Jesus will cleanse us from all sin. After we are saved, we maintain our fellowship with the Lord by walking in the light of His word. As we do so, we grow in grace and knowledge, as Peter taught in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

And so we read in Isaiah 30 (KJV):15 For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

Cyprian did not understand the growth process of the believer.

### **Treatise III, On the Lapsed, paragraph 6**

#### **Treatise III.**

#### **On the Lapsed.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 438, col. 2, Page 1011-1012 (pdf)**

6. Each one was desirous of increasing his estate; and forgetful of what believers had either done before in the times of the apostles, or always ought to do, they, with the insatiable ardour of covetousness, devoted themselves to the increase of their property. Among the priests there was no devotedness of religion; among the ministers there was no sound faith: in their works there was no mercy; in their manners there was no discipline. In men, their beards were defaced; in women, their complexion was dyed: the eyes were falsified from what God’s hand had made them; their hair was stained with a falsehood. Crafty frauds were used to deceive the hearts of the simple, subtle meanings for circumventing the brethren. They united in the bond of marriage with unbelievers; they prostituted the members of Christ to the Gentiles. They would swear not only rashly, but even more, would swear falsely; would despise those set over them with haughty swelling, would speak evil of one another with envenomed tongue, would quarrel with one another with obstinate hatred. **Not a few bishops who ought to furnish both exhortation and example to others, despising their divine charge, became agents in secular business, forsook their throne, deserted their people, wandered about over foreign provinces, hunted the markets for gainful merchandise, while brethren were starving in the Church.** They sought to possess money in hoards, they seized estates by crafty deceits, they



increased their gains by multiplying usuries. What do not such as we deserve to suffer for sins of this kind, when even already the divine rebuke has forewarned us, and said, “If they shall forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they shall profane my statutes, and shall not observe my precepts, I will visit their offences with a rod, and their sins with scourges?” (Psalm 89:30)

**Comment:** In paragraph 6, Cyprian says, “Each one was desirous of increasing his estate; and forgetful of what believers had either done before in the times of the apostles, or always ought to do, they, with the insatiable ardour of covetousness, devoted themselves to the increase of their property. Among the priests there was no devotedness of religion; among the ministers there was no sound faith: in their works there was no mercy; in their manners there was no discipline. In men, their beards were defaced; in women, their complexion was dyed: the eyes were falsified from what God’s hand had made them; their hair was stained with a falsehood. Crafty frauds were used to deceive the hearts of the simple, subtle meanings for circumventing the brethren. They united in the bond of marriage with unbelievers; they prostituted the members of Christ to the Gentiles. They would swear not only rashly, but even more, would swear falsely; would despise those set over them with haughty swelling, would speak evil of one another with envenomed tongue, would quarrel with one another with obstinate hatred. **Not a few bishops who ought to furnish both exhortation and example to others, despising their divine charge, became agents in secular business, forsook their throne, deserted their people, wandered about over foreign provinces, hunted the markets for gainful merchandise, while brethren were starving in the Church.** They sought to possess money in hoards, they seized estates by crafty deceits, they increased their gains by multiplying usuries. What do not such as we deserve to suffer for sins of this kind, when even already the divine rebuke has forewarned us, and said, “If they shall forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they shall profane my statutes, and shall not observe my precepts, I will visit their offences with a rod, and their sins with scourges?” (Psalm 89:30)”

He refers to **Psalm 89 (KJV):30** If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; 31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; 32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

This is quite a testimony of Cyprian that he was in fact against what “not a few bishops” were doing in his time. And so we read of the chastening of the Lord in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):1** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye

bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

### **Treatise III, On the Lapsed, paragraphs 15-17**

#### **Treatise III.**

#### **On the Lapsed.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 441-442, col. 1-2, Page 1016-1018 (pdf)**

15. Moreover, beloved brethren, a new kind of devastation has appeared; and, as if the storm of persecution had raged too little, there has been added to the heap, under the title of mercy, a deceiving mischief and a fair-seeming calamity. Contrary to the vigour of the Gospel, contrary to the law of the Lord and God, by the temerity of some, communion is relaxed to heedless persons,—a vain and false peace, dangerous to those who grant it, and likely to avail nothing to those who receive it. They do not seek for the patience necessary to health nor the true medicine derived from atonement. **Penitence is driven forth from their breasts, and the memory of their very grave and extreme sin is taken away.** The wounds of the dying are covered over, and the deadly blow that is planted in the deep and secret entrails is concealed by a dissimulated suffering. Returning from the altars of the devil, they draw near to the holy place of the Lord, with hands filthy and reeking with smell, still almost breathing of the plague-bearing idol-meats; and even with jaws still exhaling their crime, and reeking with the fatal contact, they intrude on the body of the Lord, although the sacred Scripture stands in their way, and cries, “Every one that is clean shall eat of the flesh; and whatever soul eateth of the flesh of the saving sacrifice, which is the Lord’s, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from his people.” (Leviticus 7:20) Also, the apostle testifies, and says, “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table and of the table of devils.” (1 Corinthians 10:21) He threatens, moreover, the stubborn and froward, and denounces them, saying, “Whosoever eateth the bread or drinketh the cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 11:27)

16. All these warnings being scorned and contemned,—before their sin is expiated, before confession has been made of their crime, before their conscience has been purged by sacrifice and by the hand of the priest, before the offence of an angry and threatening Lord has been appeased, violence is done to His body and blood; and they sin now against their Lord more with their hand and mouth than when they denied their Lord. They think that that is peace which some with deceiving words are blazoning forth: that is not peace, but war; and he is not joined to the Church who is separated from the Gospel. Why do they call an injury a kindness? Why do they call impiety by the name of piety? Why do they hinder those who ought to weep continually and to entreat their Lord, from the sorrowing of repentance, and pretend to receive

them to communion? This is the same kind of thing to the lapsed as hail to the harvests; as the stormy star to the trees; as the destruction of pestilence to the herds; as the raging tempest to shipping. They take away the consolation of eternal hope; they overturn the tree from the roots; they creep on to a deadly contagion with their pestilent words; they dash the ship on the rocks, so that it may not reach to the harbour. Such a facility does not grant peace, but takes it away; nor does it give communion, but it hinders from salvation. This is another persecution, and another temptation, by which the crafty enemy still further assaults the lapsed; attacking them by a secret corruption, that their lamentation may be hushed, that their grief may be silent, that the memory of their sin may pass away, that the groaning of their heart may be repressed, that the weeping of their eyes may be quenched; **nor long and full penitence deprecate the Lord so grievously offended, although it is written, “Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent.” (Revelation 2:5)**

17. Let no one cheat himself, let no one deceive himself. **The Lord alone can have mercy. He alone can bestow pardon for sins which have been committed against Himself, who bare our sins, who sorrowed for us, whom God delivered up for our sins.** Man cannot be greater than God, nor can a servant remit or forego by his indulgence what has been committed by a greater crime against the Lord, lest to the person lapsed this be moreover added to his sin, if he be ignorant that it is declared, “Cursed is the man that putteth his hope in man.” The Lord must be besought. The Lord must be appeased by our atonement, who has said, that him that denieth Him He will deny, who alone has received all judgment from His Father. We believe, indeed, that the merits of martyrs and the works of the righteous are of great avail with the Judge; but that will be when the day of judgment shall come; when, after the conclusion of this life and the world, His people shall stand before the tribunal of Christ.

**Comment:** In paragraph 15, Cyprian says, “Moreover, beloved brethren, a new kind of devastation has appeared; and, as if the storm of persecution had raged too little, there has been added to the heap, under the title of mercy, a deceiving mischief and a fair-seeming calamity. Contrary to the vigour of the Gospel, contrary to the law of the Lord and God, by the temerity of some, communion is relaxed to heedless persons,—a vain and false peace, dangerous to those who grant it, and likely to avail nothing to those who receive it. They do not seek for the patience necessary to health nor the true medicine derived from atonement. **Penitence is driven forth from their breasts, and the memory of their very grave and extreme sin is taken away.**”

Cyprian is speaking of the “lapsed” who denied Christ in order not to suffer martyrdom. But in stead of repentance, he speaks of “**Penitence**”. One had to seek for “the true medicine derived from atonement” for their sins in the time of Cyprian.

He continues, and says, “The wounds of the dying are covered over, and the deadly blow that is planted in the deep and secret entrails is concealed by a dissimulated suffering. Returning from the altars of the devil, they draw near to the holy place of the Lord, with hands filthy and reeking with smell, still almost breathing of the plague-bearing idol-meats; and even with jaws still exhaling their crime, and reeking with the fatal contact, they intrude on the body of the Lord, although the sacred Scripture stands in their way, and cries, saying, “Every one that is clean shall eat of the flesh; and whatever soul eateth of the flesh of the saving sacrifice, which is

the Lord's, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from his people.” (Leviticus 7:20) Also, the apostle testifies, and says, “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.” (1 Corinthians 10:21) He threatens, moreover, the stubborn and froward, and denounces them, saying, “Whosoever eateth the bread or drinketh the cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 11:27)”

He refers to **Leviticus 7 (KJV):20** But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.

And in context to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):21** But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

And in context to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):26** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

In verse 29, the word “damnation” in the Greek is **κρίμα** (pronounced kree'-mah); from G2919; a decision (the function or the effect, for or against ("crime")):—avenge, condemned, condemnation, damnation, + go to law, judgment. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G2917**

And this Greek word is derived from **κρίνω** (pronounced kree'-no); properly, to distinguish, i.e. decide (mentally or judicially); by implication, to try, condemn, punish:—avenge, conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, go to (sue at the) law, ordain, call in question, sentence to, think. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G2919**

A better translation in verse 29 for “damnation” would be “judgment”.

If verse 31 we read that if we would “judge ourselves, we should not be judged”. And in verse 32, “But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

Now in verse 30, we read that because of drinking and eating the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, “many are weak and sickly among” the Corinthians, and “many sleep”, speaking of physical death. The judgment of physical death refers to the sin unto death, which we read of in **1 John 5 (KJV):16** If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

The sin unto death does not refer to spiritual death but to physical death. The brother who sinned in this way went home to be with the Lord because of the judgment of the Lord. They did not lose their salvation, but their rewards.

Then in paragraph 16, Cyprian says, “All these warnings being scorned and contemned,—before their sin is expiated, before confession has been made of their crime, before their conscience has been purged by sacrifice and by the hand of the priest, before the offence of an angry and threatening Lord has been appeased, violence is done to His body and blood; and they sin now against their Lord more with their hand and mouth than when they denied their Lord. They think that that is peace which some with deceiving words are blazoning forth: that is not peace, but war; and he is not joined to the Church who is separated from the Gospel.”

In the thinking of the Church in Cyprian’s time, sin had to be atoned for by penitence, which was “purged by sacrifice and by the hand of the priest”.

Cyprian continues, and says, “Why do they call an injury a kindness? Why do they call impiety by the name of piety? Why do they hinder those who ought to weep continually and to entreat their Lord, from the sorrowing of repentance, and pretend to receive them to communion? This is the same kind of thing to the lapsed as hail to the harvests; as the stormy star to the trees; as the destruction of pestilence to the herds; as the raging tempest to shipping. They take away the consolation of eternal hope; they overturn the tree from the roots; they creep on to a deadly contagion with their pestilent words; they dash the ship on the rocks, so that it may not reach to the harbour. Such a facility does not grant peace, but takes it away; nor does it give communion, but it hinders from salvation. This is another persecution, and another temptation, by which the crafty enemy still further assaults the lapsed; attacking them by a secret corruption, that their lamentation may be hushed, that their grief may be silent, that the memory of their sin may pass away, that the groaning of their heart may be repressed, that the weeping of their eyes may be quenched; **nor long and full penitence deprecate the Lord so grievously offended, although it is written, “Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent.” (Revelation 2:5)**”

He refers in context to **Revelation 2 (KJV)**:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

To repent is to have a change of mind about our sin. It is to turn to the Lord with all our heart, and to remember our “first love”. But to Cyprian and the Church in his time, it meant a “**long and full penitence**”.

Then in paragraph 17, Cyprian says, “Let no one cheat himself, let no one deceive himself. **The Lord alone can have mercy. He alone can bestow pardon for sins which have been committed against Himself, who bare our sins, who sorrowed for us, whom God delivered up for our sins.** Man cannot be greater than God, nor can a servant remit or forego by his indulgence what has been committed by a greater crime against the Lord, lest to the person lapsed this be moreover added to his sin, if he be ignorant that it is declared, “Cursed is

the man that putteth his hope in man.” The Lord must be besought. The Lord must be appeased by our atonement, who has said, that him that denieth Him He will deny, who alone has received all judgment from His Father.”

Cyprian refers to **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):5** Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.

And we read in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):7** Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

Cyprian then refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):33** But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

And to **John 5 (KJV):26** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Cyprian is right when he says, “**The Lord alone can have mercy. He alone can bestow pardon for sins which have been committed against Himself, who bare our sins, who sorrowed for us, whom God delivered up for our sins.**” But the understanding of the Church in the time of Cyprian was that God bestowed pardon through confession to the priest.

Cyprian then continues, and says, “We believe, indeed, that the merits of martyrs and the works of the righteous are of great avail with the Judge; but that will be when the day of judgment shall come; when, after the conclusion of this life and the world, His people shall stand before the tribunal of Christ.”

Cyprian refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):18** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Everyone will receive “according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”. The works of others, that is “the merits of martyrs and the works of the righteous”, will not benefit us. We are only judged according to what we ourselves have done, “whether it be good or bad”. At this judgment only the righteous will appear, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

This judgment is not about salvation, but for rewards of the righteous. He that believes in Him is not condemned, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

This judgment will be at the first resurrection, as in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath

no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The judgment of the wicked dead will be after the thousand year reign with Christ, as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Again, Cyprian is correct when he says, **“The Lord alone can have mercy. He alone can bestow pardon for sins which have been committed against Himself, who bare our sins, who sorrowed for us, whom God delivered up for our sins.”**

And so we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):9** Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):20** And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

And in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The blood of Jesus Christ has made atonement for “all sin”. To maintain our fellowship with the Lord we need only to confess our sins to Him.

### **Treatise III, On the Lapsed, paragraphs 34-35**

#### **Treatise III.**

#### **On the Lapsed.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 446-447, col. 2, Page 1027 (pdf)**

34. Flee from such men as much as you can; avoid with a wholesome caution those who adhere to their mischievous contact. Their word doth eat as doth a cancer; (2 Timothy 2:17) their conversation advances like a contagion; their noxious and envenomed persuasion kills worse than persecution itself. **In such a case there remains only penitence which can make atonement.** But they who take away repentance for a crime, close the way of atonement. Thus it happens that, while by the rashness of some a false safety is either promised or trusted, the hope of true safety is taken away.

35. But you, beloved brethren, whose fear is ready towards God, and whose mind, although it is placed in the midst of lapse, is mindful of its misery, do you in repentance and grief look into your sins; acknowledge the very grave sin of your conscience; open the eyes of your heart to the understanding of your sin, neither despairing of the Lord’s mercy nor yet at

once claiming His pardon. God, in proportion as with the affection of a Father He is always indulgent and good, in the same proportion is to be dreaded with the majesty of a judge. Even as we have sinned greatly, so let us greatly lament. To a deep wound let there not be wanting a long and careful treatment; let not the repentance be less than the sin. Think you that the Lord can be quickly appeased, whom with faithless words you have denied, to whom you have rather preferred your worldly estate, whose temple you have violated with a sacrilegious contact? Think you that He will easily have mercy upon you whom you have declared not to be your God? You must pray more eagerly and entreat; you must spend the day in grief; wear out nights in watchings and weepings; occupy all your time in wailful lamentations; lying stretched on the ground, you must cling close to the ashes, be surrounded with sackcloth and filth; **after losing the raiment of Christ, you must be willing now to have no clothing; after the devil's meat, you must prefer fasting; be earnest in righteous works, whereby sins may be purged; frequently apply yourself to almsgiving, whereby souls are freed from death. (Matthew 25:36)** What the adversary took from you, let Christ receive; nor ought your estate now either to be held or loved, by which you have been both deceived and conquered. Wealth must be avoided as an enemy; must be fled from as a robber; must be dreaded by its possessors as a sword and as poison. To this end only so much as remains should be of service, that by it the crime and the fault may be redeemed. Let good works be done without delay, and largely; let all your estate be laid out for the healing of your wound; let us lend of our wealth and our means to the Lord, who shall judge concerning us. Thus faith flourished in the time of the apostles; thus the first people of believers kept Christ's commands: they were prompt, they were liberal, they gave their all to be distributed by the apostles; and yet they were not redeeming sins of such a character as these.

**Comment:** In paragraph 34, Cyprian says, "Flee from such men as much as you can; avoid with a wholesome caution those who adhere to their mischievous contact. Their word doth eat as doth a cancer; (2 Timothy 2:17) their conversation advances like a contagion; their noxious and envenomed persuasion kills worse than persecution itself. **In such a case there remains only penitence which can make atonement.** But they who take away repentance for a crime, close the way of atonement. Thus it happens that, while by the rashness of some a false safety is either promised or trusted, the hope of true safety is taken away."

Cyprian refers in context to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):**16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Penitence in the early church involved feeling sorrow for sins committed, and then doing penance, that is, sacrifice to make atonement for sins committed. But there is only one sacrifice for sin that is acceptable to God, as it is explained in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance



again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

And so it is not possible for any of our works, or sacrifices, to take away sins.

We continue to read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

And so the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for us has made us acceptable to God for ever. It is not that we are perfect yet, but we will be made so when we see Him, as in **1 John 3 (KJV):**2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

We continue to read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. 19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

In verse 18 “where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin”. The blood of Jesus is the only remission for sin. But there is a warning for sinning willfully as we continue in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**26 For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 32 But call to remembrance the former

days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

In verse 30 we read that, “The Lord shall judge his people.” And in verse 31, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” We must make sure we are in the faith, as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Then in paragraph 35, Cyprian says, “But you, beloved brethren, whose fear is ready towards God, and whose mind, although it is placed in the midst of lapse, is mindful of its misery, do you in repentance and grief look into your sins; acknowledge the very grave sin of your conscience; open the eyes of your heart to the understanding of your sin, neither despairing of the Lord’s mercy nor yet at once claiming His pardon. God, in proportion as with the affection of a Father He is always indulgent and good, in the same proportion is to be dreaded with the majesty of a judge. Even as we have sinned greatly, so let us greatly lament. To a deep wound let there not be wanting a long and careful treatment; let not the repentance be less than the sin. Think you that the Lord can be quickly appeased, whom with faithless words you have denied, to whom you have rather preferred your worldly estate, whose temple you have violated with a sacrilegious contact? Think you that He will easily have mercy upon you whom you have declared not to be your God?”

Such a denial of the “lapsed” may seem shocking to us who have all the resources of a completed translation of the Scriptures, and access to Greek and Hebrew online. But the Church in Cyprian’s time was very young in the faith. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, the rule over the people by the clergy, was becoming a stronghold in the Church. The bishop was ruling from his “throne”. But the Lord is rich in mercy, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Cyprian continues, and says, “You must pray more eagerly and entreat; you must spend the day in grief; wear out nights in watchings and weepings; occupy all your time in wailful lamentations; lying stretched on the ground, you must cling close to the ashes, be surrounded with sackcloth and filth; **after losing the raiment of Christ, you must be willing now to have**

**no clothing; after the devil's meat, you must prefer fasting; be earnest in righteous works, whereby sins may be purged; frequently apply yourself to almsgiving, whereby souls are freed from death. (Matthew 25:36)"**

He may refer to **Matthew 25 (KJV):36** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

But the **"raiment of Christ"** is the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God is imputed to us when we have believed in Jesus Christ, as it was to Abraham, as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):11** And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

And we read of Abraham in **Genesis 15 (KJV):5** And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Now the word "imputed" means to reckon or put down to one's account. The righteousness of God is given to us when we believe, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

This righteousness cannot be lost if one has truly believed in Jesus Christ. And so we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):32** He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

The question for the "lapsed" would be, "Have you truly believed in Jesus Christ?" If one has denied Christ, they must repent, and believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confess Him as their Lord. To repent in the Hebrew context means to turn or return to God. In the Greek context it means to have a change of mind about our sin, and surrender to God. But in the time of Cyprian, one had to make up for one's sin against God by **"fasting"**, **"righteous works"**, and **"almsgiving"**.

Paul wrote in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We are to present our bodies a "living sacrifice". This is not to atone for our sins but is in appreciation for the atonement that God has accomplished for us in the one sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for all sin.

Cyprian continues, and says, "What the adversary took from you, let Christ receive; nor

ought your estate now either to be held or loved, by which you have been both deceived and conquered. Wealth must be avoided as an enemy; must be fled from as a robber; must be dreaded by its possessors as a sword and as poison. To this end only so much as remains should be of service, that by it the crime and the fault may be redeemed. Let good works be done without delay, and largely; let all your estate be laid out for the healing of your wound; let us lend of our wealth and our means to the Lord, who shall judge concerning us. Thus faith flourished in the time of the apostles; thus the first people of believers kept Christ's commands: they were prompt, they were liberal, they gave their all to be distributed by the apostles; and yet they were not redeeming sins of such a character as these."

Cyprian is referring to **Acts 2 (KJV):44** And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

And to **Acts 4 (KJV):33** And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

But in verse 33, this was a time when "great grace was upon them all". They were not giving to redeem their sins, but because of the grace that "was upon them all". They were so thankful that they gave their all to those in need. This is something we can still do, but we must use wisdom in our giving. We must not enable those who would use us to get out of working and of supplying their own needs.

Remember **Proverbs 3 (KJV):5** Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

### **Treatise IV, On the Lord's Prayer, paragraph 3**

#### **Treatise IV.**

#### **On the Lord's Prayer.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 448, col. 1, Page 1030 (pdf)**

3. Let us therefore, brethren beloved, pray as God our Teacher has taught us. It is a loving and friendly prayer to beseech God with His own word, to come up to His ears in the prayer of Christ. Let the Father acknowledge the words of His Son when we make our prayer, and let Him also who dwells within in our breast Himself dwell in our voice. And since we have Him as an Advocate with the Father for our sins, let us, when as sinners we petition on behalf of our sins, put forward the words of our Advocate. For since He says, that "whatsoever we shall ask of the Father in His name, He will give us," (John 16:23) how much more effectually do we obtain what we ask in Christ's name, if we ask for it in His own prayer! (John 14:6)

**Comment:** Cyprian refers to **John 16 (KJV):23** And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

And to **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no

man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Here we must acknowledge the faith of Cyprian.

## **Treatise IV, On the Lord's Prayer, paragraph 12**

### **Treatise IV.**

#### **On the Lord's Prayer.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 450, col. 2, Page 1034-1035 (pdf)**

12. After this we say, "Hallowed be Thy name;" not that we wish for God that He may be hallowed by our prayers, but that we beseech of Him that His name may be hallowed in us. But by whom is God sanctified, since He Himself sanctifies? Well, because He says, "Be ye holy, even as I am holy," (Leviticus 20:7) we ask and entreat, that we who were sanctified in baptism may continue in that which we have begun to be. **And this we daily pray for; for we have need of daily sanctification, that we who daily fall away may wash out our sins by continual sanctification.** And what the sanctification is which is conferred upon us by the condescension of God, the apostle declares, when he says, "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor deceivers, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such indeed were you; but ye are washed; but ye are justified; but ye are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9) He says that we are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God. We pray that this sanctification may abide in us and because our Lord and Judge warns the man that was healed and quickened by Him, to sin no more lest a worse thing happen unto him, we make this supplication in our constant prayers, we ask this day and night, that the sanctification and quickening which is received from the grace of God may be preserved by His protection.

**Comment:** In paragraph 12, Cyprian says, "After this we say, "Hallowed be Thy name;" not that we wish for God that He may be hallowed by our prayers, but that we beseech of Him that His name may be hallowed in us."

He refers in context to **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Cyprian continues, and says, "But by whom is God sanctified, since He Himself sanctifies? Well, because He says, "Be ye holy, even as I am holy," (Leviticus 20:7) we ask and entreat, that we who were sanctified in baptism may continue in that which we have begun to be."

He refers to **Leviticus 20 (KJV):7** Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God.

And to **Leviticus 11 (KJV):44** For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 45 For I am the Lord that bringeth you

up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

But we were not “sanctified in baptism”, but when we believed, as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The “washing of regeneration” refers to the remission of our sins when we were regenerated or born again. This happens when we believe, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Cyprian continues, and says, “**And this we daily pray for; for we have need of daily sanctification, that we who daily fall away may wash out our sins by continual sanctification.** And what the sanctification is which is conferred upon us by the condescension of God, the apostle declares, when he says, “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor deceivers, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such indeed were you; but ye are washed; but ye are justified; but ye are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9) He says that we are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God. We pray that this sanctification may abide in us and because our Lord and Judge warns the man that was healed and quickened by Him, to sin no more lest a worse thing happen unto him, we make this supplication in our constant prayers, we ask this day and night, that the sanctification and quickening which is received from the grace of God may be preserved by His protection.”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):9** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

But we must remember that the original Greek is speaking in the past tense, as we read in a more correct translation in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):9** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor those habitually drunk, nor verbal abusers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

In verse 11 we read that we “were washed”, and we “were sanctified”, and we “were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God”.

When we believed, we were given a standing as righteous ones, as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

This does not mean that we are perfect yet. After we have believed, and we are born again, we will go through a progressive sanctification in our mind, will, heart, and conscience, which is the area of our soul, as we grow in grace and knowledge. But in our spirit we are made new, having been born from above by the Holy Spirit.

The fear of losing one's salvation was present in the early Church. They did not understand that after they believed, they stood in grace, as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we also have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we celebrate in hope of the glory of God.

When we see Him we will be like Him, as we read again in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

We are not just "called the sons of God", as in verse 1, but as in verse 2 we read, "now are we the sons of God". And when He appears we shall all be changed to be like Him, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

If we have truly believed in Jesus Christ, we are secure in Him. But let us think soberly as we read again in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

## **Treatise IV, On the Lord's Prayer, paragraph 18**

### **Treatise IV.**

#### **On the Lord's Prayer.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 452, col. 2, Page 1037-1038 (pdf)**

18. As the prayer goes forward, we ask and say, "Give us this day our daily bread." And this may be understood both spiritually and literally, because either way of understanding it is rich in divine usefulness to our salvation. For Christ is the bread of life; and this bread does not belong to all men, but it is ours. And according as we say, "Our Father," because He is the Father of those who understand and believe; so also we call it "our bread," because Christ is the bread of those who are in union with His body. And we ask that this bread should be given to us daily, that we who are in Christ, and daily receive the Eucharist for the food of salvation, may not, by the interposition of some heinous sin, by being prevented, as withheld and not communicating, from partaking of the heavenly bread, be separated from Christ's body, as He Himself predicts, and warns, "I am the bread of life which came down from heaven. If any man eat of my bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of

the world.” (John 6:58) **When, therefore, He says, that whoever shall eat of His bread shall live for ever; as it is manifest that those who partake of His body and receive the Eucharist by the right of communion are living, so, on the other hand, we must fear and pray lest any one who, being withheld from communion, is separate from Christ’s body should remain at a distance from salvation; as He Himself threatens, and says, “Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall have no life in you.” (John 6:53)** And therefore we ask that our bread—that is, Christ—may be given to us daily, that we who abide and live in Christ may not depart from His sanctification and body.

**Comment:** In paragraph 18, Cyprian says, “As the prayer goes forward, we ask and say, “Give us this day our daily bread.” And this may be understood both spiritually and literally, because either way of understanding it is rich in divine usefulness to our salvation. For Christ is the bread of life; and this bread does not belong to all men, but it is ours. And according as we say, “Our Father,” because He is the Father of those who understand and believe; so also we call it “our bread,” because Christ is the bread of those who are in union with His body. And we ask that this bread should be given to us daily, that we who are in Christ, and daily receive the Eucharist for the food of salvation, may not, by the interposition of some heinous sin, by being prevented, as withheld and not communicating, from partaking of the heavenly bread, be separated from Christ’s body, as He Himself predicts, and warns, “I am the bread of life which came down from heaven. If any man eat of my bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.” (John 6:58)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):58** This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

And to **John 6 (KJV):51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Cyprian continues, and says, **“When, therefore, He says, that whoever shall eat of His bread shall live for ever; as it is manifest that those who partake of His body and receive the Eucharist by the right of communion are living, so, on the other hand, we must fear and pray lest any one who, being withheld from communion, is separate from Christ’s body should remain at a distance from salvation; as He Himself threatens, and says, “Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall have no life in you.” (John 6:53)** And therefore we ask that our bread—that is, Christ—may be given to us daily, that we who abide and live in Christ may not depart from His sanctification and body.”

This sounds very logical, but it is out of context with the Scripture.

Let us begin reading in **John 6 (KJV):47** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

Jesus is very clear in this verse. He who believes in Him has “everlasting life”.

We continue in **John 6 (KJV):48** I am that bread of life. **49** Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. **50** This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. **51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. **52** The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying,



How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

In verse 51, Jesus said that “the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”. He is speaking of His death on the cross, which was for our redemption. This was hidden from them at this time. The Jews did not understand what He was saying. Even the disciples murmured about this, as we continue in **John 5 (KJV):59** These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

In verse 63, Jesus said, “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life”. There were many who did not believe, but Peter answered for the believers, and said in verse 69, “we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God”.

It is when we truly believe in Jesus Christ that we eat the bread of life, and receive eternal life. It is then that we have eternal life, as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we pass from death to life. The life that is now in our spirit is eternal life. Eternal life is life that lives forever. That is, it does not die. When we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we do so in remembrance of what Jesus has done for us.

## **Treatise VIII, On Works and Alms, paragraphs 1-2**

### **Treatise VIII.**

#### **On Works and Alms.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 476, col. 1, Page 1083-1084 (pdf)**

1. Many and great, beloved brethren, are the divine benefits wherewith the large and abundant mercy of God the Father and Christ both has laboured and is always labouring for our salvation: that the Father sent the Son to preserve us and give us life, in order that He might

restore us; and that the Son was willing to be sent and to become the Son of man, that He might make us sons of God; humbled Himself, that He might raise up the people who before were prostrate; was wounded that He might heal our wounds; served, that He might draw out to liberty those who were in bondage; underwent death, that He might set forth immortality to mortals. These are many and great boons of divine compassion. But, moreover, what is that providence, and how great the clemency, that by a plan of salvation it is provided for us, that more abundant care should be taken for preserving man after he is already redeemed! For when the Lord at His advent had cured those wounds which Adam had borne, and had healed the old poisons of the serpent, He gave a law to the sound man and bade him sin no more, lest a worse thing should befall the sinner. We had been limited and shut up into a narrow space by the commandment of innocence. **Nor would the infirmity and weakness of human frailty have any resource, unless the divine mercy, coming once more in aid, should open some way of securing salvation by pointing out works of justice and mercy, so that by almsgiving we may wash away whatever foulness we subsequently contract.**

2. **The Holy Spirit speaks in the sacred Scriptures, and says, “By almsgiving and faith sins are purged.” (Proverbs 16:6) Not assuredly those sins which had been previously contracted, for those are purged by the blood and sanctification of Christ. Moreover, He says again, “As water extinguisheth fire, so almsgiving quencheth sin.” (Ecclesiasticus 3:30) Here also it is shown and proved, that as in the laver of saving water the fire of Gehenna is extinguished, so by almsgiving and works of righteousness the flame of sins is subdued. And because in baptism remission of sins is granted once for all, constant and ceaseless labour, following the likeness of baptism, once again bestows the mercy of God.** The Lord teaches this also in the Gospel. For when the disciples were pointed out, as eating and not first washing their hands, He replied and said, “He that made that which is within, made also that which is without. But give alms, and behold all things are clean unto you;” (Luke 11:41) teaching hereby and showing, that not the hands are to be washed, but the heart, and that the foulness from inside is to be done away rather than that from outside; but that he who shall have cleansed what is within has cleansed also that which is without; and that if the mind is cleansed, a man has begun to be clean also in skin and body. **Further, admonishing, and showing whence we may be clean and purged, He added that alms must be given.** He who is pitiful teaches and warns us that pity must be shown; and because He seeks to save those whom at a great cost He has redeemed, He teaches that those who, after the grace of baptism, have become foul, may once more be cleansed.

**Comment:** In paragraph 1, Cyprian says, “Many and great, beloved brethren, are the divine benefits wherewith the large and abundant mercy of God the Father and Christ both has laboured and is always labouring for our salvation: that the Father sent the Son to preserve us and give us life, in order that He might restore us; and that the Son was willing to be sent and to become the Son of man, that He might make us sons of God; humbled Himself, that He might raise up the people who before were prostrate; was wounded that He might heal our wounds; served, that He might draw out to liberty those who were in bondage; underwent death, that He might set forth immortality to mortals. These are many and great boons of divine compassion. But, moreover, what is that providence, and how great the clemency, that by a plan of salvation

it is provided for us, that more abundant care should be taken for preserving man after he is already redeemed! For when the Lord at His advent had cured those wounds which Adam had borne, and had healed the old poisons of the serpent, He gave a law to the sound man and bade him sin no more, lest a worse thing should befall the sinner.”

Cyprian refers in context to **John 5 (KJV):1** After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. 5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. 10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. 11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. 12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? 13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. 14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. 15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. 16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

Again, Cyprian says, “the Lord at His advent had cured those wounds which Adam had borne”, and so we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Adam’s wound was his sin which he passed to the whole human race, as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

But when Cyprian says, “He gave a law to the sound man and bade him sin no more, lest a worse thing should befall the sinner”, he is implying that one could lose their salvation. But it seems that the man had faith because he had been waiting to be healed possibly for up to 38 years. If the man had faith in the Lord, then he was saved. But if he did not produce fruit, a worse thing could happen to him in this life before he died and went to be with the Lord.

Cyprian continues, and says, “We had been limited and shut up into a narrow space by the commandment of innocence. **Nor would the infirmity and weakness of human frailty have any resource, unless the divine mercy, coming once more in aid, should open some way of securing salvation by pointing out works of justice and mercy, so that by almsgiving we may wash away whatever foulness we subsequently contract.**”

But we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are

his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are not saved by good works, but by grace through faith, which is a gift of God. If only the early Church could have known the “liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free”, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Then in paragraph 2, Cyprian says, “**The Holy Spirit speaks in the sacred Scriptures, and says, “By almsgiving and faith sins are purged.” (Proverbs 16:6) Not assuredly those sins which had been previously contracted, for those are purged by the blood and sanctification of Christ. Moreover, He says again, “As water extinguisheth fire, so almsgiving quencheth sin.” (Ecclesiasticus 3:30) Here also it is shown and proved, that as in the laver of saving water the fire of Gehenna is extinguished, so by almsgiving and works of righteousness the flame of sins is subdued. And because in baptism remission of sins is granted once for all, constant and ceaseless labour, following the likeness of baptism, once again bestows the mercy of God.”**

He refers first to **Proverbs 16 (KJV):6** By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

Or more likely to the apocryphal book, **Tobit 12 (KJV):8** Prayer is good with fasting and alms and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with unrighteousness. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold: 9 For alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin. Those that exercise alms and righteousness shall be filled with life:

And he refers to another apocryphal book, **Ecclesiasticus 3 (KJV):30** Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins.

Cyprian would have us do “**constant and ceaseless labour**” to gain the “**mercy of God**”. But Jesus taught as in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Cyprian continues, and says, “The Lord teaches this also in the Gospel. For when the disciples were pointed out, as eating and not first washing their hands, He replied and said, “He that made that which is within, made also that which is without. But give alms, and behold all things are clean unto you;” (Luke 11:41) teaching hereby and showing, that not the hands are to be washed, but the heart, and that the foulness from inside is to be done away rather than that from outside; but that he who shall have cleansed what is within has cleansed also that which is without; and that if the mind is cleansed, a man has begun to be clean also in skin and body.” **Further, admonishing, and showing whence we may be clean and purged, He added that alms must be given.** He who is pitiful teaches and warns us that pity must be shown; and because He seeks to save those whom at a great cost He has redeemed, He teaches that those who, after the grace of baptism, have become foul, may once more be cleansed.”

He refers in context to **Luke 11 (KJV):37** And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. 38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not first washed before dinner. 39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of

ravening and wickedness. 40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

In verse 39, the word “ravening” in the Greek is **ἀρπαγή** (pronounced har-pag-ay'); from G726; pillage (properly abstract):—extortion, ravening, spoiling. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G724**

And this Greek word is from **ἀρπάζω** (pronounced har-pad'-zo); from a derivative of G138; to seize (in various applications):—catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force). **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G726**

In verse 41, the word “alms” in the Greek is **ἐλεημοσύνη** (pronounced el-eh-ay-mos-oo'-nay); from G1656; compassionateness, i.e. (as exercised towards the poor) beneficence, or (concretely) a benefaction:—alms(-deeds). **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G1654**

And this Greek word is derived from **ἔλεος** (pronounced el'-eh-os); of uncertain affinity; compassion (human or divine, especially active):—(+ tender) mercy. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G1656**

Jesus was rebuking the Pharisees for their extortion and spoiling of others in taking from them more than they should. Instead, He wanted them to be merciful to others. Jesus was trying to show the Pharisees a better way, a way that was clean and holy.

And Jesus continues His rebuke, as we then read in **Luke 11 (KJV):42** But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. 44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Jesus was trying to show the Pharisees His way, the way of mercy. And Jesus said in **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

## **Treatise VIII, On Works and Alms, paragraph 3-5**

### **Treatise VIII.**

#### **On Works and Alms.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 476-477, col. 2, Page 1084-1086 (pdf)**

3. Let us then acknowledge, beloved brethren, the wholesome gift of the divine mercy; and let us, who cannot be without some wound of conscience, heal our wounds by the spiritual remedies for the cleansing and purging of our sins. Nor let any one so flatter himself with the notion of a pure and immaculate heart, as, in dependence on his own innocence, to think that the medicine needs not to be applied to his wounds; since it is written, “Who shall boast that he hath a clean heart, or who shall boast that he is pure from sins?” (Proverbs 20:9) And again, in his epistle, John lays it down, and says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8-9) But if no one can be without sin, and whoever should

say that he is without fault is either proud or foolish, how needful, how kind is the divine mercy, which, knowing that there are still found some wounds in those that have been healed, even after their healing, has given wholesome remedies for the curing and healing of their wounds anew!

4. Finally, beloved brethren, the divine admonition in the Scriptures, as well old as new, has never failed, has never been silent in urging God's people always and everywhere to works of mercy; and in the strain and exhortation of the Holy Spirit, every one who is instructed into the hope of the heavenly kingdom is commanded to give alms. God commands and prescribes to Isaiah: "Cry," says He, "with strength, and spare not. Lift up thy voice as a trumpet, and declare to my people their transgressions, and to the house of Jacob their sins." (Isaiah 58:1) And when He had commanded their sins to be charged upon them, and with the full force of His indignation had set forth their iniquities, and had said, that not even though they should use supplications, and prayers, and fastings, should they be able to make atonement for their sins; nor, if they were clothed in sackcloth and ashes, be able to soften God's anger, yet in the last part showing that God can be appeased by almsgiving alone, he added, saying, "Break thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are without a home into thy house. If thou seest the naked, clothe him; and despise not the household of thine own seed. Then shall thy light break forth in season, and thy garments shall arise speedily; and righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of God shall surround thee. Then shalt thou cry, and God shall hear thee; whilst yet thou art speaking, He shall say, Here I am." (Isaiah 58:1-9)

5. The remedies for propitiating God are given in the words of God Himself; the divine instructions have taught what sinners ought to do, that by works of righteousness God is satisfied, that with the deserts of mercy sins are cleansed. And in Solomon we read, "Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and these shall intercede for thee from all evil." (**Ecclesiasticus 29:12**) And again: "Whoso stoppeth his ears that he may not hear the weak, he also shall call upon God, and there will be none to hear him." (Proverbs 21:13) For he shall not be able to deserve the mercy of the Lord, who himself shall not have been merciful; nor shall he obtain aught from the divine pity in his prayers, who shall not have been humane towards the poor man's prayer. And this also the Holy Spirit declares in the Psalms, and proves, saying, Blessed is he that considereth of the poor and needy; the Lord will deliver him in the evil day." (Psalm 41:1) Remembering which precepts, Daniel, when king Nebuchodonosor was in anxiety, being frightened by an adverse dream, gave him, for the turning away of evils, a remedy to obtain the divine help, saying, "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee; and redeem thy sins by almsgivings, and thine unrighteousness by mercies to the poor, and God will be patient to thy sins." (Daniel 9:27) And as the king did not obey him, he underwent the misfortunes and mischiefs which he had seen, and which he might have escaped and avoided had he redeemed his sins by almsgiving. Raphael the angel also witnesses the like, and exhorts that alms should be freely and liberally bestowed, saying, "Prayer is good, with fasting and alms; because alms doth deliver from death, and it purgeth away sins." (Tobias 12:8-9) He shows that our prayers and fastings are of less avail, unless they are aided by almsgiving; that entreaties alone are of little force to obtain what they seek, unless they be made sufficient by the addition of deeds and good works. **The angel reveals, and manifests, and certifies that our petitions become efficacious by almsgiving, that life is redeemed from dangers by almsgiving, that souls are**

## delivered from death by almsgiving.

**Comment:** In paragraph 3, Cyprian says, “Let us then acknowledge, beloved brethren, the wholesome gift of the divine mercy; and let us, who cannot be without some wound of conscience, heal our wounds by the spiritual remedies for the cleansing and purging of our sins. Nor let any one so flatter himself with the notion of a pure and immaculate heart, as, in dependence on his own innocence, to think that the medicine needs not to be applied to his wounds; since it is written, “Who shall boast that he hath a clean heart, or who shall boast that he is pure from sins?” (Proverbs 20:9) And again, in his epistle, John lays it down, and says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8-9) But if no one can be without sin, and whoever should say that he is without fault is either proud or foolish, how needful, how kind is the divine mercy, which, knowing that there are still found some wounds in those that have been healed, even after their healing, has given wholesome remedies for the curing and healing of their wounds anew!”

Cyprian refers to **Proverbs 20 (KJV):9** Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

And in context to **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

In verse 7 we read that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”, that is, “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light”. In verse 9, the remedy for sin is to “confess our sins”, and then He “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.

And we read in **Psalm 119 (KJV):105** Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

And in **Psalm 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.

The word of God rightly divided is the light we must walk in.

Then in paragraph 4, Cyprian says, “Finally, beloved brethren, the divine admonition in the Scriptures, as well old as new, has never failed, has never been silent in urging God’s people always and everywhere to works of mercy; and in the strain and exhortation of the Holy Spirit, every one who is instructed into the hope of the heavenly kingdom is commanded to give alms. God commands and prescribes to Isaiah: “Cry,” says He, “with strength, and spare not. Lift up thy voice as a trumpet, and declare to my people their transgressions, and to the house of Jacob their sins.” (Isaiah 58:1) And when He had commanded their sins to be charged upon them, and with the full force of His indignation had set forth their iniquities, and had said, that not even though they should use supplications, and prayers, and fastings, should they be able to make atonement for their sins; nor, if they were clothed in sackcloth and ashes, be able to soften God’s anger, yet in the last part showing that God can be appeased by almsgiving alone, he added, saying, “Break thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are without a home into

thy house. If thou seest the naked, clothe him; and despise not the household of thine own seed. Then shall thy light break forth in season, and thy garments shall arise speedily; and righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of God shall surround thee. Then shalt thou cry, and God shall hear thee; whilst yet thou art speaking, He shall say, Here I am.” (Isaiah 58:1-9)”

Cyprian refers in context to **Isaiah 58 (KJV)**:1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. 2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. 3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. 4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. 5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? 6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? 8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. 9 Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; 10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: 11 And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. 12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

In these verses, God is showing Israel how they had sinned. He told them in verse 3, “in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours”. God wanted them to know the way of showing mercy to the oppressed, the hungry, and to the poor, the naked, and “thine own flesh” in verses 6 to 7. Nothing is said about making “atonement for their sins”. The Lord was showing them how to walk in the “light” in verses 10 and 11. He was showing them how to walk in fellowship with Him.

Then in paragraph 5, Cyprian says, “The remedies for propitiating God are given in the words of God Himself; the divine instructions have taught what sinners ought to do, that by works of righteousness God is satisfied, that with the deserts of mercy sins are cleansed. And in Solomon we read, “Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and these shall intercede for thee from all evil.” (Ecclesiasticus 29:12) And again: “Whoso stoppeth his ears that he may not hear the weak, he also shall call upon God, and there will be none to hear him.” (Proverbs 21:13)”

Cyprian refers to the apocryphal book of **Ecclesiasticus 29 (KJV)**:12 Shut up alms in



thy storehouses: and it shall deliver thee from all affliction.

And to **Proverbs 21 (KJV):13** Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

Cyprian continues, and says, “For he shall not be able to deserve the mercy of the Lord, who himself shall not have been merciful; nor shall he obtain aught from the divine pity in his prayers, who shall not have been humane towards the poor man’s prayer. And this also the Holy Spirit declares in the Psalms, and proves, saying, Blessed is he that considereth of the poor and needy; the Lord will deliver him in the evil day.” (Psalm 41:1)”

And he refers here to **Psalms 41 (KJV):1** Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.

Cyprian continues, and says, “Remembering which precepts, Daniel, when king Nebuchodonosor was in anxiety, being frightened by an adverse dream, gave him, for the turning away of evils, a remedy to obtain the divine help, saying, “Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee; and redeem thy sins by almsgivings, and thine unrighteousness by mercies to the poor, and God will be patient to thy sins.” (Daniel 4:27)”

He refers to **Daniel 4 (Septuagint):24** Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and iniquities by compassion on the poor: it may be God will be long-suffering to thy trespasses.

But also to **Daniel 4 (KJV):27** Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

The word translated “righteousness” is **ܚܘܘܢܐ** (pronounced tsid-kaw’); (Aramaic) corresponding to H6666; beneficence:—righteousness. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, H6665**

This word corresponds to the Hebrew word, “**חַיִּימוּת** (pronounced tsed-aw-kaw’); from H6663; rightness (abstractly), subjectively (rectitude), objectively (justice), morally (virtue) or figuratively (prosperity):—justice, moderately, right(-eous) (act, -ly, -ness). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, H6666**

Cyprian continues, and says, “And as the king did not obey him, he underwent the misfortunes and mischiefs which he had seen, and which he might have escaped and avoided had he redeemed his sins by almsgiving. Raphael the angel also witnesses the like, and exhorts that alms should be freely and liberally bestowed, saying, “Prayer is good, with fasting and alms; because alms doth deliver from death, and it purgeth away sins.” (Tobias 12:8-9)”

He refers to the apocryphal book **Tobit 12 (KJV):8** Prayer is good with fasting and alms and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with unrighteousness. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold: 9 For alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin. Those that exercise alms and righteousness shall be filled with life:

Cyprian continues, and says, “He shows that our prayers and fastings are of less avail, unless they are aided by almsgiving; that entreaties alone are of little force to obtain what they seek, unless they be made sufficient by the addition of deeds and good works. **The angel reveals, and manifests, and certifies that our petitions become efficacious by almsgiving, that life is redeemed from dangers by almsgiving, that souls are delivered from death by almsgiving.**”

He refers to the angel in **Tobit 12 (KJV):5** So he called the angel, and he said unto him, Take half of all that ye have brought and go away in safety. 6 Then he took them both apart, and said unto them, Bless God, praise him, and magnify him, and praise him for the things which he hath done unto you in the sight of all that live. It is good to praise God, and exalt his name, and honourably to shew forth the works of God; therefore be not slack to praise him. 7 It is good to keep close the secret of a king, but it is honourable to reveal the works of God. Do that which is good, and no evil shall touch you.

But the Lord desires mercy and not sacrifice, as we read in **Hosea 6 (KJV):6** For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

We must walk in the light as He is in the light, as in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

We must take His yoke upon us, as we read in **Matthew 11 (KJV):29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

His yoke is “easy” and His burden is “light”. As we show mercy to others, we will find rest for our souls. It is not to keep ourselves saved, but to walk in fellowship with Him. And as we do so we will enter into rest in our souls. The Lord’s way is the better way.

## **Treatise VIII, On Works and Alms, paragraph 25**

### **Treatise VIII.**

#### **On Works and Alms.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 483, col. 2, Page 1096-1097 (pdf)**

25. Let us consider, beloved brethren, what the congregation of believers did in the time of the apostles, when at the first beginnings the mind flourished with greater virtues, when the faith of believers burned with a warmth of faith as yet new. Then they sold houses and farms, and gladly and liberally presented to the apostles the proceeds to be dispensed to the poor; selling and alienating their earthly estate, they transferred their lands thither where they might receive the fruits of an eternal possession, and there prepared homes where they might begin an eternal habitation. **Such, then, was the abundance in labours, as was the agreement in love, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles: “And the multitude of them that believed acted with one heart and one soul; neither was there any distinction among them, nor did they esteem anything their own of the goods which belonged to them, but they had all things common.” (Acts 4:32) This is truly to become sons of God by spiritual birth; this is to imitate by the heavenly law the equity of God the Father.** For whatever is of God is common in our use; nor is any one excluded from His benefits and His gifts, so as to prevent the whole human race from enjoying equally the divine goodness and liberality. Thus the day equally enlightens, the sun gives radiance, the rain moistens, the wind blows, and the sleep is one to those that sleep, and the splendour of the stars and of the moon is common. In which example of equality, he who, as a possessor in the earth, shares his returns and his fruits with the fraternity, while he is common and just in his gratuitous bounties, is an imitator of God the Father.

**Comment:** In paragraph 25, Cyprian says, “Let us consider, beloved brethren, what the congregation of believers did in the time of the apostles, when at the first beginnings the mind flourished with greater virtues, when the faith of believers burned with a warmth of faith as yet new. Then they sold houses and farms, and gladly and liberally presented to the apostles the proceeds to be dispensed to the poor; selling and alienating their earthly estate, they transferred their lands thither where they might receive the fruits of an eternal possession, and there prepared homes where they might begin an eternal habitation. **Such, then, was the abundance in labours, as was the agreement in love, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles: “And the multitude of them that believed acted with one heart and one soul; neither was there any distinction among them, nor did they esteem anything their own of the goods which belonged to them, but they had all things common.” (Acts 4:32)”**

Cyprian refers in context to **Acts 4 (KJV):32** And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

Cyprian continues, and says, “**This is truly to become sons of God by spiritual birth; this is to imitate by the heavenly law the equity of God the Father.** For whatever is of God is common in our use; nor is any one excluded from His benefits and His gifts, so as to prevent the whole human race from enjoying equally the divine goodness and liberality. Thus the day equally enlightens, the sun gives radiance, the rain moistens, the wind blows, and the sleep is one to those that sleep, and the splendour of the stars and of the moon is common. In which example of equality, he who, as a possessor in the earth, shares his returns and his fruits with the fraternity, while he is common and just in his gratuitous bounties, is an imitator of God the Father.”

We are not to ignore the needs of others. Jesus taught to “beware of covetousness”, as in **Luke 12 (KJV):13** And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. 14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? 15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. 16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

God wants us to be “rich” toward Him. Jesus continues in **Luke 12 (KJV):22** And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. 23 The life is more than meat, and the body is

more than raiment. 24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? 25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? 26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? 27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? 29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The Lord is showing us how to enter into rest for our souls. Giving alms in verse 33, that is, showing mercy to the poor, is making a “treasure” for us “in the heavens that faileth not”. In verse 34, “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”. Giving as we are able is good and pleasing to God. But it does not atone for our sins. The blood of Christ is the only thing that cleanses us “from all sin”, as we read again in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

## **Treatise X, On Jealousy and Envy, paragraph 18**

### **Treatise X.**

#### **On Jealousy and Envy.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 496, col. 1, Page 1120 (pdf)**

18. And you have many things to consider. Think of paradise, whither Cain does not enter, who by jealousy slew his brother. **Think of the heavenly kingdom, to which the Lord does not admit any but those who are of one heart and mind.** Consider that those alone can be called sons of God who are peacemakers, who in heavenly birth and by the divine law are made one, and respond to the likeness of God the Father and of Christ. Consider that we are standing under the eyes of God, that we are pursuing the course of our conversation and our life, with God Himself looking on and judging, that we may then at length be able to attain to the result of beholding Him, if we now delight Him who sees us, by our actions, if we show ourselves worthy of His favour and indulgence; if we, who are always to please Him in His kingdom, previously please Him in the world.

**Comment:** In paragraph 18, Cyprian says, “And you have many things to consider. Think of paradise, whither Cain does not enter, who by jealousy slew his brother. **Think of the heavenly kingdom, to which the Lord does not admit any but those who are of one heart and mind.**”

So to Cyprian, only “**those who are of one heart and mind**” will be admitted to the heavenly kingdom. He continues, and says, “Consider that those alone can be called sons of

God who are peacemakers, who in heavenly birth and by the divine law are made one, and respond to the likeness of God the Father and of Christ. Consider that we are standing under the eyes of God, that we are pursuing the course of our conversation and our life, with God Himself looking on and judging, that we may then at length be able to attain to the result of beholding Him, if we now delight Him who sees us, by our actions, if we show ourselves worthy of His favour and indulgence; if we, who are always to please Him in His kingdom, previously please Him in the world.”

But the Scripture says that, “when we see Him we will be like Him”, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Jesus is now in a glorified state, as we read in **Acts 3 (KJV):13** The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

And “Now we are the sons of God”, but we are not “what we shall be”, that is “like him” as He is now, in a glorified state. So when we see Him, we shall be like Him in a glorified state, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Being imperfect now in our mortal state, we are not all “**of one heart and mind**”. But the Lord is building His Church, and we are growing up in Him in all things, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

When we see Him, we will be like Him. But as we “speak the truth in love, we “grow up into him in all things” in verse 15.

And Paul encourages us in **Philippians 3 (NKJV):7** But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those

things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

We are encouraged now to be “of the same mind”, but it is not a condition of salvation. Believers in Jesus Christ will all be changed to be like Him at the resurrection, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

By “speaking the truth in love”, we “grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”. It takes time to grow.

## **Treatise XI, Exhortation to Martyrdom, paragraph 11**

### **Treatise XI.**

#### **Exhortation to Martyrdom, Addressed to Fortunatus**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 502-505, col. 1, Page 1138-1143 (pdf)**

11. That it was before predicted that the world would hold us in abhorrence, and that it would stir up persecutions against us, and that no new thing is happening to the Christians, since from the beginning of the world the good have suffered, and the righteous have been oppressed and slain by the unrighteous. (Matthew 10:19-20)

The Lord in the Gospel forewarns and foretells, saying: “If the world hates you, know that it first hated me. If ye were of the world, the world would love what is its own: but because ye are not of the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I spoke unto you, The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” (John 15:18-20) And again: “The hour will come, that every one that killeth you will think that he doeth God service; but they will do this because they have not known the Father nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the hour shall come ye may remember them, because I told you.” (John 16: 2-4) And again: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” (John 16:20) And again: “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace; but in the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good confidence, for I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) And when He was interrogated by His disciples concerning the sign of His coming, and of the consummation of the world, He answered and said: “Take care lest any deceive you: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall begin to hear of wars, and rumours of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

and there shall be famines, and earthquakes, and pestilences, in every place. But all these things are the beginnings of travailings. Then they shall deliver you up into affliction, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hateful to all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall seduce many; and because wickedness shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he who shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached through all the world, for a testimony to all nations; and then shall come the end. When, therefore, ye shall see the abomination of desolation which is spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him who readeth understand), then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let him which is on the house-roof not go down to take anything from the house; and let him who is in the field not return back to carry away his clothes. But woe to them that are pregnant, and to those that are giving suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath-day: for there shall be great tribulation, such as has not arisen from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall arise. And unless those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any one shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or, Lo, there; believe him not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, to cause error, if it be possible, even to the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. If, therefore, they shall say to you, Lo, he is in the desert; go not forth: lo, he is in the sleeping chambers; believe it not. For as the flashing of lightning goeth forth from the east, and appeareth even to the west, so also shall the coming of the Son of man be. Wheresoever the carcass shall be, there shall the eagles be gathered together. But immediately after the affliction of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and all the tribes of the earth shall lament, and shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory. And He shall send His angels with a great trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the heights of heaven, even into the farthest bounds thereof.” (Matthew 24:4-31) And these are not new or sudden things which are now happening to Christians; since the good and righteous, and those who are devoted to God in the law of innocence and the fear of true religion, advance always through afflictions, and wrongs, and the severe and manifold penalties of troubles, in the hardship of a narrow path. Thus, at the very beginning of the world, the righteous Abel was the first to be slain by his brother; and Jacob was driven into exile, and Joseph was sold, and king Saul persecuted the merciful David; and king Ahab endeavoured to oppress Elias, who firmly and bravely asserted the majesty of God. Zacharias the priest was slain between the temple and the altar, that himself might there become a sacrifice where he was accustomed to offer sacrifices to God. So many martyrdoms of the righteous have, in fact, often been celebrated; so many examples of faith and virtue have been set forth to future generations. The three youths, Ananias, Azarias, and Misäel, equal in age, agreeing in love, steadfast in faith, constant in virtue, stronger than the flames and penalties that urged them, proclaim that they only obey God, that they know Him alone, that they worship Him alone, saying: “O king Nebuchodonosor, there is no need for us to answer thee in this matter. For the God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of the furnace of burning fire; and

He will deliver us from thy hands, O king. And if not, be it known unto thee, that we do not serve thy gods, and we do not adore the golden image which thou hast set up.” (Daniel 3:16-18) And Daniel, devoted to God, and filled with the Holy Spirit, exclaims and says: “I worship nothing but the Lord my God, who founded the heaven and the earth.” Tobias also, although under a royal and tyrannical slavery, yet in feeling and spirit free, maintains his confession to God, and sublimely announces both the divine power and majesty, saying: “In the land of my captivity I confess to Him, and I show forth His power in a sinful nation.” (Tobias 13:6) What, indeed, do we find in the Maccabees of seven brethren, equals alike in their lot of birth and virtues, filling up the number seven in the sacrament of a perfected completion? Seven brethren were thus associating in martyrdom. As the first seven days in the divine arrangement containing seven thousand of years, as the seven spirits and seven angels which stand and go in and out before the face of God, and the seven-branched lamp in the tabernacle of witness, and the seven golden candlesticks in the Apocalypse, and the seven columns in Solomon upon which Wisdom built her house; so here also the number seven of the brethren, embracing, in the quantity of their number, the seven churches, as likewise in the first book of Kings we read that the barren hath borne seven. And in Isaiah seven women lay hold on one man, whose name they ask to be called upon them. And the Apostle Paul, who refers to this lawful and certain number, writes to the seven churches. And in the Apocalypse the Lord directs His divine and heavenly precepts to the seven churches and their angels, which number is now found in this case, in the seven brethren, that a lawful consummation may be completed. With the seven children is manifestly associated also the mother, their origin and root, who subsequently begat seven churches, she herself having been first, and alone founded upon a rock by the voice of the Lord. Nor is it of no account that in their sufferings the mother alone is with her children. For martyrs who witness themselves as the sons of God in suffering are now no more counted as of any father but God, as in the Gospel the Lord teaches, saying, “Call no man your father upon earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven.” (Matthew 23:9)

But what utterances of confessions did they herald forth! how illustrious, how great proofs of faith did they afford! The king Antiochus, their enemy—yea, in Antiochus Antichrist was set forth—sought to pollute the mouths of martyrs, glorious and unconquered in the spirit of confession, with the contagion of swine’s flesh; and when he had severely beaten them with whips, and could prevail nothing, commanded iron plates to be heated, which being heated and made to glow, he commanded him who had first spoken, and had more provoked the king with the constancy of his virtue and faith, to be brought up and roasted, his tongue having first been pulled out and cut off, which had confessed God; and this happened the more gloriously to the martyr. For the tongue which had confessed the name of God, ought itself first to go to God. Then in the second, sharper pains having been devised, before he tortured the other limbs, he tore off the skin of his head with the hair, doubtless with a purpose in his hatred. For since Christ is the head of the man, and God is the head of Christ, he who tore the head in the martyr was persecuting God and Christ in that head. But he, trusting in his martyrdom, and promising to himself from the retribution of God the reward of resurrection, exclaimed and said, “Thou indeed impotently destroyest us out of this present life; but the King of the world will raise us up, who die for His laws, unto the eternal resurrection of life.” (2 Maccabees 7:9, Hebrews 11:35) The third being challenged, quickly put forth his tongue; for he had learned from his



brother to despise the punishment of cutting off the tongue. Moreover, he firmly held forth his hands to be cut off, greatly happy in such a mode of punishment, since it was his lot to imitate, by stretching forth his hands, the form of his Lord's passion. And also the fourth, with like virtue, despising the tortures, and answering, to restrain the king, with a heavenly voice exclaimed, and said, "It is better that those who are given to death by men should wait for hope from God, to be raised up by Him again to eternal life. For to thee there shall be no resurrection to life." (2 Maccabees 7:14) The fifth, besides treading under foot the torments of the king, and his severe and various tortures, by the strength of faith, animated to prescience also and knowledge of future events by the Spirit of divinity, foretold to the king the wrath of God, and the vengeance that should swiftly follow. "Having power," said he, "among men, though thou art corruptible, thou doest what thou wilt. But think not that our race is forsaken of God. Abide, and see His great power, how He will torment thee and thy seed." (2 Maccabees 7:16) What alleviation was that to the martyr! how substantial a comfort in his sufferings, not to consider his own torments, but to predict the penalties of his tormentor! But in the sixth, not his bravery only, but also his humility, is to be set forth; that the martyr claimed nothing to himself, nor even made an account of the honour of his own confession with proud words, but rather ascribed it to his sins that he was suffering persecution from the king, while he attributed to God that afterwards he should be avenged. He taught that martyrs are modest, that they were confident of vengeance, and boasted nothing in their suffering. "Do not," said he, "needlessly err; for we on our own account suffer these things, as sinning against our God. But think not thou that thou shalt be unpunished, who darest to fight against God." (2 Maccabees 7:18) Also the admirable mother, who, neither broken down by the weakness of her sex, nor moved by her manifold bereavement, looked upon her dying children with cheerfulness, and did not reckon those things punishments of her darlings, but glories, giving as great a witness to God by the virtue of her eyes, as her children had given by the tortures and suffering of their limbs; when, after the punishment and slaying of six, there remained one of the brethren, to whom the king promised riches, and power, and many things, that his cruelty and ferocity might be soothed by the satisfaction of even one being subdued, and asked that the mother would entreat that her son might be cast down with herself; she entreated, but it was as became a mother of martyrs—as became one who was mindful of the law and of God—as became one who loved her sons not delicately, but bravely. For she entreated, but it was that he would confess God. She entreated that the brother would not be separated from his brothers in the alliance of praise and glory; then only considering herself the mother of seven sons, if it should happen to her to have brought forth seven sons, not to the world, but to God. Therefore arming him, and strengthening him, and so bearing her son by a more blessed birth, she said, "O son, pity me that bare thee ten months in the womb, and gave thee milk for three years, and nourished thee and brought thee up to this age; I pray thee, O son, look upon the heaven and the earth; and having considered all the things which are in them, understand that out of nothing God made these things and the human race. Therefore, O son, do not fear that executioner; but being made worthy of thy brethren, receive death, that in the same mercy I may receive thee with thy brethren." (2 Maccabees 7:27) **The mother's praise was great in her exhortation to virtue, but greater in the fear of God and in the truth of faith, that she promised nothing to herself or her son from the honour of the six martyrs, nor believed that the prayer of the brothers would**

**avail for the salvation of one who should deny, but rather persuaded him to become a sharer in their suffering, that in the day of judgment he might be found with his brethren.** After this the mother also dies with her children; for neither was anything else becoming, than that she who had borne and made martyrs, should be joined in the fellowship of glory with them, and that she herself should follow those whom she had sent before to God. And lest any, when the opportunity either of a certificate or of any such matter is offered to him whereby he may deceive, should embrace the wicked part of deceivers, let us not be silent, moreover, about Eleazar, who, when an opportunity was offered him by the ministers of the king, that having received the flesh which it was allowable for him to partake of, he might pretend, for the misguiding of the king, that he ate those things which were forced upon him from the sacrifices and unlawful meats, would not consent to this deception, saying that it was fitting neither for his age nor nobility to feign that, whereby others would be scandalized and led into error; if they should think that Eleazar, being ninety years old, had left and betrayed the law of God, and had gone over to the manner of aliens; and that it was not of so much consequence to gain the short moments of life, and so incur eternal punishment from an offended God. And he having been long tortured, and now at length reduced to extremity, while he was dying in the midst of stripes and tortures, groaned and said, “O Lord, that hast the holy knowledge, it is manifest that although I might be delivered from death, I suffer the severest pains of body, being beaten with scourges; but with my mind, on account of Thy fear, I willingly suffer these things.” (2 Maccabees 6:30) Assuredly his faith was sincere and his virtue sound, and abundantly pure, not to have regarded king Antiochus, but God the Judge, and to have known that it could not avail him for salvation if he should mock and deceive man, when God, who is the judge of our conscience, and who only is to be feared, cannot at all be mocked nor deceived. If, therefore, we also live as dedicated and devoted to God—if we make our way over the ancient and sacred footsteps of the righteous, let us go through the same proofs of sufferings, the same testimonies of passions, considering the glory of our time the greater on this account, that while ancient examples may be numbered, yet that subsequently, when the abundance of virtue and faith was in excess, the Christian martyrs cannot be numbered, as the Apocalypse testifies and says: “After these things I beheld a great multitude, which no man could number, of every nation, and of every tribe, and people, and language, standing in the sight of the throne and of the Lamb; and they were clothed in white robes, and palms were in their hands; and they said with a loud voice, Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb! And one of the elders answered and said unto me, Who are those which are arrayed in white robes, and whence come they? And I said unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.” (Revelation 7:9-15) But if the assembly of the Christian martyrs is shown and proved to be so great, let no one think it a hard or a difficult thing to become a martyr, when he sees that the crowd of martyrs cannot be numbered.

**Comment:** Cyprian has high praises for martyrs partly because he was afraid that, if one denied God under the pain of martyrdom, they could lose salvation.

And note that Cyprian said, “**The mother’s praise was great in her exhortation to**

virtue, but greater in the fear of God and in the truth of faith, that she promised nothing to herself or her son from the honour of the six martyrs, nor believed that the prayer of the brothers would avail for the salvation of one who should deny, but rather persuaded him to become a sharer in their suffering, that in the day of judgment he might be found with his brethren.”

Cyprian here did not allow any benefit of martyrs to carry forward to one who would deny God under the pain of martyrdom.

Cyprian has many references to Scripture here, and also many references to Apocryphal books.

## **Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews, paragraph 1**

### **Treatise XII.**

#### **Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews. Third Book**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 530-532, col. 1, Page 1223-1227 (pdf)**

1. Of the benefit of good works and mercy. In Isaiah: “Cry aloud,” saith He, “and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet; tell my people their sins, and the house of Jacob their wickednesses. They seek me from day to day, and desire to know my ways, as a people which did righteousness, and did not forsake the judgment of God. They ask of me now a righteous judgment, and desire to approach to God, saying, What! because we have fasted, and Thou hast not seen: we have humiliated our souls, and Thou hast not known. For in the days of fasting are found your own wills; for either ye torment those who are subjected to you, or ye fast for strifes and judgments, or ye strike your neighbours with fists. For what do you fast unto me, that today your voice should be heard in clamour? This fast I have not chosen, save that a man should humble his soul. And if thou shalt bend thy neck like a ring, and spread under thee sackcloth and ashes, neither thus shall it be called an acceptable fast. Not such a fast have I chosen, saith the Lord; but loose every knot of unrighteousness, let go the chokings of impotent engagements. Send away the harassed into rest, and scatter every unrighteous contract. Break thy bread to the hungry, and bring the houseless poor into thy dwelling. If thou seest the naked, clothe him; and despise not them of thy own seed in thy house. Then shall thy seasonable light break forth, and thy garments shall quickly arise; and righteousness shall go before thee: and the glory of God shall surround thee. Then thou shalt cry out, and God shall hear thee; while thou art yet speaking, He shall say, Here I am.” (Isaiah 58:1-9) Concerning this same thing in Job: “I have preserved the needy from the hand of the mighty; and I have helped the orphan, to whom there was no helper. The mouth of the widow blessed me, since I was the eye of the blind; I was also the foot of the lame, and the father of the weak.” (Job 29:12,13,15,16) Of this same matter in Tobias: “And I said to Tobias, My son, go and bring whatever poor man thou shalt find out of our brethren, who still has God in mind with his whole heart. Bring him hither, and he shall eat my dinner together with me. Behold, I attend thee, my son, until thou come.” (Tobias 2:2) Also in the same place: **“All the days of thy life, my son, keep God in mind, and transgress not His precepts. Do justice all the days of thy life, and do not walk in the way of unrighteousness; because if thou act truly, there will be respect of thy works. Give alms of thy substance, and turn not thy face from any poor man. So shall it come to pass that the**

face of God shall not be turned away from thee. Even as thou hast, my son, so do: if thou hast abundant substance, give the more alms therefrom; if thou hast little, communicate even of that little. And do not fear when thou givest alms: thou layest up for thyself a good reward against the day of need; because alms delivereth from death, and does not suffer to go into darkness. Alms is a good office for all who do it in the sight of the most high God.” (Tobias 4:5-11) On this same subject in Solomon in Proverbs: “He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord.” (Proverbs 19:17) Also in the same place: “He that giveth to the poor shall never want; but he who turns away his eye shall be in much penury.” (Proverbs 28:27) **Also in the same place: “Sins are purged away by alms-giving and faith.” (Proverbs 16:6)** Again, in the same place: “If thine enemy hunger, feed him; and if he thirst, give him to drink: for by doing this thou shalt scatter live coals upon his head.” (Proverbs 25:21) Again, in the same place: **“As water extinguishes fire, so alms-giving extinguishes sin.” (Ecclesiasticus 3:30)** In the same in Proverbs: “Say not, Go away, and return, tomorrow I will give; when you can do good immediately. For thou knowest not what may happen on the coming day.” (Proverbs 3:28) Also in the same place: “He who stoppeth his ears that he may not hear the weak, shall himself call upon God, and there shall be none to hear him.” (Proverbs 21:13) Also in the same place: “He who has his conversation without reproach in righteousness, leaves blessed children.” (Proverbs 20:7) In the same in Ecclesiasticus: “My son, if thou hast, do good by thyself, and present worthy offerings to God; remember that death delayeth not.” (Ecclesiasticus 14:11) Also in the same place: **“Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and this will entreat for thee from all evil.” (Ecclesiasticus 29:12)** Concerning this thing in the thirty-sixth Psalm, that mercy is beneficial also to one’s posterity: “I have been young, and I have also grown old; and I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread. The whole day he is merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is in blessing.” (Proverbs 37:25-26) Of this same thing in the fortieth Psalm: “Blessed is he who considereth over the poor and needy: in the evil day God will deliver him.” (Psalm 41:1) Also in the cxith Psalm: “He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness shall remain from generation to generation.” (Psalm 112:9) Of this same thing in Hosea: “I desire mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than whole burnt-offerings.” (Hosea 6:6) Of this same thing also in the Gospel according to Matthew: “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be satisfied.” (Matthew 5:6) Also in the same place: “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matthew 5:7) Also in the same place: “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not dig through and steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:20-21) Also in the same place: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls: and when he hath found a precious pearl, he went away and sold all that he had, and bought it.” (Matthew 8:45-46) That even a small work is of advantage, also in the same place: “And whoever shall give to drink to one of the least of these a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, His reward shall not perish.” (Matthew 10:42) **That alms are to be denied to none, also in the same place: “Give to every one that asketh thee; and from him who would wish to borrow, be not turned away.” (Matthew 5:42)** Also in the same place: “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith, Which? Jesus saith unto him, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

Honour thy father and mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet? Jesus saith unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” (Matthew 19:17-21) Also in the same place: “When the Son of man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then He shall sit on the throne of His glory: and all nations shall be gathered together before Him; and He shall separate them one from another, even as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats: and He shall place the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left hand. Then shall the King say unto them that are on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, and say, Lord, when saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in: naked, and clothed Thee? And when saw we Thee sick, and in prison, and came to Thee? And the King, answering, shall say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me. Then shall He say unto them who are on His left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave me not to eat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me not to drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: I was naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, and say, Lord, when saw we Thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? And He shall answer them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into everlasting burning: but the righteous into life eternal.” (Matthew 25:31-46) **Concerning this same matter in the Gospel according to Luke: “Sell your possessions, and give alms.” (Luke 12:33) Also in the same place: “He who made that which is within, made that which is without also. But give alms, and, behold, all things are pure unto you.” (Luke 11:40-41)** Also in the same place: “Behold, the half of my substance I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, that salvation has this day been wrought for this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.” (Luke 19:8-9) Of this same thing also in the second Epistle to the Corinthians: “Let your abundance supply their want, that their abundance also may be the supplement of your want, that there may be equality: as it is written, He who had much had not excess; and he who had little had no lack.” (2 Corinthians 8:14-15) Also in the same place: “He who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who soweth in blessing shall reap also of blessing. But let every one do as he has proposed in his heart: not as if sorrowfully, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7) Also in the same place: “As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.” (2 Corinthians 9:9) Likewise in the same place: “Now he who ministereth seed to the sower, shall both supply bread to be eaten, and shall multiply your seed, and shall increase the growth of the fruits of your righteousness: that in all things ye may be made rich.” (2 Corinthians 9:10-11) Also in the same place: “The administration of this service has not only supplied that which is lacking to the saints, but has abounded by much giving of thanks unto God.” (2 Corinthians 9:12) Of this same matter in the Epistle of John: “Whoso hath this world’s

substance, and seeth his brother desiring, and shutteth up his bowels from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:17) Of this same thing in the Gospel according to Luke: “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor brethren, nor neighbours, nor the rich; lest haply they also invite thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a banquet, call the poor, the weak, the blind, and lame: and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not the means of rewarding thee: but thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.” (Luke 14:12-14)

**Comment:** In paragraph 1, Cyprian emphasizes the giving of alms. His focus is more balanced here. Alms do not atone for sins, but they can make amends for a wrong done to someone.

Zacchaeus is an example of such an instance, as we read in **Luke 19 (KJV)**: 1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. 4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. 8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

In verse 1, Zacchaeus was a publican, that is, a tax collector, and he was rich. In verse 8, Zacchaeus promised to give “half of my goods” to the poor. This was showing mercy to the poor. And Zacchaeus also promised to restore “fourfold” to anyone he had defrauded. This is an example of making amends for a wrong done to someone.

But Cyprian’s reference to “**Sins are purged away by alms-giving and faith. (Proverbs 16:6)**” seems to be his own version of the verse.

This verse should read as in **Proverbs 16 (KJV)**: 6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

In all our giving and showing mercy, we must be led of the Lord so that we don’t enable those who don’t want to work.

## **Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews, paragraph 27**

### **Treatise XII.**

#### **Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews. Third Book**

#### **ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 542, col. 1, Page 1262 (pdf)**

### **27. That even a baptized person loses the grace that he has attained, unless he keep innocency.**

In the Gospel according to John: “Lo, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee.” (John 5:14) Also in the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: “Know

ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God abideth in you? If any one violate the temple of God, him will God destroy.” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17) Of this same thing in the Chronicles: “God is with you, while ye are with Him: if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.” (2 Chronicles 15:2)

**Comment:** Cyprian refers to **John 5 (KJV):14** Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

And in context to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

If all we build is wood, hay, or stubble, we will still be saved, yet so as by the fire of our bad choices. God chastens every son He receives, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):5** And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

This could include the sin unto death, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):27** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

So those who ate the Lord's Supper unworthily were chastened but not condemned. Some were “weak and sickly” and “many sleep”, that is, they died physically but not spiritually.

Cyprian also refers in context to **2 Chronicles 15 (KJV):1** And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: 2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 3 Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. 4 But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. 5 And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. 6 And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity. 7 Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded. 8 And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had

taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the Lord, that was before the porch of the Lord.

When the prophet Oded prophesied in verse 2, “but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you”, God was telling Israel that if they weren’t “with Him”, that is, walking in fellowship with Him, then He would not be with them. This is how He chastened Israel. But the Lord has made a promise to Israel, as we read in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV)**:31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. 35 Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

So in 2 Chronicles 15:2, the Lord did not mean that He would utterly forsake them but only that He would forsake them for a time in order to correct them.

And He has made promise to us who believe in Jesus as well in **Hebrews 13 (KJV)**:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

In the Greek there is a triple negative in this verse so that it could actually be translated as, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never, no never, not under any circumstances, leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

The early Church did not understand the Biblical truth about regeneration. They did not understand the triune nature of man. They thought that the soul was the same as the spirit, and that when one was born again, they received grace in their soul. This grace could be lost by grievous sin. They did not understand that the Holy Spirit gives eternal life to our spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ and we are born of the Holy Spirit. After this birth, God deals with us as with sons and daughters.

## **Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews, paragraph 116**

### **Treatise XII.**

#### **Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews. Third Book**

#### **ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 556, col. 1, Page 1355 (pdf)**

116. That God is more loved by him who has had many sins forgiven in baptism.



In the Gospel according to Luke: “To whom much is forgiven, he loveth much; and to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” (Luke 7:47)

**Comment:** Cyprian refers in context to **Luke 7 (KJV):47** And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Nothing was said about baptism in this Scripture. But because of the assumption of the early Church that regeneration occurs at baptism, Cyprian would have us believe, “That God is more loved by him who has had many sins forgiven in baptism.”

Jesus was pointing out that whether our sins are many or few, there is forgiveness. And this woman had not been baptized yet, but Jesus still forgave her sins, and said to her, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

And Jesus was also pointing out to the Pharisee that if we love much, we will have many sins forgiven. And we read in **Isaiah 30 (KJV):15** For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

As we turn to God, we will grow in grace and knowledge. Even the sins we are unaware of now will be made known to us. As we confess them, we will be forgiven. And our light will shine brighter and brighter until the full day, as we read in **Proverbs 4 (NASB):18** But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

## **THE SEVENTH COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE UNDER CYPRIAN**

### **Concerning the Baptism of Heretics, The Judgment of Eighty-Seven Bishops on the Baptism of Heretics.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 565, col. 1, Page 1370-1373 (pdf)**

*Proœmium.*—When Stephen, Bishop of Rome, Had by His Letters Condemned the Decrees of the African Council on the Baptism of Heretics, Cyprian Lost No Time in Holding Another Council at Carthage with a Greater Number of Bishops. Having Therefore Summoned Eighty-Seven Bishops from Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, Who Assembled at Carthage in the Kalends of September, a.d. 258, This Third Council on the Same Matter of Baptism Was Then Celebrated; At the Beginning of Which, After the Letters on Either Side Had Been Read, Cyprian, by Implication, Condemns the Assumption of Stephen.

When, in the Kalends of September, a great many bishops from the provinces of Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, had met together at Carthage, together with the presbyters and deacons, and a considerable part of the congregation who were also present; and when the letter of Jubaianus written to Cyprian had been read, as also the reply of Cyprian to Jubaianus, about baptizing heretics, and what the same Jubaianus had subsequently rejoined to Cyprian,—Cyprian said: You have heard, my dearly beloved colleagues, what Jubaianus our co-bishop has written to me, taking counsel of my poor intelligence concerning the unlawful and profane baptism of heretics, as well as what I wrote in answer to him, decreeing, to wit, what we have once and again and frequently determined, that heretics who come to the Church must be baptized and sanctified by the baptism of the Church. Moreover, another letter of Jubaianus has also been read to you, wherein, replying, in accordance with his sincere and religious devotion, to my letter, he not only acquiesced in what I had said, but, confessing that he had been instructed thereby, he returned thanks for it. It remains, that upon this same matter each of us should bring forward what we think, judging no man, nor rejecting any one from the right of communion, if he should think differently from us. **For neither does any of us set himself up as a bishop of bishops, nor by tyrannical terror does any compel his colleague to the necessity of obedience; since every bishop, according to the allowance of his liberty and power, has his own proper right of judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another.** But let us all wait for the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only one that has the power both of preferring us in the government of His Church, and of judging us in our conduct there.

Cæcilius of Bilita said: I know only one baptism in the Church, and none out of the Church. This one will be here, where there is the true hope and the certain faith. For thus it is written: “One faith, one hope, one baptism;” (Ephesians 4:5) not among heretics, where there is no hope, and the faith is false, where all things are carried on by lying; where a demoniac exorcises; where one whose mouth and words send forth a cancer puts the sacramental interrogation; the faithless gives faith; the wicked bestows pardon of sins; and Antichrist baptizes in the name of Christ; he who is cursed of God blesses; he who is dead promises life; he who is unpeaceful gives peace; the blasphemer calls upon God; the profane person administers the office of the priesthood; the sacrilegious person establishes an altar. In addition to all these things, there is also this evil, that the priests of the devil dare to celebrate the Eucharist; or else let those who stand by them say that all these things concerning heretics are false. Behold to what kind of things the Church is compelled to consent, and is constrained without baptism, without pardon of sins, to hold communion. And this thing, brethren, we ought to flee from and avoid, and to separate ourselves from so great a wickedness, and to hold one

baptism, which is granted by the Lord to the Church alone.

Primus of Misgirpa said: I decide, that every man who comes to us from heresy must be baptized. For in vain does he think that he has been baptized there, seeing that there is no baptism save the one and true baptism in the Church; because not only is God one, but the faith is one, and the Church is one, wherein stands the one baptism, and holiness, and the rest. For whatever is done without, has no effect of salvation.

Polycarp from Adrumetum said: They who approve the baptism of heretics make void our baptism.

Novatus of Thamugada said: Although we know that all the Scriptures give witness concerning the saving baptism, still we ought to declare our faith, that heretics and schismatics who come to the Church, and appear to have been falsely baptized, ought to be baptized in the everlasting fountain; and therefore, according to the testimony of the Scriptures, and according to the decree of our colleagues, men of most holy memory, that all schismatics and heretics who are converted to the Church must be baptized; **and moreover, that those who appeared to have been ordained must be received among lay people.**

Nemesianus of Thubunae said: That the baptism which heretics and schismatics bestow is not the true one, is everywhere declared in the Holy Scriptures, since their very leading men are false Christs and false prophets, as the Lord says by Solomon: "He who trusteth in that which is false, he feedeth the winds; and the very same, moreover, followeth the flight of birds. For he forsaketh the ways of his own vineyard, he has wandered from the paths of his own little field. But he walketh through pathless places, and dry, and a land destined for thirst; moreover, he gathereth together fruitless things in his hands." (Proverbs 9:12 LXX) And again: "Abstain from strange water, and from the fountain of another do not drink, that you may live a long time; also that the years of life may be added to thee." (Proverbs 9:19) And in the Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with His divine voice, saying, "Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5) This is the Spirit which from the beginning was borne over the waters; for neither can the Spirit operate without the water, nor the water without the Spirit. **Certain people therefore interpret for themselves ill, when they say that by imposition of the hand they receive the Holy Ghost, and are thus received, when it is manifest that they ought to be born again in the Catholic Church by both sacraments.** Then indeed they will be able to be sons of God, as says the apostle: "Taking care to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, as ye have been called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God." (Ephesians 4:3-6) All these things speaks the Catholic Church. And again, in the Gospel the Lord says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; because God is a Spirit, and he is born of God." (John 3:6) Therefore, whatsoever things all heretics and schismatics do are carnal, as the apostle says: "For the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, fornications, uncleannesses, incest, idolatries, witchcrafts, hatreds, contentions, jealousy, anger, divisions, heresies, and the like to these; concerning which have told you before, as I also foretell you now, that whoever do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21) **And thus the apostle condemns, with all the wicked, those also who cause division, that is, schismatics and heretics. Unless therefore they receive saving baptism in the Catholic Church, which is one, they cannot be saved, but will be condemned with the**

## **carnal in the judgment of the Lord Christ.**

Januarius of Lambesis said: According to the authority of the Holy Scriptures, I decree that all heretics must be baptized, and so admitted into the holy Church.

**Comment:** Note that Cyprian did not recognize the bishop of Rome as preeminent, as he says, **“For neither does any of us set himself up as a bishop of bishops, nor by tyrannical terror does any compel his colleague to the necessity of obedience; since every bishop, according to the allowance of his liberty and power, has his own proper right of judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another.”**

And he adds, “But let us all wait for the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only one that has the power both of preferring us in the government of His Church, and of judging us in our conduct there.”

And Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):** 1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

And note that Novatus of Thamugada makes a distinction between one who is ordained, that is, clergy, and “lay people”, as he said, **“and moreover, that those who appeared to have been ordained must be received among lay people.”** But heretics should not be allowed to continue as pastors until they have repented and have earned the trust of the faithful.

And according to Nemesianus of Thubunae, one had to be born of “both sacraments”, as he said, **“Certain people therefore interpret for themselves ill, when they say that by imposition of the hand they receive the Holy Ghost, and are thus received, when it is manifest that they ought to be born again in the Catholic Church by both sacraments.”**

The Catholic Church was building a hierarchy of authority while maintaining a clergy and laity division among the people. And the understanding of the Scripture was being impacted by the developing ritual of the sacraments, which was not according to Scripture. The recognition of Peter as the first Pope was still not fully established but it was coming.

## **Of the Discipline and Advantage of Chastity, paragraphs 1-4**

### **Of the Discipline and Advantage of Chastity.**

**ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, Volume V, Page 587-589, col. 1, Page 1411-1413 (pdf)**

1. **I do not conceive that I have exceeded any portions of my duty, in always striving as much as possible, by daily discussions of the Gospels, to afford to you from time to time the means of growth, by the Lord's help, in faith and knowledge. For what else can be effected in the Lord's Church with greater advantage, what can be found more suitable to the office of a bishop, than that, by the teaching of the divine words, recommended and commented on by Him, believers should be enabled to attain to the promised kingdom of heaven?** This assuredly, as the desired result day by day of my work as well as of my office, I

endeavour, notwithstanding my absence, to accomplish; and by my letters I try to make myself present to you, addressing you in faith, in my usual manner, by the exhortations that I send you. I call upon you, therefore, to be established in the power of the Root of the Gospel, and to stand always armed against all the assaults of the devil. I shall not believe myself to be absent from you, if I shall be sure of you. Nevertheless, everything which is advantageously set forth, and which either defines or promises the condition of eternal life to those who are investigating it, is then only profitable, if it be aided in attaining the reward of the effort by the power of the divine mercy. We not only set forth words which come from the sacred fountains of the Scriptures, but with these very words we associate prayers to the Lord, and wishes, that, as well to us as to you, He would not only unfold the treasures of His sacraments, but would bestow strength for the carrying into act of what we know. For the danger is all the greater if we know the Lord's will, and loiter in the work of the will of God.

2. Although, therefore, I exhort you always, as you are aware, to many things, and to the precepts of the Lord's admonition—for what else can be desirable or more important to me, than that in all things you should stand perfect in the Lord?—yet I admonish you, that you should before all things maintain the barriers of chastity, as also you do: knowing that you are the temple of the Lord, the members of Christ, the habitation of the Holy Spirit, elected to hope, consecrated to faith, destined to salvation, sons of God, brethren of Christ, associates of the Holy Spirit, owing nothing any longer to the flesh, as born again of water, that the chastity, over and above the will, which we should always desire to be ours, may be afforded to us also, on account of the redemption, that that which has been consecrated by Christ might not be corrupted. For if the apostle declares the Church to be the spouse of Christ, I beseech you *consider* what chastity is required, where the Church is given in marriage as a betrothed virgin. And I indeed, except that I have proposed to admonish you with brevity, think the most diffuse praises due, and could set forth abundant laudations of chastity; but I have thought it superfluous to praise it at greater length among those who practice it. For you adorn it while you exhibit it; and in its exercise you set forth its more abundant praises, being made its ornament, while it also is yours, each lending and borrowing honour from the other. It adds to you the discipline of good morals; you confer upon it the ministry of saintly works. For how much and what it can effect has on the one hand been manifest by your means, and on the other it has shown and taught what you are wishing for,—the two advantages of precepts and practice being combined into one, that nothing should appear maimed, as would be the case if either principles were wanting to service, or service to principles.

3. Chastity is the dignity of the body, the ornament of morality, the sacredness of the sexes, the bond of modesty, the source of purity, the peacefulness of home, the crown of concord. Chastity is not careful whom it pleases but itself. Chastity is always modest, being the mother of innocency; chastity is ever adorned with modesty alone, then rightly conscious of its own beauty if it is displeasing to the wicked. Chastity seeks nothing in the way of adornments: it is its own glory. It is this which commends us to the Lord, unites us with Christ; it is this which drives out from our members all the illicit conflicts of desire, instills peace into our bodies: blessed itself, and making those blessed, whoever they are, in whom it condescends to dwell. It is that which even they who possess it not can never accuse; it is even venerable to its enemies, since, they admire it much more because they are unable to capture it. Moreover, as

mature, it is both always excellent in men, and to be earnestly desired by women; so its enemy, unchastity, is always detestable, making an obscene sport for its servants, sparing neither bodies nor souls. For, their own proper character being overcome, it sends the entire man under its yoke of lust, alluring at first, that it may do the more mischief by its attraction,—the foe of continency, exhausting both means and modesty; the perilous madness of lust frequently attaining to the blood, the destruction of a good conscience, the mother of impenitence, the ruin of a more virtuous age, the disgrace of one's race, driving away all confidence in blood and family, intruding one's own children upon the affections of strangers, interpolating the offspring of an unknown and corrupted stock into the testaments of others. **And this also, very frequently burning without reference to sex, and not restraining itself within the permitted limits, thinks it little satisfaction to itself, unless even in the bodies of men it seeks, not a new pleasure, but goes in quest of extraordinary and revolting extravagances, contrary to nature itself, of men with men.**

4. **But chastity maintains the first rank in virgins, the second in those who are continent, the third in the case of wedlock. Yet in all it is glorious, with all its degrees. For even to maintain the marriage-faith is a matter of praise in the midst of so many bodily strifes; and to have determined on a limit in marriage defined by continency is more virtuous still, because herein even lawful things are refused.** Assuredly to have guarded one's purity from the womb, and to have kept oneself an infant even to old age throughout the whole of life, is certainly the part of an admirable virtue; only that *if* never to have known the body's seductive capacities is the greater blessedness, to have overcome them when once known is the greater virtue; yet still in such a sort that that virtue comes of God's gift, although it manifests itself to men in their members.

**Comment:** In paragraph 1, Cyprian says, **“I do not conceive that I have exceeded any portions of my duty, in always striving as much as possible, by daily discussions of the Gospels, to afford to you from time to time the means of growth, by the Lord's help, in faith and knowledge. For what else can be effected in the Lord's Church with greater advantage, what can be found more suitable to the office of a bishop, than that, by the teaching of the divine words, recommended and commented on by Him, believers should be enabled to attain to the promised kingdom of heaven?”**

We commend Cyprian here for his heart to serve God's people, and help them grow **“in faith and knowledge”**.

He continues, and says, “This assuredly, as the desired result day by day of my work as well as of my office, I endeavour, notwithstanding my absence, to accomplish; and by my letters I try to make myself present to you, addressing you in faith, in my usual manner, by the exhortations that I send you. I call upon you, therefore, to be established in the power of the Root of the Gospel, and to stand always armed against all the assaults of the devil. I shall not believe myself to be absent from you, if I shall be sure of you. Nevertheless, everything which is advantageously set forth, and which either defines or promises the condition of eternal life to those who are investigating it, is then only profitable, if it be aided in attaining the reward of the effort by the power of the divine mercy. We not only set forth words which come from the sacred fountains of the Scriptures, but with these very words we associate prayers to the Lord,

and wishes, that, as well to us as to you, He would not only unfold the treasures of His sacraments, but would bestow strength for the carrying into act of what we know. For the danger is all the greater if we know the Lord's will, and loiter in the work of the will of God."

The word "sacrament" is not found in the Scriptures. To Cyprian and the early Church, it meant something that was a means of receiving grace. The most notable ones in Cyprian's time were baptism, confirmation, which is the receiving of the Holy Spirit by hands laid on, and the Lord's Supper, or Communion. In the Roman Catholic Church today, there are four more, penance, anointing of the sick, marriage, and holy orders.

Cyprian continues in paragraph 2, and says, "Although, therefore, I exhort you always, as you are aware, to many things, and to the precepts of the Lord's admonition—for what else can be desirable or more important to me, than that in all things you should stand perfect in the Lord?—yet I admonish you, that you should before all things maintain the barriers of chastity, as also you do: knowing that you are the temple of the Lord, the members of Christ, the habitation of the Holy Spirit, elected to hope, consecrated to faith, destined to salvation, sons of God, brethren of Christ, associates of the Holy Spirit, owing nothing any longer to the flesh, as born again of water, that the chastity, over and above the will, which we should always desire to be ours, may be afforded to us also, on account of the redemption, that that which has been consecrated by Christ might not be corrupted."

This is good encouragement by Cyprian, and reminds us of **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):18** Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Cyprian continues, and says, "For if the apostle declares the Church to be the spouse of Christ, I beseech you *consider* what chastity is required, where the Church is given in marriage as a betrothed virgin."

He refers to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):2** For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

And Paul reveals that this is a great mystery, as we read in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

The great mystery of Christ and the church is that we are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" and so we are "one flesh" with Him. Paul gives us some understanding of this in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink

into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

So we are set in the body in a particular place as it pleased God. Where God has placed us in His body relates to our function, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

God has gifted us according to where He has placed us in His body. We all have a function to perform just as hands, feet, eyes, ears, and so on. And all of this relates to the works He has ordained for us to do, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

As we are lead by the Spirit, we will do the works God has ordained for us to do.

Cyprian continues, and says, “And I indeed, except that I have proposed to admonish you with brevity, think the most diffuse praises due, and could set forth abundant laudations of chastity; but I have thought it superfluous to praise it at greater length among those who practice it. For you adorn it while you exhibit it; and in its exercise you set forth its more abundant praises, being made its ornament, while it also is yours, each lending and borrowing honour from the other. It adds to you the discipline of good morals; you confer upon it the ministry of saintly works. For how much and what it can effect has on the one hand been manifest by your means, and on the other it has shown and taught what you are wishing for,—the two advantages of precepts and practice being combined into one, that nothing should appear maimed, as would be the case if either principles were wanting to service, or service to principles.”

Cyprian continues in paragraph 3, and says, “Chastity is the dignity of the body, the ornament of morality, the sacredness of the sexes, the bond of modesty, the source of purity, the peacefulness of home, the crown of concord. Chastity is not careful whom it pleases but itself. Chastity is always modest, being the mother of innocency; chastity is ever adorned with modesty alone, then rightly conscious of its own beauty if it is displeasing to the wicked. Chastity seeks nothing in the way of adornments: it is its own glory.”

The word “chastity” means “abstention from unlawful sexual intercourse”.

**<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chastity>**

In the time of Cyprian, it was not unlawful for clergy to be married.

Cyprian continues, and says, “It is this which commends us to the Lord, unites us with Christ; it is this which drives out from our members all the illicit conflicts of desire, instills peace into our bodies: blessed itself, and making those blessed, whoever they are, in whom it condescends to dwell. It is that which even they who possess it not can never accuse; it is even



venerable to its enemies, since, they admire it much more because they are unable to capture it. Moreover, as mature, it is both always excellent in men, and to be earnestly desired by women; so its enemy, unchastity, is always detestable, making an obscene sport for its servants, sparing neither bodies nor souls. For, their own proper character being overcome, it sends the entire man under its yoke of lust, alluring at first, that it may do the more mischief by its attraction,—the foe of continency, exhausting both means and modesty; the perilous madness of lust frequently attaining to the blood, the destruction of a good conscience, the mother of impenitence, the ruin of a more virtuous age, the disgrace of one's race, driving away all confidence in blood and family, intruding one's own children upon the affections of strangers, interpolating the offspring of an unknown and corrupted stock into the testaments of others. **And this also, very frequently burning without reference to sex, and not restraining itself within the permitted limits, thinks it little satisfaction to itself, unless even in the bodies of men it seeks, not a new pleasure, but goes in quest of extraordinary and revolting extravagances, contrary to nature itself, of men with men.**"

It is evident that Cyprian agreed with Scripture in regard to homosexuality, as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):27** And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

Cyprian continues in paragraph 4, and says, **"But chastity maintains the first rank in virgins, the second in those who are continent, the third in the case of wedlock. Yet in all it is glorious, with all its degrees. For even to maintain the marriage-faith is a matter of praise in the midst of so many bodily strifes; and to have determined on a limit in marriage defined by continency is more virtuous still, because herein even lawful things are refused."**

The word "continent", means **"SELF-RESTRAINT especially** : a refraining from sexual intercourse." <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/contenance>

So when Cyprian says, **"But chastity maintains the first rank in virgins, the second in those who are continent"**, the **"second"** are those who refrain from "sexual intercourse". Marriage ranks third in Cyprian's estimation, as he says that chastity ranks **"the third in the case of wedlock"**.

Concerning marriage, Paul taught as in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):1** Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. **2** Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. **3** Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. **4** The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. **5** Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. **6** But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. **7** For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. **8** I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. **9** But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

Cyprian continues, and says, "Assuredly to have guarded one's purity from the womb,

and to have kept oneself an infant even to old age throughout the whole of life, is certainly the part of an admirable virtue; only that *if* never to have known the body's seductive capacities is the greater blessedness, to have overcome them when once known is the greater virtue; yet still in such a sort that that virtue comes of God's gift, although it manifests itself to men in their members."

We see the reason that, in the thinking of the early Church, it began to be a requirement for the clergy to be celibate because to be celibate would rank one as the highest in "admirable virtue".

## Cyprian Highlights

In **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 5, Cyprian was “**chosen to the office of the priesthood and the degree of the episcopate while still a neophyte, and, as it was considered, a novice.**”

And in **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 6, we read that “**Cyprian the bishop’s *cathedra* received such as he had been before,—it did not make him so.**”

The “*cathedra*” was a large chair that the bishop sat in. This idea of this chair came from the Roman Empire’s use of a chair like this by magistrates and officials. So it is symbolic of the bishop’s rule over the church. And the church of the bishop is therefore called a cathedral.

In **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 8, we read that “**The unusual and violent rage of a cruel persecution had laid waste God’s people;**”

This no doubt affected the spiritual growth of the Church. The early church suffered under great persecutions very early on under Claudius (41–54), Nero (54–68), Domitian (81–96), Trajan (98–117), Marcus Aurelius (161–180), Septimius Severus (193–211), and under Decius (249–251) and Valerian (253–260) in the time of Cyprian. And Cyprian himself was martyred in a.d. 258.

In **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 9, we read, “**No one did to another what he himself wished to experience. In these circumstances, it would be a wrong to pass over what the pontiff of Christ did, who excelled the pontiffs of the world as much in kindly affection as he did in truth of religion.**”

It is interesting that the deacon Pontius calls Cyprian “**the pontiff of Christ**” who “**excelled the pontiffs of the world**”.

The term “**pontiff**” was applied to any high or chief priest in the College of Priests in the pagan religion of the Romans before Christ. Clearly this term does not belong to the elders in the Church of Christians.

Then in **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 11, we read, “**And what God’s priest replied to the interrogation of the proconsul, there are Acts which relate.**”

Pontius refers to Paul as if Paul were a priest.

And also in **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 11, we read, “**Such a place might have borne the name of exile, if Cyprian, the priest of God, had come thither; although to him, if the ministrations of men had been wanting, either birds, as in the case of Elias, or angels, as in that of Daniel, would have ministered. Away, away with the belief that anything would be wanting to the least of us, so long as he stands for the confession of the name. So far was God’s pontiff, who had always been urgent in merciful works, from needing the assistance of all these things.**”

To Pontius, Cyprian was “**the priest of God**”, and “**God’s pontiff**”.

Then in **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 16, we read, “**He went out from the house of the officer, though he was the officer of Christ and God, and was walled in on all sides by the ranks of a mingled multitude.**”

To Pontius, and the early Church, Cyprian was “**the officer of Christ and God**”.

In **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 17, we read that, “**He had been a standard-bearer, who was accustomed to teach concerning the bearing of Christ’s standard; he had**

been an enemy of the gods, who commanded the idols to be destroyed. Moreover, he gave example to his friends, since, when many were about to follow in a similar manner, he was the first in the province to consecrate the first-fruits of martyrdom.”

And Cyprian was a faithful martyr for Christ.

Then in **Epistle XXIV, To Moyses and Maximus**, paragraph 1, we read, “**But he who, preceding in the struggle, has been made an example of virtue to the brethren, is on common ground with the martyrs in honour. Hence you have delivered to us garlands woven by your hand, and have pledged your brethren from the cup of salvation.**”

And in **Epistle XXIV, To Moyses and Maximus**, paragraph 2, we read, “**You prompt the keeping of these precepts; you observe the divine and heavenly commands. This is to be a confessor of the Lord; this is to be a martyr of Christ,—to keep the firmness of one’s profession inviolate among all evils, and secure.**”

Cyprian held a twofold meaning of the word “martyr”, which is according to Scripture. First, a martyr is one who considers himself dead to sin and walks in the light of the word of God. Second, a martyr is one who is physically slain for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

In **Epistle XXVI, to the Lapsed**, paragraph 1, we read, “**Our Lord, whose precepts and admonitions we ought to observe, describing the honour of a bishop and the order of His Church, speaks in the Gospel, and says to Peter: “I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:18-19) Thence, through the changes of times and successions, the ordering of bishops and the plan of the Church flow onwards; so that the Church is founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers.**”

Cyprian thought that our Lord was speaking of the “**honour of a bishop and the order of His Church**” when he spoke to Peter as in Matthew 16:18-19 because he thought that the bishops succeeded the apostles, “**so that the Church is founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers.**” But the Church is founded upon the apostles and prophets, **as we read in Ephesians 2 (KJV):** 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

And the Church is being built on Jesus Christ, who is the “mass of rock” mentioned in Matthew 16:18. And He is the foundation upon which we are building, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):** 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

But the Church in Cyprian’s time had misunderstood these Scriptures, and had misinterpreted them because of their loyalty to their traditions.

In **Epistle XXIX, to Cyprian**, paragraph 1, we read, **“The presbyters and deacons abiding at Rome, to Father Cyprian, greeting.”**

But Jesus said to call no man “father” in **Matthew 23 (KJV):9** And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

In **Epistle XXIX, to Cyprian**, paragraph 2, we read, **“if martyrs become martyrs for no other reason than that by not sacrificing they may keep the peace of the Church even to the shedding of their own blood, lest, overcome by the suffering of the torture, by losing peace, they might lose salvation;”**

The Lapsed were afraid of losing their salvation if they suffered torture. This was their excuse for denying the Lord.

In **Epistle XXX, to Cyprian**, paragraph 4, we read, **“For he who does not guard what he has, in that condition whereon he possesses it, by violating the condition whereon he possesses it, loses what he possessed.”**

Losing one’s salvation was part of the thinking of the early Church. They did not understand the security of the believer.

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 1, we read, **“Cyprian to Antonianus his brother, greeting. I received your first letters, dearest brother, firmly maintaining the concord of the priestly college, and adhering to the Catholic Church, in which you intimated that you did not hold communion with Novatian, but followed my advice, and held one common agreement with Cornelius our co-bishop.”**

The “**priestly college**” was a term that was borrowed from Roman religion.

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 4, we read, **“For when the battle was still going on, and the struggle of a glorious contest was raging in the persecution, the courage of the soldiers had to be excited with every exhortation, and with full urgency, and especially the minds of the lapsed had to be roused with the trumpet call, as it were, of my voice, that they might pursue the way of repentance, not only with prayers and lamentations; but, since an opportunity was given of repeating the struggle and of regaining salvation, that they might be reproved by my voice, and stimulated rather to the ardour of confession and the glory of martyrdom.”**

To the early Church, if you denied the Lord you suffered the loss of your salvation. They did not understand the security of the believer as Peter showed when he denied the Lord three times and yet the Lord received him back.

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 8, we read, **“I come now, dearest brother, to the character of Cornelius our colleague, that with us you may more justly know Cornelius, not from the lies of malignants and detractors, but from the judgment of the Lord God, who made him a bishop, and from the testimony of his fellow-bishops, the whole number of whom has agreed with an absolute unanimity throughout the whole world. For,—a thing which with laudable announcement commends our dearest Cornelius to God and Christ, and to His Church, and also to all his fellow-priests,—he was not one who on a sudden attained to the episcopate; but, promoted through all the ecclesiastical offices, and having often deserved well of the Lord in divine administrations, he ascended by all the grades of religious service to the lofty summit of the Priesthood.”**

To Cyprian, **“the lofty summit of the Priesthood”** was something that God had

instituted. But there is no evidence in the Scriptures of a priesthood that is separate from all believers. All believers make up a “royal priesthood”, as we read in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):9** But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 8, we read, **“when the place of Fabian, that is, when the place of Peter and the degree of the sacerdotal throne was vacant;”**

To Cyprian and the early Church, Peter was the first bishop of Rome. And Peter ruled the Church from the **“sacerdotal throne”**, or priestly throne.

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 8, we read, **“and he cannot have the ordination of the Church who does not hold the unity of the Church.”**

This sounds logical but Cyprian will also say that one cannot have salvation **“who does not hold the unity of the Church.”**

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 11, we read, **“Therefore the matter being considered there with several colleagues, Trophimus was received, for whom the return of the brethren and salvation restored to many made atonement.”**

If you left the Church in Cyprian’s time, you lost salvation which could be restored if one made atonement, or did penance.

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 24, we read, **“Whoever he may be, and whatever he may be, he who is not in the Church of Christ is not a Christian. Although he may boast himself, and announce his philosophy or eloquence with lofty words, yet he who has not maintained brotherly love or ecclesiastical unity has lost even what he previously had been.”**

The early Church in Cyprian’s time did not understand the regeneration of the believer when one believed in Jesus Christ, and confessed Him as Lord. This relates to the security of the believer of which the early Church had no understanding.

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 28, we read, **“Oh, ineffectual and profitless tradition of heretical institution! to exhort to the repentance of atonement, and to take away the healing from the atonement; to say to our brethren, “Mourn and shed tears, and groan day and night, and labour largely and frequently for the washing away and cleansing of your sin; but, after all these things, you shall die without the pale of the Church.”**

The word **“pale”** means “an area or the limits within which one is privileged or protected (as from censure)”

[https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/pale#:~:text=a,saturation%20\(see%20saturation%20sense%204a\)](https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/pale#:~:text=a,saturation%20(see%20saturation%20sense%204a))

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 29, we read, **“But if we find that none ought to be restrained from repenting, and that peace may be granted by His priests to those who entreat and beseech the Lord’s mercy, inasmuch as He is merciful and loving, the groaning of those who mourn is to be admitted, and the fruit of repentance is not to be denied to those who grieve.”**

Cyprian thought that **“His priests”** may grant peace to those who did penance.

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 29, we read, **“But apostates and deserters, or adversaries and enemies, and those who lay waste the Church of Christ, cannot, even if**

**outside the Church they have been slain for His name, according to the apostle, be admitted to the peace of the Church, since they have neither kept the unity of the spirit nor of the Church.”**

To Cyprian and the early Church, salvation was maintained by keeping **“the unity of the spirit”** and **“of the Church.”**

In **Epistle LIV, To Cornelius**, paragraph 5, we read, **“When He says that not even the least things are done without God’s will, does any one think that the highest and greatest things are done in God’s Church either without God’s knowledge or permission, and that priests—that is, His stewards—are not ordained by His decree? This is not to have faith, whereby we live; this is not to give honour to God, by whose direction and decision we know and believe that all things are ruled and governed.”**

This is a very logical but circular argument. Cyprian assumes that the Church is following the Lord’s commands. Therefore, God is ordaining priests, **“that is, His stewards”**, because God is ruling and governing **“all things”**. Cyprian didn’t realize that the priesthood had changed, and that we now have a great high priest in heaven who ever lives to make intercession for us. The believer himself or herself, as a believer priest, can go directly to God without the mediation of another priest.

In **Epistle LIV, To Cornelius**, paragraph 13, we read, **“The highest degree of happiness is, not to sin; the second, to acknowledge our sins. In the former, innocence flows pure and unstained to preserve us; in the latter, there comes a medicine to heal us. Both of these they have lost by offending God, both because the grace is lost which is received from the sanctification of baptism, and repentance comes not to their help, whereby the sin is healed.”**

To Cyprian and the early Church, one was saved when they were baptized. That is, they received the grace to be saved. This grace could be lost, and so salvation would then be lost. But salvation could be restored through repentance. The early Church did not understand that when one believes in Jesus Christ, they are born again by the Holy Spirit. Their spirit now has a new divine nature. Their flesh is still mortal with a sin nature. Their soul, which is their mind, will, conscience, heart, and feelings will undergo a progressive sanctification in this life. If one has truly believed, they have passed from death to life. If all one builds after believing is wood, hay, or stubble, they will still be saved but will suffer for their bad choices in this life.

In **Epistle LIV, To Cornelius**, paragraph 13, we read, **“Let the laity see to it how they may amend this.”**

The early Church had **“laity”** and **“clergy”**. They did not understand that all believers have been given a place in the body of Christ by God, according to their individuality. All believers have a function to perform, and according to the effectual working in the measure of every part of the body of Christ, the body will grow up to the measure of the stature of Christ.

In **Epistle LIV, To Cornelius**, paragraph 14, we read, **“After such things as these, moreover, they still dare—a false bishop having been appointed for them by heretics—to set sail and to bear letters from schismatic and profane persons to the throne of Peter, and to the chief church whence priestly unity takes its source; and not to consider that these were the Romans whose faith was praised in the preaching of the apostle, to whom faithlessness could have no access.”**

Cyprian is referring to the church in Rome, and Paul did praise them as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):8** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

But there is no evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. It is more likely that the prestige of Rome as the center of the Roman Empire had something to do with the assumption that it was the **“throne of Peter”**. But for Cyprian to say that it was **“the chief church whence priestly unity takes its source”** adds weight to the preeminence of the bishop of Rome. The bishop of Rome would one day become the Pope, the supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. And Paul was not saying that the Romans were of such faith that **“faithlessness could have no access”**, for Paul also wrote as in **Romans 1 (KJV):11** For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

It is more likely that, when speaking of the faith of the Romans, Paul was simply saying that everyone was talking about the Romans having faith because Rome was the center of the Roman empire. It would only be natural that anything that happened in Rome would be the subject of conversation wherever anyone lived outside of Rome.

In **Epistle LIV, To Cornelius**, paragraph 21, we read, **“but that we should be as much separated from them, as they are deserters from the Church; because it is written, “If he shall neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” (Matthew 18:17)”**

But Jesus also taught as in **Matthew 18 (KJV):20** For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

It is not a matter of aligning one’s self with a particular church, but it is a matter of aligning one’s self with the word of God rightly divided. The Church is where two or three believers are gathered together.

In **Epistle LVI, To Cornelius**, paragraph 3, we read, **“Does he now acknowledge who is the priest of God; which is the Church and the house of Christ; who are God’s servants, whom the devil molests; who the Christians, whom Antichrist attacks?”**

Cyprian makes **“the Church and the house of Christ”** out to be the **“priest of God”**. But the Church is the body of Christ composed of all believers in Jesus Christ who places each one in a particular place in His body.

In **Epistle LXI, To Cornelius**, paragraph 4, we read, **“Nor let them think that the way of life or of salvation is still open to them, if they have refused to obey the bishops and priests, since in Deuteronomy the Lord God says, “And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest or judge, whosoever he shall be in those days, that man shall die, and all the people shall hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously.” (Deuteronomy 17:12-13)”**

But we now have been delivered from the law, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):6** But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

And we are no longer under the law, as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

There has been a change in the priesthood, as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):11** If



therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Cyprian and the early Church did not understand that there has been a change in the priesthood. We now have a priest who is “is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” in verse 26, and who doesn’t need “daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself”, in verse 27. Jesus is now our great high priest. We don’t need any other.

In **Epistle LXI, To Cornelius**, paragraph 4, we read, **“but now that circumcision has begun to be of the spirit among God’s faithful servants, the proud and contumacious are slain with the sword of the Spirit, in that they are cast out of the Church. For they cannot live out of it, since the house of God is one, and there can be no salvation to any except in the Church.**

But the Church is a spiritual body, that is, the body of Christ, as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):**22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

And in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):**29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):**24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

We live in Him because of Him, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

When we believe in Him, we pass from death to life, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):23** That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

**In Epistle LXII, To Caecilius, paragraph 8, we read, “There God foretold by the prophet, that among the nations, in places which previously had been dry, rivers should afterwards flow plenteously, and should provide water for the elected people of God, that is, for those who were made sons of God by the generation of baptism.”**

In this paragraph, Cyprian said that “as often as water is named alone in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is referred to”, and he quotes from Isaiah 43:18-21. Cyprian and the early Church misunderstood the Scriptures regarding baptism. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we pass from death to life. We are then baptized because we have believed in Jesus Christ, and in obedience to His command.

**In Epistle LXIII, To Epictetus, paragraph 2, we read, “Those, therefore, who have brought grievous sins upon themselves, that is, who, by sacrificing to idols, have offered sacrilegious sacrifices, cannot claim to themselves the priesthood of God, nor make any prayer for their brethren in His sight;”**

While sacrificing to idols is a grievous sin, one could still be saved if they have truly believed in Jesus Christ. The Lord forgave Peter for denying Him three times.

**In Epistle LXVIII, To Florentius Pupianus, paragraph 1, we read, “This is not to believe in God—this is to stand forth as a rebel against Christ and His Gospel; so that although He says, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and neither of them falls to the ground without the will of my Father,” (Matthew 10:29) and His majesty and truth prove that even things of little consequence are not done without the consciousness and permission of God, you think that God’s priests are ordained in the Church without His knowledge. For to believe that they who are ordained are unworthy and unchaste, what else is it than to believe that his priests are not appointed in the Church by God, nor through God?”**

Cyprian and the early Church did not understand that the priesthood had changed. We now have a great High Priest in heaven who ever lives to intercede for us. Paul spoke to the elders of Ephesus as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

In verse 30, Paul said that even among the elders themselves “shall men arise, speaking

perverse things, to draw away disciples after them”. To say that those who are ordained by God cannot be **“unworthy and unchaste”** is to make it a standard in the Church that it is not possible for them to sin. But Paul taught as in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):19** Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. 20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

Elders are to be held accountable by all believers.

In **Epistle LXVIII, To Florentius Pupianus**, paragraph 8, we read, **“Whence you ought to know that the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop; and if any one be not with the bishop, that he is not in the Church, and that those flatter themselves in vain who creep in, not having peace with God’s priests, and think that they communicate secretly with some; while the Church, which is Catholic and one, is not cut nor divided, but is indeed connected and bound together by the cement of priests who cohere with one another.”**

But the Church is a spiritual body, the body of Christ. Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ is baptized into it, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

The Church, the body of Christ, is **“bound together”** by the Holy Spirit, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

In **Epistle LXVIII, To Florentius Pupianus**, paragraph 9, we read, **“and rules the Church by prelates;**

The Lord rules the Church by the Holy Spirit through the ministry gifts He gives to each member, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

And in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

These ministry gifts are given by the Lord, **“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”**, as in verse 13 above.

Nothing is mentioned in the Scriptures about prelates. Bishops, that is elders, are just as accountable to the Holy Spirit as any believer. We will all have to give account of the things

done in our body, as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

In **Epistle LXIX, To Januarius**, in paragraph 1, we read, **“When we were together in council, dearest brethren, we read your letter which you wrote to us concerning those who seem to be baptized by heretics and schismatics, (asking) whether, when they come to the Catholic Church, which is one, they ought to be baptized. On which matter, although you yourselves hold thereupon the truth and certainty of the Catholic rule, yet since you have thought that of our mutual love we ought to be consulted, we put forward our opinion, not as a new one, but we join with you in equal agreement, in an opinion long since decreed by our predecessors, and observed by us,—judging, namely, and holding it for certain that no one can be baptized abroad outside the Church, since there is one baptism appointed in the holy Church. And it is written in the words of the Lord, “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out broken cisterns, which can hold no water.” (Jeremiah 2:13) And again, sacred Scripture warns, and says, “Keep thee from the strange water, and drink not from a fountain of strange water.” (Proverbs 9:19 LXX) It is required, then, that the water should first be cleansed and sanctified by the priest, that it may wash away by its baptism the sins of the man who is baptized; because the Lord says by Ezekiel the prophet: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your filthiness; and from all your idols will I cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” (Ezekiel 36:25-26)”**

There is one church, the body of Christ, and there is one baptism, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):4** There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; **5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

But the Church is a spiritual body, and Jesus is the door of entrance, as we read in **John 10 (KJV):7** Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. **8** All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. **9** I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

It is by faith in Jesus Christ that we enter into the Church, which is His body.

In **Epistle LXIX, To Januarius**, in paragraph 2, we read, **“But, moreover, the very interrogation which is put in baptism is a witness of the truth. For when we say, “Dost thou believe in eternal life and remission of sins through the holy Church?” we mean that remission of sins is not granted except in the Church, and that among heretics, where there is no Church, sins cannot be put away.”**

But Paul taught as in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. **11** For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. **12** For there is no difference between the Jew and the

Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Eternal life and remission of sins are what receive when we believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus. We are not dependent on anyone but the Lord. Our faith is in Him, and not in a church. He is the one we are accountable to.

In **Epistle LXIX, To Januarius**, in paragraph 3, we read, **“But if he cannot give the Holy Spirit, because he that is appointed without is not endowed with the Holy Spirit, he cannot baptize those who come; since both baptism is one and the Holy Spirit is one, and the Church founded by Christ the Lord upon Peter, by a source and principle of unity, is one also.”**

But the Church founded by Christ the Lord was not upon Peter, but upon Christ. And remission of sins is given to whosoever believes in Jesus Christ, as Peter preached in **Acts 10 (KJV):42** And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. 44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

In **Epistle LXX, To Quintus**, paragraph 1, we read, **“to the true and only and legitimate baptism of the Catholic Church, not considering that it is written, “He who is baptized by one dead, what availeth his washing?” (Ecclesiasticus 34:25) Now it is manifest that they who are not in the Church of Christ are reckoned among the dead; and another cannot be made alive by him who himself is not alive, since there is one Church which, having attained the grace of eternal life, both lives for ever and quickens the people of God.”**

But the Church doesn't quicken, that is make alive, the people of God. People are born of the Spirit of God when they believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and they confess Him as Lord. It is God who gives birth to those who believe in Jesus Christ, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Church in Cyprian's time thought that eternal life was grace, which could be lost if one committed a grievous sin. Grace refers to how eternal life is given by God, as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Eternal life is something that we have when we believe on the name of the Son of God, as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Eternal life is something we receive by the grace of God, which is His unmerited favor. Eternal life is the life of our spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ, and we are born from above by the Holy Spirit.

In **Epistle LXX, To Quintus**, paragraph 3, we read, **“For neither did Peter, whom first the Lord chose, and upon whom He built His Church, when Paul disputed with him**

afterwards about circumcision, claim anything to himself insolently, nor arrogantly assume anything; so as to say that he held the primacy, and that he ought rather to be obeyed by novices and those lately come.”

But Peter was not the “**first the Lord chose**”, nor was he the one “**upon whom He built His Church**”. In Matthew 16:18, two Greek words are used. The one for Peter is petros, a stone, or a piece of rock. The one for “rock” is petra, a massive rock. And Peter was not the first whom the Lord chose, but his brother Andrew was the first according to the Gospel of John. But Cyprian is correct in what he said about Peter in that Peter did not assume “**that he held the primacy**”.

In **Epistle LXX, To Quintus**, paragraph 3, we read, “**For we are not overcome when better things are presented to us, but we are instructed, especially in those matters which pertain to the unity of the Church and the truth of our hope and faith; so that we, priests of God and prelates of His Church, by His condescension, should know that remission of sins cannot be given save in the Church, nor can the adversaries of Christ claim to themselves anything belonging to His grace.**”

But “**remission of sins**” is not given by the Church, but through faith in His name, as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV):43** To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Cyprian is adding another layer between God and the believer. The believer must go through the “**priests of God and prelates of His Church**” to get “**remission of sins**”.

In **Epistle LXXI, To Stephen**, paragraph 1, we read, “**For then finally can they be fully sanctified, and be the sons of God, if they be born of each sacrament; since it is written, “Except a man be born again of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)**”

Cyprian misread John 3:5. The word “again” is not in the Greek text. It should read as in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

When Jesus mentioned “water”, he was referring to the birth of flesh, as we continue in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

When one is born again, or more literally “born from above”, they are “born of the Spirit”. Before we believe in Jesus Christ, our spirit is dead in offenses and sins, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest.

But when we believed in Jesus Christ, God made us alive, as we continue in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly

places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the boundless riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Our spirit was given birth by the Holy Spirit, for “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” as in John 3:6 above. Being born of the Holy Spirit, our spirit now has eternal life.

Cyprian did not understand the Scripture. He thought that one had to “**be born of each sacrament**”, that is of water baptism, and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. But the birth of our spirit happens when we believe in Jesus, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an empowering for serving the Lord, as Jesus taught in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This is not a birth, and it happens after one believes in Jesus Christ and is born of the Holy Spirit.

In **Epistle LXXII, To Jubaianus**, paragraph 2, we read, “**Because Novatian also usurps the honour of the priestly throne, ought we therefore to renounce our throne?**”

Cyprian speaks of the “**priestly throne**”. Not only is there no special priestly order, which is separate from the royal priesthood of all believers, but also no such throne of priests is mentioned in the Scriptures.

In **Epistle LXXII, To Jubaianus**, paragraph 3, we read, “**and thenceforward until the present day, so many thousands of heretics in our provinces have been converted to the Church, and have neither despised nor delayed, nay, they have both reasonably and gladly embraced, the opportunity to attain the grace of the life-giving laver and of saving baptism.**”

To Cyprian and the early Church, baptism meant receiving grace at baptism which could be lost if one committed a grievous sin. There was no understanding of the Biblical truth about regeneration.

In **Epistle LXXII, To Jubaianus**, paragraph 5, we read, “**Does he know the same Son, Christ born of the Virgin Mary, who as the Word was made flesh, who bare our sins, who conquered death by dying, who by Himself first of all originated the resurrection of the flesh, and showed to His disciples that He had risen in the same flesh?**”

Cyprian was a believer.

In **Epistle LXXII, To Jubaianus**, In paragraph 7, we read, “**For first of all the Lord gave that power to Peter, upon whom He built the Church, and whence He appointed and showed the source of unity—the power, namely, that whatsoever he loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven.**”

To Cyprian and the early Church, God had given them the power to bind whatsoever they felt they should bind, and loose whatsoever they felt they should loose. But Jesus taught as in **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Jesus is building His Church, and He is directing everything by the Holy Spirit. And so we read in **Psalms 127 (KJV):1** Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build

it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

When Jesus was on earth, He was led by the Spirit, as we read in **Luke 4 (KJV):1** And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

And in the same way we are to be led by the Spirit, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

As we do so we will accomplish the works He has ordained for us to do, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

In **Epistle LXXII, To Jubaianus**, paragraph 9, we read, **“And therefore, because they had obtained a legitimate and ecclesiastical baptism, there was no need that they should be baptized any more, but only that which was needed was performed by Peter and John; viz., that prayer being made for them, and hands being imposed, the Holy Spirit should be invoked and poured out upon them, which now too is done among us, so that they who are baptized in the Church are brought to the prelates of the Church, and by our prayers and by the imposition of hands obtain the Holy Spirit, and are perfected with the Lord’s seal.**

The sealing of the Holy Spirit happens when we believe, as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):13** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

And in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):30** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

And in **2 Corinthians 1 (KJV):22** Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

When we are born from above by the Holy Spirit, we have the Holy Spirit. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is an empowering for ministry, as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

In **Epistle LXXII, To Jubaianus**, paragraph 10, we read, **“The Church, setting forth the likeness of paradise, includes within her walls fruit-bearing trees, whereof that which does not bring forth good fruit is cut off and is cast into the fire. These trees she waters with four rivers, that is, with the four Gospels, wherewith, by a celestial inundation, she bestows the grace of saving baptism. Can any one water from the Church’s fountains who is not within the Church?”**

It is faith in Christ, not the Church, that saves, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Nowhere in the Scriptures is the Church said to bestow **“the grace of saving baptism”**.



This was a misunderstanding of the Scriptures in the early Church. It is the “word of faith” preached by the Holy Spirit that saves us, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

In **Epistle LXXIII, To Pompey**, in paragraph 5, we read, **“Otherwise He who is sent will be greater than Him who sends; so that one baptized without may begin indeed to put on Christ, but not to be able to receive the Holy Spirit, as if Christ could either be put on without the Spirit, or the Spirit be separated from Christ. Moreover, it is silly to say, that although the second birth is spiritual, by which we are born in Christ through the laver of regeneration, one may be born spiritually among the heretics, where they say that the Spirit is not.”**

Again, baptism doesn’t save us. It is the word preached by the Holy Spirit that the Lord uses to convict us of our sin, and causes us to have faith in Jesus Christ. God can use any believer to preach His word of faith. It does not matter what church you belong to, but it matters who you have faith in.

In **Epistle LXXIII, To Pompey**, paragraph 6, we read, **“But what a thing it is, to assert and contend that they who are not born in the Church can be the sons of God! For the blessed apostle sets forth and proves that baptism is that wherein the old man dies and the new man is born, saying, “He saved us by the washing of regeneration.” (Titus 3:5)”**

When one hears the Gospel and receives Jesus Christ, they are born of God, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Whoever believes in Him receives remission of sins, as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV):43** To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

So the washing of regeneration is the remission of sins when we believe in Jesus Christ. Water baptism is a type of the cleansing that happens when we have believed in Jesus Christ. Water baptism is not the actual cleansing of sins but it is typical of it.

In **Epistle LXXIII, To Pompey**, paragraph 6, we read, **“For it is the Church alone which, conjoined and united with Christ, spiritually bears sons;”**

The Church does not bear sons, but God uses believers in the Church, which is His body, to preach the word by which we believe, and then we are born of God, as we read in John 1:13 above.

In **Epistle LXXIII, To Pompey**, paragraph 7, we read, **“But further, one is not born by the imposition of hands when he receives the Holy Ghost, but in baptism, that so, being already born, he may receive the Holy Spirit, even as it happened in the first man Adam. For first God formed him, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. For the Spirit cannot be received, unless he who receives first have an existence. But as the birth of Christians is in baptism, while the generation and sanctification of baptism are with the**

**spouse of Christ alone, who is able spiritually to conceive and to bear sons to God, where and of whom and to whom is he born, who is not a son of the Church, so as that he should have God as his Father, before he has had the Church for his Mother?"**

Adam's body existed when God formed him, but Adam was not alive until God breathed into him the breath of life. Adam became alive when his spirit was breathed into him by God. And when our spirit is come into our body, our soul is created as well. One does have to exist before he can receive the Holy Spirit. And we are composed of body, soul, and spirit. Our spirit is dead to God in offenses and sins. This is why we must be born again. But the birth of Christians is not in baptism, but when one believes in Jesus Christ. That is when we pass from death to spiritual life in our spirit, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The spiritual birth of one who believes in Jesus Christ happens like the wind, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

It is God who adds to His Church, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):47** Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

We don't know where the wind will blow next, but God does.

In **Epistle LXXIV, Firmilian to Cyprian**, in paragraph 4, we read, "Moreover, *we do this* that some remedy may be sought for by repentance for lapsed brethren, and for those wounded by the devil after **the saving laver**, not as though they obtained remission of sins from us, but that by our means they may be converted to the understanding of their sins, and may be compelled to give fuller satisfaction to the Lord."

**Firmilian**, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, was writing to Cyprian about a letter of Stephen, Bishop of Rome. He mentions "**the saving laver**", referring to water baptism.

In **Epistle LXXIV, Firmilian to Cyprian**, paragraph 14, we read, "**But if the spouse of Christ is one, which is the Catholic Church, it is she herself who alone bears sons of God.**"

It is interesting that the early Church thought that they were already married to Christ. But Paul says that we are to be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ, as we read in **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):2** For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

The marriage supper of the Lamb is still future, as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):6** And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

This will happen sometime after the rapture.

In **Epistle LXXIV, Firmilian to Cyprian**, paragraph 16, we read, “**But what is the greatness of his error, and what the depth of his blindness, who says that remission of sins can be granted in the synagogues of heretics, and does not abide on the foundation of the one Church which was once based by Christ upon the rock, may be perceived from this, that Christ said to Peter alone, “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19)**”

But Jesus didn't say this to Peter alone. He also spoke this to the disciples, as we read in **Matthew 18 (KJV):1** At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And Jesus then said in **Matthew 18 (KJV):18** Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

And the “rock” was Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

In **Epistle LXXIV, Firmilian to Cyprian**, paragraph 16, we read, “**Therefore the power of remitting sins was given to the apostles, and to the churches which they, sent by Christ, established, and to the bishops who succeeded to them by vicarious ordination.**”

This was the theory of apostolic succession. Irenaeus was the bishop of Lyons, which is in present day France, from about a.d. 177 to a.d. 202. Irenaeus codified the theory of apostolic succession. He wrote the following in his 5 books entitled **Against Heresies**:

**Book 3: Chapter III.—A refutation of the heretics, from the fact that, in the various Churches, a perpetual succession of bishops was kept up.**

“1. It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times; those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about. For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to “the perfect” apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.

2. Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the

apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.”

The early Church began to rely on the “apostolical tradition” that “has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.”

But the reliance on tradition was proven by the Jews to be unreliable. And so we read in **Matthew 15 (KJV)**: 1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

In **Epistle LXXIV, Firmilian to Cyprian**, paragraph 17, we read, “**And in this respect I am justly indignant at this so open and manifest folly of Stephen, that he who so boasts of the place of his episcopate, and contends that he holds the succession from Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were laid, should introduce many other rocks and establish new buildings of many churches; maintaining that there is baptism in them by his authority.**”

This sounds logical for the Church is one body. But it is a spiritual body. That is, it is a body led by the Holy Spirit. Cyprian and the early Church interpreted the Scriptures to mean that God has given the power of binding and loosing to the apostles who then were succeeded by the bishops. And they interpreted the power of binding and loosing to mean that they must do whatever they thought best as long as it was in accordance with what they thought was the tradition handed down by the apostles. But the reliance on tradition only leads the Church to rely on the commandments of men, and not those of God. Our reliance must be on the Scripture as illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

In **Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church**, paragraph 5, we read, “**Thus also the Church, shone over with the light of the Lord, sheds forth her rays over the whole world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body separated. Her fruitful abundance spreads her branches over the whole world. She broadly expands her rivers, liberally flowing, yet her head is one, her source one; and she is one mother, plentiful in the results of fruitfulness: from her womb we are born, by her milk we are nourished, by her spirit we are animated.**”

Cyprian is teaching the tradition of the Catholic Church in his time. While Cyprian says that the Church is **“shone over with the light of the Lord”**, he then says that the Church **“sheds forth her rays over the whole world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body separated.”** But the Church is the body of Christ which is composed of members who still have sin in their flesh, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):**14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul then speaks of **“the law of sin which is in my members”**, as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV):**21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

After we accept Christ and we are born again, sin still dwells in our members as a nature. Our bodies are still mortal. When we are raised at the resurrection, our bodies will become immortal and free from all sin.

The Church in Cyprian’s time did not understand that all the members, including the bishops, have a sin nature. All the members must be held accountable to the word of God, rightly divided. It is the only thing that we can rely on, for it is inspired by God, as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):**16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The head of the Church is not Peter but Christ. We are not born from **“her womb”** but from the Holy Spirit who blows like the wind. We are not **“nourished”** by **“her milk”** but by the milk of the word of God, as Peter taught in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):**1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

In **Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church**, paragraph 6, we read, **“He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother.”**

There is no place in the Scriptures that would support this statement. It is God who places the believer in the body of Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And so we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):**30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Our spiritual birth is of God, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):**12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

In **Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church**, paragraph 6, we read, **“He who does not hold this unity does not hold God’s law, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation.”**

Again, this is not supported by the Scriptures. We are not saved by holding the unity of the Church, but we are “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”, as in Ephesians 4:3. We do this by being lead by the Spirit.

In **Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church**, paragraph 8, we read, **“Do you think that you can stand and live if you withdraw from the Church, building for yourself other homes and a different dwelling, when it is said to Rahab, in whom was prefigured the Church, “Thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all the house of thy father, thou shalt gather unto thee into thine house; and it shall come to pass, whosoever shall go abroad beyond the door of thine house, his blood shall be upon his own head?” (Joshua 2:19)”**

Cyprian is taking this Scripture out of context. There is no evidence in the Scriptures that Rahab prefigures the Church. There is no other name but the name of Jesus whereby we are saved, as Peter preached in **Acts 4 (KJV):8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Cyprian is adding to the Scriptures on the basis that he, as a bishop, is a successor of the apostles, and as such, he believes he has the authority to bind and loose whatever he thinks he should bind and loose.

In **Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church**, paragraph 14, we read, **“He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church; he cannot attain unto the kingdom who forsakes that which shall reign there.”**

But the Church is a spiritual body composed of all who have been added to it by the Lord, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):47** Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. It is the spiritual birth of the Holy Spirit that adds us to Christ’s body, the Church.

In **Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church**, paragraph 14, we read, **“They cannot dwell with God who would not be of one mind in God’s Church.”**

Cyprian is adding to the Scripture. There is no such condition for salvation in the Scriptures.

In **Treatise II, On the Dress of Virgins**, paragraph 2, we read, **“considering as well as knowing that our members, when purged from all the filth of the old contagion by the sanctification of the laver of life, are God’s temples, and must not be violated nor polluted, since he who does violence to them is himself injured”.**

It is not the laver of life that purges us **“from all the filth of the old contagion”**, but it is the blood of Christ, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJ):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The early Church was relying on a tradition that was a misinterpretation of the Scriptures.

In **Treatise II, On the Dress of Virgins**, paragraph 2, we read, **“but there is no further pardon for sinning after you have begun to know God.”**

But the apostle John wrote as in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

God has made provision for us by the blood of Jesus Christ to be forgiven of all our sins, even after we have been born again. Our faith and hope is in God, as we read in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):18** Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

In **Treatise III, On the Lapsed**, paragraph 6, we read, **“Not a few bishops who ought to furnish both exhortation and example to others, despising their divine charge, became agents in secular business, forsook their throne, deserted their people, wandered about over foreign provinces, hunted the markets for gainful merchandise, while brethren were starving in the Church.”**

According to Cyprian’s own testimony, not all bishops could be trusted. And Cyprian again mentions **“their throne”**.

In **Treatise III, On the Lapsed**, paragraph 16, we read, **“Penitence is driven forth from their breasts, and the memory of their very grave and extreme sin is taken away.”**

Cyprian is speaking of the “lapsed”, who denied Christ in order not to suffer martyrdom. But instead of repentance, he speaks of **“Penitence”**, which became penance, which is “an act of self-abasement, mortification (see MORTIFICATION sense 3), or devotion performed to show sorrow or repentance for sin”. **Merriam Webster Dictionary**

One had to make atonement for their sins by some form of suffering for their sins in the time of Cyprian. Penance began to replace repentance, which is simply having a change of mind about our sin, and a turning to God.

In **Treatise III, On the Lapsed**, paragraph 16, we read, **“nor long and full penitence deprecate the Lord so grievously offended, although it is written, “Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent.” (Revelation 2:5)”**

To deprecate means “to make little of”. **Merriam Webster Dictionary**

So Cyprian is saying that even a **“long and full penitence”** would “make little” of how **“grievously offended”** the Lord was because of the sin of the Lapsed. But the Scripture says in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In **Treatise III, On the Lapsed**, paragraph 17, we read, **“The Lord alone can have mercy. He alone can bestow pardon for sins which have been committed against Himself, who bare our sins, who sorrowed for us, whom God delivered up for our sins.”**

And Cyprian has written correctly here. And so we read as in **Romans 8 (KJV):32** He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? **33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

In **Treatise III, On the Lapsed**, paragraph 34, we read, **“In such a case there remains only penitence which can make atonement.”**

Penitence is something we would do to make atonement for sin. But we receive the atonement by the Lord Jesus Christ, as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):11** And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

It is the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

In **Treatise III, On the Lapsed**, paragraph 35, we read, **“after losing the raiment of Christ, you must be willing now to have no clothing; after the devil’s meat, you must prefer fasting; be earnest in righteous works, whereby sins may be purged; frequently apply yourself to almsgiving, whereby souls are freed from death. (Matthew 25:36)”**

And we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):36** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

But the **“raiment of Christ”** is the righteousness of God. This **“raiment”** is given to us when we believe in Jesus Christ, and God justifies us, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; **22** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: **23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

And so we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? **32** He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? **33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. **34** Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

It is the continuous intercession of Christ for us by His blood that keeps us. And so we read in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, **5** Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto



salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Once we have faith in Jesus Christ, we are not our own, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

In **Treatise IV, On the Lord's Prayer**, paragraph 3, we read, "Let us therefore, brethren beloved, pray as God our Teacher has taught us. It is a loving and friendly prayer to beseech God with His own word, to come up to His ears in the prayer of Christ. Let the Father acknowledge the words of His Son when we make our prayer, and let Him also who dwells within in our breast Himself dwell in our voice. And since we have Him as an Advocate with the Father for our sins, let us, when as sinners we petition on behalf of our sins, put forward the words of our Advocate. For since He says, that "whatsoever we shall ask of the Father in His name, He will give us," (John 16:23) how much more effectually do we obtain what we ask in Christ's name, if we ask for it in His own prayer! (John 14:6)"

This was good encouragement by Cyprian.

In **Treatise IV, On the Lord's Prayer**, paragraph 12, we read, "**And this we daily pray for; for we have need of daily sanctification, that we who daily fall away may wash out our sins by continual sanctification.**"

And he refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **10** Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. **11** Give us this day our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Although we have a standing of righteousness before the Lord, our old ways of thinking and hurts in our past will be cleansed as we walk in the light and grow in grace and knowledge.

In **Treatise IV, On the Lord's Prayer**, paragraph 18, we read, "**When, therefore, He says, that whoever shall eat of His bread shall live for ever; as it is manifest that those who partake of His body and receive the Eucharist by the right of communion are living, so, on the other hand, we must fear and pray lest any one who, being withheld from communion, is separate from Christ's body should remain at a distance from salvation; as He Himself threatens, and says, "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall have no life in you."** (John 6:53)"

But we must put the words of Jesus in their proper context. And so we read in **John 6 (NASB):52** Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" **53** So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. **54** The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. **55** For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. **56** The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him. **57** Just as the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, the one who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. **58** This is the bread that came down out of heaven, not as the fathers ate and died; the one who eats this bread will live forever."

Jesus then explained, as we continue in **John 6 (NASB):59** These things He said in the

synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. 60 So then many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, “This statement is very unpleasant; who can listen to it?” 61 But Jesus, aware that His disciples were complaining about this, said to them, “Is this offensive to you? 62 What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh provides no benefit; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit, and are life.

Jesus could not tell them clearly what He meant because He was not glorified yet. But He hints at it when he said in verse 62, “What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?” Then in verse 63, He explains that He didn’t speak of eating His literal flesh and blood, but of the receiving of the words that He spoke which “are spirit, and are life”. He was talking about the spiritual life we receive when we believe in Him. And as He said in verse 58, “the one who eats this bread will live forever”. When we partake of Communion, we remember what He gave us when we received Him and were born again. We are not maintaining our spiritual life by partaking of Communion, for the spiritual life we have received is eternal, as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

In **Treatise VIII, On Works and Alms**, paragraph 1, we read, “**Nor would the infirmity and weakness of human frailty have any resource, unless the divine mercy, coming once more in aid, should open some way of securing salvation by pointing out works of justice and mercy, so that by almsgiving we may wash away whatever foulness we subsequently contract.**”

The thinking of the early Church in Cyprian’s time was that all sins were forgiven when one was born again by baptism. After baptism, it was thought that one had to atone for any sins that were committed. And so we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

But we must put what Paul wrote in context with what the apostle John wrote in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we don’t walk in the light, God will discipline us, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

But the Lord will never forsake us, as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

In **Treatise VIII, On Works and Alms**, paragraph 2, we read, “**The Holy Spirit speaks in the sacred Scriptures, and says, “By almsgiving and faith sins are purged.” (Proverbs 16:6) Not assuredly those sins which had been previously contracted, for those are purged by the blood and sanctification of Christ. Moreover, He says again, “As water extinguisheth fire, so almsgiving quencheth sin.” (Ecclesiasticus 3:30) Here also it is shown and proved, that as in the laver of saving water the fire of Gehenna is extinguished, so by almsgiving and works of righteousness the flame of sins is subdued. And because in baptism remission of sins is granted once for all, constant and ceaseless labour, following**

**the likeness of baptism, once again bestows the mercy of God.**

And also in paragraph 2, **“Further, admonishing, and showing whence we may be clean and purged, He added that alms must be given.”**

We must remember that it is our faith in Jesus Christ that saves us, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):**8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

It is our faith that gives us a standing of righteousness before God who has justified us. If we sin after being born again, we confess our sins, as John says in **1 John 2 (KJV):**1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And in **1 John 1 (KJV):**9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

As we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):**7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

In **Treatise, VIII, On Works and Alms**, paragraph 25, we read, **“Such, then, was the abundance in labours, as was the agreement in love, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles: “And the multitude of them that believed acted with one heart and one soul; neither was there any distinction among them, nor did they esteem anything their own of the goods which belonged to them, but they had all things common.” (Acts 4:32) This is truly to become sons of God by spiritual birth; this is to imitate by the heavenly law the equity of God the Father.”**

And Jesus taught as in **Matthew 7 (KJV):**15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

We are known by the fruit that we produce. As we are changed, our fruit will prove what the will of God is, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):**1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

In **Treatise X, On Jealousy and Envy**, paragraph 18, we read, **“Think of the heavenly kingdom, to which the Lord does not admit any but those who are of one heart and mind.”**

But Cyprian is adding to the Scriptures here. We will become of one **“heart and mind”** as we grow in grace and knowledge after we have been born again. It is not a condition of

salvation but a growth in Him.

In **Treatise XI, Exhortation to Martyrdom**, paragraph 11, we read, **“The mother’s praise was great in her exhortation to virtue, but greater in the fear of God and in the truth of faith, that she promised nothing to herself or her son from the honour of the six martyrs, nor believed that the prayer of the brothers would avail for the salvation of one who should deny, but rather persuaded him to become a sharer in their suffering, that in the day of judgment he might be found with his brethren.”**

Cyprian himself became a martyr in a.d. 258.

In **Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews**, paragraph 1, we read, **“All the days of thy life, my son, keep God in mind, and transgress not His precepts. Do justice all the days of thy life, and do not walk in the way of unrighteousness; because if thou act truly, there will be respect of thy works. Give alms of thy substance, and turn not thy face from any poor man. So shall it come to pass that the face of God shall not be turned away from thee. Even as thou hast, my son, so do: if thou hast abundant substance, give the more alms therefrom; if thou hast little, communicate even of that little. And do not fear when thou givest alms: thou layest up for thyself a good reward against the day of need; because alms delivereth from death, and does not suffer to go into darkness. Alms is a good office for all who do it in the sight of the most high God.” (Tobias 4:5-11)**

Tobias is an apochryphal book, and not in the canon of Scripture. But in the time of Cyprian it was accepted as Scripture.

In **Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews**, paragraph 1, we read, **“Also in the same place: “Sins are purged away by alms-giving and faith.” (Proverbs 16:6)”**

But this verse actually reads as in **Proverbs 16 (KJV):6** By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

In **Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews**, paragraph 1, we read, **“As water extinguishes fire, so alms-giving extinguishes sin.” (Ecclesiasticus 3:30)**

Ecclesiasticus is another apochryphal book, and not in the canon of Scripture. But in the time of Cyprian it was accepted as Scripture.

In **Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews**, paragraph 1, we read, **“Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and this will entreat for thee from all evil.” (Ecclesiasticus 29:12)**

This thinking about alms would lead ultimately to the belief in indulgences.

In **Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews**, paragraph 1, we read, **“That alms are to be denied to none, also in the same place: “Give to every one that asketh thee; and from him who would wish to borrow, be not turned away.” (Matthew 5:42)”**

And so we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):42** Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

In **Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews**, paragraph 1, **“Concerning this same matter in the Gospel according to Luke: “Sell your possessions, and give alms.” (Luke 12:33) Also in the same place: “He who made that which is within, made that which is without also. But give alms, and, behold, all things are pure unto you.” (Luke 11:40-41)”**

We read in context in **Luke 12 (KJV):**27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? 29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

And we read in context in **Luke 11 (KJV):**37 And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. 38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. 39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. 40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. 42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

In **Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jew**, paragraph 27, we read, **“That even a baptized person loses the grace that he has attained, unless he keep innocency.”**

The difference between standing and state was not understood in the early Church. When one has faith in Jesus Christ, they are justified, and God imputes His righteousness down to their account. It wasn't grace that was put down to the believer's account, but the righteousness of God. Our state relates to our thoughts and feelings at any given moment in time. This will change as we walk in the light of His word, and we grow in grace and knowledge. As we become aware of sin in our life, we confess it and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

In **THE SEVENTH COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE UNDER CYPRIAN, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics, The Judgment of Eighty-Seven Bishops on the Baptism of Heretics**, we read,

*Proœmium.*—When Stephen, Bishop of Rome, Had by His Letters Condemned the Decrees of the African Council on the Baptism of Heretics, Cyprian Lost No Time in Holding Another Council at Carthage with a Greater Number of Bishops. Having Therefore Summoned Eighty-Seven Bishops from Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, Who Assembled at Carthage in the Kalends of September, a.d. 258, This Third Council on the Same Matter of Baptism Was Then Celebrated; At the Beginning of Which, After the Letters on Either Side Had Been Read, Cyprian, by Implication, Condemns the Assumption of Stephen.

When, in the Kalends of September, a great many bishops from the provinces of Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, had met together at Carthage, together with the presbyters and deacons, and a considerable part of the congregation who were also present; and when the letter

of Jubaianus written to Cyprian had been read, as also the reply of Cyprian to Jubaianus, about baptizing heretics, and what the same Jubaianus had subsequently rejoined to Cyprian,— Cyprian said:...”**For neither does any of us set himself up as a bishop of bishops, nor by tyrannical terror does any compel his colleague to the necessity of obedience; since every bishop, according to the allowance of his liberty and power, has his own proper right of judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another.**”

Cyprian did not acknowledge any bishop as preeminent. But this was developing in the Roman church whose bishop would someday declare himself as the supreme pontiff over all the other churches.

Novatus of Thamugada said: “Although we know that all the Scriptures give witness concerning the saving baptism, still we ought to declare our faith, that heretics and schismatics who come to the Church, and appear to have been falsely baptized, ought to be baptized in the everlasting fountain; and therefore, according to the testimony of the Scriptures, and according to the decree of our colleagues, men of most holy memory, that all schismatics and heretics who are converted to the Church must be baptized; **and moreover, that those who appeared to have been ordained must be received among lay people.**”

So “all schismatics and heretics who are converted to the Church must be baptized”, and must not be allowed to continue as a bishop. The early Church had a clergy-laity structure to it, and did not realize that every member in the body of Christ has a function to perform according to where the Lord has placed them in His body. Some are eyes and ears, feet and hands, but all have a function. The body of Christ will grow as each part does its part.

Nemesianus of Thubunae said: “**Certain people therefore interpret for themselves ill, when they say that by imposition of the hand they receive the Holy Ghost, and are thus received, when it is manifest that they ought to be born again in the Catholic Church by both sacraments...And thus the apostle condemns, with all the wicked, those also who cause division, that is, schismatics and heretics. Unless therefore they receive saving baptism in the Catholic Church, which is one, they cannot be saved, but will be condemned with the carnal in the judgment of the Lord Christ.**”

But our salvation is ours when we accept Christ as our savior and Lord, as we read again in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. **11** For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

In **Of the Discipline and Advantage of Chastity**, paragraph 1, we read, “**I do not conceive that I have exceeded any portions of my duty, in always striving as much as possible, by daily discussions of the Gospels, to afford to you from time to time the means of growth, by the Lord’s help, in faith and knowledge. For what else can be effected in the Lord’s Church with greater advantage, what can be found more suitable to the office of a bishop, than that, by the teaching of the divine words, recommended and commented on by Him, believers should be enabled to attain to the promised kingdom of heaven?**”

The qualifications of a bishop are as we read in **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):1** This is a true

saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

And in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):24** And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

In **Of the Discipline and Advantage of Chastity**, paragraph 3, we read, **“And this also, very frequently burning without reference to sex, and not restraining itself within the permitted limits, thinks it little satisfaction to itself, unless even in the bodies of men it seeks, not a new pleasure, but goes in quest of extraordinary and revolting extravagances, contrary to nature itself, of men with men.”**

Here Cyprian condemns homosexuality, and is in agreement with Scripture, as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):27** And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

In **Of the Discipline and Advantage of Chastity**, paragraph 4, **“But chastity maintains the first rank in virgins, the second in those who are continent, the third in the case of wedlock. Yet in all it is glorious, with all its degrees. For even to maintain the marriage-faith is a matter of praise in the midst of so many bodily strifes; and to have determined on a limit in marriage defined by continency is more virtuous still, because herein even lawful things are refused.”**

But Paul warns the married in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):1** Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

## Conclusion

In the **Eulogy of Pontius** we read that Cyprian was “**chosen to the office of the priesthood and the degree of the episcopate while still a neophyte, and, as it was considered, a novice.**” Cyprian was saved in a.d. 246 and chosen to the office of bishop in a.d. 248. He was trained under the Carthaginian presbyter Cæcilius. This means that he would have been indoctrinated into the traditions of the Catholic Church at the time.

In the **Eulogy of Pontius** we read also that a “**violent rage of a cruel persecution had laid waste God’s people in the time of Cyprian**”. This is probably why the Church was so reliant on the traditions, which were thought to be handed down to them by the apostles. Being composed of Jew and Gentile, the Church struggled to maintain its true identity as the body of Christ. For the Jew, it was hard to let go of traditions, which had a long history behind them. For the Gentile, it was all new.

It is interesting that the deacon Pontius in his Eulogy calls Cyprian “**the pontiff of Christ**” who “**excelled the pontiffs of the world**”.

The term “**pontiff**” was applied to any high or chief priest in the College of Priests in the pagan religion of the Romans before Christ. Cyprian refers to “**maintaining the concord of the priestly college**” in the Church. The priesthood very early on in Church history began to take over the ministry in the early Church. The “**priestly college**” was a term that was borrowed from Roman religion.

Clearly these are not appropriate terms to describe the elders in the Church of Christians. But the early Church saw a resemblance of the “**pontiff**” to the bishop who, as overseer, was in charge so to speak. So to Pontius, “**Cyprian was the priest of God**” and “**God’s pontiff**”, and also “**the officer of Christ and God**”.

Then the “**cathedra**” was a large chair that the bishop sat in. In ancient Rome it was a chair of a leader or judge ruling from a chair, and was a sign of power. But the office of a bishop, or overseer, according to Scripture was not the office of a lord or ruler in the world. Bishops, that is elders, are to be examples to the flock and not lords, as Peter taught in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):1** The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: **2** Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **3** Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. **4** And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The early Church began to blend with the world, and to borrow terms of Roman religion and Roman government.

Now Cyprian thought that our Lord was speaking of the “**honour of a bishop and the order of His Church**” when He spoke to Peter in Matthew 16:18-19, because he thought that the bishops succeeded the apostles, “**so that the Church is the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers.**”

And to Cyprian, “**the lofty summit of the Priesthood**” was something that God had instituted. But there is no evidence in the Scriptures of a priesthood that is separate from all believers. All believers make up a “royal priesthood”.



To Cyprian and the early Church, Peter was the first bishop of Rome, and Peter ruled the Church from the “**sacerdotal throne**”, or “**priestly throne**”. But there is no historical evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. But Cyprian speaks of the “**priestly throne**”. Not only is there no special priestly order, which is separate from the royal priesthood of all believers, but there is also no such throne that is mentioned in the Scriptures.

Jesus spoke in **John 20 (KJV):21** Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. **22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: **23** Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

Based on this Scripture, Cyprian wrote, “**Therefore the power of remitting sins was given to the apostles, and to the churches which they, sent by Christ, established, and to the bishops who succeeded to them by vicarious ordination.**”

In order to understand what Jesus meant in John 20:21-23, we must read in context with **Matthew 26 (KJV):27** And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; **28** For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

And then we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):37** Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? **38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. **39** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The apostles had authority to tell people who received the Gospel message that their sins had been remitted because of the blood of Jesus that is “shed for many for the remission of sins”, as in Matthew 26:28 above. The apostles were not remitting their sins, but they had authority to explain that remission of sins is what happened when anyone received the Gospel message. They also had authority to tell the people that they preached the Gospel to that, if they didn’t receive the Gospel message, their sins would be retained. This is far different than actually remitting sins as the early Church began to teach.

The word “remit” in John 20:23 in the Greek is ἀφίημι (pronounced af-ee'-ay-mee); from G575 and ἵημι hīēmi (to send; an intensive form of εἶμι eīmi, to go); to send forth, in various applications (as follow):—cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g863/kjv/tr/0-1/>

Cyprian and the early Church believed that “**the bishops who succeeded**” the apostles were, by “**vicarious ordination**”, given the same authority. But there is no “**vicarious ordination**” according to the Scriptures. Every believer is a member that is set by God in the church, the body of Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. **28** And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. **29** Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? **30** Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? **31** But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

All who believe in Jesus Christ are baptized into the body of Christ, and are “members in particular”. Each member has a function to perform, depending on how the Lord has gifted them. And so we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The bishop is an overseer, and functions in a pastoral role of a local church. But the bishop is never said to be an apostle, or to replace the apostolic ministry in the Scripture.

Now because of the belief of the bishop’s succession from the apostles, Cyprian and the early Church believed that any church who could not validate their succession from an apostle was not a valid church. And so Cyprian speaks of the Catholic Church as having special fountains when he said, **“These trees she waters with four rivers, that is, with the four Gospels, wherewith, by a celestial inundation, she bestows the grace of saving baptism. Can any one water from the Church’s fountains who is not within the Church?”** Epistle LXXII, To Jubaianus, paragraph 10

And Cyprian says, **“For it is the Church alone which, conjoined and united with Christ, spiritually bears sons;”** Epistle LXXIII, To Pompey, paragraph 6

And Cyprian says, **“But if the spouse of Christ is one, which is the Catholic Church, it is she herself who alone bears sons of God.”** Epistle LXXIV, Firmilian to Cyprian, paragraph 14

And Cyprian says, **“He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother.”** Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church, paragraph 6

And Cyprian says, **“He who does not hold this unity does not hold God’s law, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation.”** Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church, paragraph 6

If you left the Catholic Church in Cyprian’s time, you lost salvation. And if you didn’t keep the unity of the Church, you didn’t **“hold life and salvation.”**

And Cyprian says, **“They cannot dwell with God who would not be of one mind in God’s Church.”** Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church, paragraph 14

And Cyprian says, **“Think of the heavenly kingdom, to which the Lord does not admit any but those who are of one heart and mind.”** Treatise X, On Jealousy and Envy, paragraph 18

And Cyprian says, **“Now it is manifest that they who are not in the Church of Christ are reckoned among the dead; and another cannot be made alive by him who himself is not alive, since there is one Church which, having attained the grace of eternal life, both lives for ever and quickens the people of God.”** Epistle LXX, To Quintus, paragraph 1

Cyprian and the early Church did not understand that the Church is a spiritual body. They did not understand that those who believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord are placed in the body of Christ by God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And the body of Christ is the Church, of which He is the head, as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):22** And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

It is not a matter of what church or fellowship you belong to. All who believe from the heart in Jesus Christ are baptized into the body of Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

The body of Christ is a spiritual body made up of all who have truly believed in Jesus Christ. When we are born of the Holy Spirit, our spirit receives eternal life. God is our spiritual father now. And so we read as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

If we have been born again, we are not waiting to receive eternal life. It is now in us, as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And we are now the sons of God, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Cyprian had a vision of the early Church as composed of a priestly clergy and of a “**laity**”. He did not understand that all believers have been given a place in the body of Christ by God, according to their individuality. All have a function to perform, and according to the effectual working in the measure of every part of the body of Christ, the body will grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The Church is where two or three believers are gathered together.

Cyprian makes “**the Church and the house of Christ**” out to be the “**priest of God**”. But the Church is the body of Christ, of which He is the head, as we read in **Colossians 1 (KJV):17** And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

And our great high priest is in heaven, as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):14** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Cyprian assumed that the Church was following the Lord’s commands. Therefore, he thought that God was ordaining priests, “**that is, His stewards**”, because God is ruling and governing “**all things**”. Cyprian didn’t realize that the priesthood had changed, and that we now

have a great high priest in heaven who ever lives to make intercession for us. The believer himself or herself can go directly to God without the mediation of a priest.

Cyprian also believed that God **“rules the Church by prelates”**; But the Lord Jesus is the head of the Church, who rules the Church by the Holy Spirit who leads each member in the body of Christ, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

The Holy Spirit also empowers each member in the body of Christ to minister in the place God has set them in the body of Christ.

Now also, in the thinking of Cyprian and the early Church, God had given the bishops the power to bind whatsoever they felt they should bind, and loose whatsoever they felt they should loose. But everything the Church does is to be directed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth, as we read in **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

As we continue in His word, we are truly His disciples, as we read in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

As we walk in the light of His word, which is the truth, we are made free to be all that He has made us to be.

In **Epistle LI, To Antonianus**, paragraph 29, Cyprian said, **“But if we find that none ought to be from repenting, and that peace may be granted by His priests to those who entreat and beseech the Lord’s mercy, inasmuch as He is merciful and loving, the groaning of those who mourn is to be admitted, and the fruit of repentance is not to be denied to those who grieve.”**

Cyprian thought that **“His priests”** may grant peace to those who were **“repenting”**, that is, to those who did penance.

Cyprian also says in **Epistle LXX, To Quintus**, paragraph 3, **“so that we, priests of God and prelates of His Church, by His condescension, should know that remission of sins cannot be given save in the Church, nor can the adversaries of Christ claim to themselves anything belonging to His grace.”**

Yet in **Treatise III, On the Lapsed**, paragraph 17, Cyprian said, **“The Lord alone can have mercy. He alone can bestow pardon for sins which have been committed against Himself, who bare our sins, who sorrowed for us, whom God delivered up for our sins.”**

But in the context of His writing, he is saying that the Lord alone can bestow pardon for our sins through the Catholic Church.

Cyprian is adding another layer between God and the believer. The believer must go through the priest in the Church to get **“remission of sins”** from God.

In **Treatise II, On the Dress of Virgins**, paragraph 2, Cyprian said, **“but there is no further pardon for sinning after you have begun to know God.”**

But Cyprian seems to disagree with himself in **Treatise III, On the Lapsed**, paragraph 34, where he said, **“In such a case there remains only penitence which can make atonement.”**

The early Church had to resolve these statements by Cyprian who was a faithful martyr

for Christ. Instead of going to the Scriptures, they came up with what they thought were logical conclusions of both statements. So the Roman Catholic Church now says that eternal punishment for sin is forgiven in confession, but temporal punishment for sin remains. This lead ultimately to the belief in Purgatory where those who died could atone for their temporal punishment for sin so they could go to heaven.

The website, **Catholic Answers**, says, “Confession remits the eternal punishment due to sin, but it does not remit the temporal punishment that God requires as satisfaction for our sins. While God is perfectly merciful, he is also perfectly just. It would be an injustice if there were no consequence for sin. As human beings, we also require some form of purification for our sins. Even if we have repented of our sins, the effects of our sins are still out there in the world and affect those around us.”

**<https://www.catholic.com/qa/why-punishment-after-confession>**

Sin does have consequence. But it is the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from all sin, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

It is the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from “all sin” in verse 7 above. There is no other “satisfaction for our sins”. The belief that temporal punishment still exists after confessing our sins eventually led to the belief in purgatory, which in Roman Catholic doctrine is a place or state of suffering, inhabited by the souls of sinners who have died, who are expiating their sins before going to heaven. But the Scriptures tell us that even Old Testament souls went to Abraham’s bosom, which was separate from hell by a great chasm, as Jesus taught in **Luke 16 (KJV):19** There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: **20** And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, **21** And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. **22** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; **23** And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. **24** And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. **25** But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. **26** And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. **27** Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: **28** For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. **29** Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. **30** And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. **31** And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

No intermediate place such as Purgatory is mentioned by Jesus. There was only a

“great gulf fixed” between Abraham’s bosom and hell. Before Jesus’ death on the cross, all of the righteous went to Abraham’s bosom when they died, because the way into heaven had not been made possible yet. The unrighteous went to hell.

Then we read of the thief on the cross who went to paradise, that is Abraham’s bosom, as we read in **Luke 23 (KJV):39** And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Because of the faith of the thief on the cross, he went with Jesus to paradise, that is, to Abraham’s bosom. Jesus went first to Abraham’s bosom so that He could take all of the righteous dead to heaven, which He entered by His blood. This is what Paul is explaining in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Jesus ascended into heaven itself, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Now all who die in Christ go directly to heaven. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):1** For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. 5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Now at the judgment seat of Christ, we who have believed in Jesus Christ will be judged according to what we have built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):9** For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any

man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

So if, after we are born again, all that we build is wood, hay, or stubble, we will still be saved, “yet so as by fire” in verse 15. This is not speaking of a purgatory, but of our bad choices in this life, which will be like a fire that we will go through before we die. And if we “defile the temple of God”, we will suffer the sin unto death, which we read of in **1 John 5 (KJV):** 16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

The “brother” in verse 16 is a brother in the Lord. If a brother or sister in the Lord commits a sin unto death, they do not lose their salvation. But they will go to be with the Lord earlier than they would have, if they would not have committed this sin.

And example of this sin is given in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):** 23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

So in verse 30 we read that many are weak and sickly, and many sleep because of eating the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner. To sleep here is speaking of death. Then in verse 32, we read that, “when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world”.

Committing the sin unto death does not mean that they will be condemned with the world, but that they are chastened of the Lord. And according to the seriousness of their sin, death is how they are chastened.

Instead of finding their answers in the Scriptures, the early Church tried to reconcile all of the writings of their bishops. This led to more and more errors in interpretation of the Scriptures, until finally to the Reformation.

Losing one's salvation was part of the thinking of the early Church. They did not understand the security of the believer. To the early Church, if you denied the Lord you suffered

the loss of your salvation. They did not understand the security of the believer as Peter showed when he denied the Lord three times and yet the Lord received him back.

To Cyprian and the early Church, one was saved when they were baptized. That is, they received the grace to be saved. This grace could be lost, and so salvation would then be lost. But salvation could be restored through repentance.

Cyprian also said, **“For then finally can they be fully sanctified, and be the sons of God, if they be born of each sacrament; since it is written, “Except a man be born again of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)”** Epistle LXXI, To Stephen, paragraph 1

To Cyprian and the early Church, the “water” referred to the first sacrament of baptism, and when one was baptized, it meant the receiving of grace which could be lost if one committed a grievous sin. The second sacrament by which one was born was thought to be the laying on of hands and receiving of the Holy Spirit. But there was no understanding of the Biblical truth about regeneration in the early Church. The early Church did not understand that when one believes in Jesus Christ, they are born again by the Holy Spirit. Their spirit now has a new divine nature, for whatever is born of Spirit is spirit. Their flesh is still mortal with a sin nature. Their soul, which is their mind, will, conscience, heart, and feelings will undergo a progressive sanctification in this life. If one has truly believed, they have passed from death to life. If all one builds after believing is wood, hay, or stubble, they will still be saved but will suffer for their bad choices in this life.

The thinking of the early Church in Cyprian’s time was that all sins were forgiven when one was born again by baptism. After baptism, it was thought that one had to atone for any sins that were committed.

To Cyprian and the early Church, communion meant keeping the life of salvation, as he says, **“When, therefore, He says, that whoever shall eat of His bread shall live for ever; as it is manifest that those who partake of His body and receive the Eucharist by the right of communion are living, so, on the other hand, we must fear and pray lest any one who, being withheld from communion, is separate from Christ’s body should remain at a distance from salvation; as He Himself threatens, and says, “Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall have no life in you.” (John 6:53)”** Treatise IV, On the Lord’s Prayer, paragraph 18

Cyprian and the early Church did not understand that the Lord Jesus was speaking of His death on the cross, which would atone for our sins. The bread and the wine were a type of what He would suffer on the cross. Our faith in His death on the cross is what gives us eternal life.

And so we read in **John 6 (KJV):35** And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

And in **John 6 (KJV):54** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

And in **John 6 (KJV):62** What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Jesus is saying that the Holy Spirit quickeneth, that is, gives us spiritual life in our spirit when we believe in Him. It is not about eating His literal flesh, but about believing in what His



death on the cross has done for us.

And Cyprian said, **“That even a baptized person loses the grace that he has attained, unless he keep innocency.”** Treatise XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jew, paragraph 27

In the early Church and the time of Cyprian, it was believed that one attained grace at baptism, and this grace could be lost unless they **“keep innocency”**.

And Cyprian said, **“after losing the raiment of Christ, you must be willing now to have no clothing; after the devil’s meat, you must prefer fasting; be earnest in righteous works, whereby sins may be purged; frequently apply yourself to almsgiving, whereby souls are freed from death. Treatise III, On the Lapsed, paragraph 35**

And Cyprian said, **“And this we daily pray for; for we have need of daily sanctification, that we who daily fall away may wash out our sins by continual sanctification.”** Treatise IV, On the Lord’s Prayer, paragraph 12

And Cyprian said, **“Further, admonishing, and showing whence we may be clean and purged, He added that alms must be given.”** Treatise VIII, On Works and Alms, paragraph 2

This thinking about alms would lead ultimately to the belief in indulgences. But the Scripture says that we need only confess our sins, and He is faithful to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Cyprian and the early Church misunderstood many Biblical truths in the Scriptures, but they were still saved by God’s grace. Cyprian himself was a faithful martyr for Christ. And in **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 17, we read that, **“He had been a standard-bearer, who was accustomed to teach concerning the bearing of Christ’s standard; he had been an enemy of the gods, who commanded the idols to be destroyed. Moreover, he gave example to his friends, since, when many were about to follow in a similar manner, he was the first in the province to consecrate the first-fruits of martyrdom.”**

And Cyprian held a twofold meaning of the word “martyr”, which is according to Scripture. First, a martyr is one who considers himself dead to sin and walks in the light of the word of God. Second, a martyr is one who is physically slain for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Cyprian was a believer. His writings give us a telescopic view into the thinking of the early Church, and helps us understand why the Church would need to go through a reformation.