

# Cyprian Summary

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## Summary

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.**”

In **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 6, the “*cathedra*” was a large chair that the bishop sat in.

In **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 8, a **violent rage of a cruel persecution had laid waste God’s people in the time of Cyprian.**

In **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 9, 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.

In **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 11, **Cyprian was the priest of God and “God’s pontiff”.**

In **The Eulogy of Pontius**, paragraph 16, to Pontius, and the early Church, Cyprian was “**the officer of Christ and God**”.

And Cyprian was a faithful martyr for Christ.

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.**”

In **Epistle XXIV. To Moyses and Maximus and the Rest of the Confessors**, paragraph 1, Cyprian says, “**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.**”

And in paragraph 2 he says, “**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, 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 founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers.**”

The Lapsed were afraid of losing their salvation if they suffered torture. This was their excuse for denying the Lord.

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.

In **Epistle XXIX. The Presbyters and Deacons Abiding at Rome, to Cyprian**. Paragraph 1, we read, “**The presbyters and deacons abiding at Rome, to Father Cyprian, greeting.**”

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.

And in Paragraph 2 we read, “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.

And in paragraph 3, 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;

In **Epistle LI. To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian**. Paragraph 1,

he mentions the “**priestly college**”, which was a term that was borrowed from Roman religion.

In **Epistle LI. To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian**. Paragraph 8, Cyprian mentions “**the lofty summit of the Priesthood**”, which he thought 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.

And Cyprian says that “**he cannot have the ordination of the Church who does not hold the unity of the Church.**”

In **Epistle LI. To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian**. Paragraph 11, he says, “now when Trophimus returned to the Church, and atoned for, and with the **penitence** of prayer confessed his former error”.

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, return. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H7725**

In the Old Testament, when one repented, or returned, they had to offer sacrifice for their sin, which would be, in the thinking of the early Church, an atonement. This was a misunderstanding of the word “repentance”. But when we look at the Hebrew we 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.

In **Epistle LI. To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian**. Paragraph 24, he says, “**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.**”

In the early Church, one had to maintain the unity of the Roman Catholic Church, and if one did not maintain the unity of the Church, he was **“not a Christian”**. But this is not a condition for salvation according to the Scripture.

To Cyprian and the early Church, salvation was maintained by keeping **“the unity of the spirit”** and **“of the Church.”**

In **Epistle LI. To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian**. Paragraph 29, 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.”**

Cyprian thought that **“His priests”** may grant peace to those who did penance.

In **Epistle LIV. To Cornelius, Concerning Fortunatus and Felicissimus, or Against the Heretics**. Paragraph 5, 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 can go directly to God without the mediation of a priest.

In **Epistle LIV. To Cornelius, Concerning Fortunatus and Felicissimus, or Against the Heretics**. Paragraph 13, he says, **“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, that is, by doing penance. 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, that 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 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 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. The Church is where two or three believers are gathered together.

And in paragraph 14, he 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:

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.

In **Epistle LVI. To Cornelius in Exile, Concerning His Confession**. Paragraph 3, he says, **“Does he now acknowledge who is the priest of God; which is the Church and the house of Christ;”**

Cyprian makes **“the Church and the house of Christ”** out to be the **“priest of God”**. The Church is a spiritual body, that is, the body of Christ

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.

In **Epistle LXVIII. To Florentius Pupianus, on Calumniators**. Paragraph 1, he says, **“and after God the Judge who makes priests”**. And he says, **“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?”**

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.

In **Epistle LXVIII. To Florentius Pupianus, on Calumniators**. Paragraph 8, he says, **“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.”**

And in Paragraph 9, he 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;”**

Cyprian believed that God **“rules the Church by prelates”**;

The Lord has set all believers in His body, 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 Lord rules the Church by the Holy Spirit through the ministry gifts He gives to each member.

In **Epistle LXIX. To Januarius and Other Numidian Bishops, on Baptizing Heretics.** Paragraph 2, he 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.”**

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.

Eternal life and remission of sins is 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 a church. He is the one we are accountable to.

In **Epistle LXIX. To Januarius and Other Numidian Bishops, on Baptizing Heretics.** Paragraph 3, he 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.”**

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.

Then in **Epistle LXX. To Quintus, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics.** Paragraph 1, he 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.”**

And in Paragraph 3 he says, **“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, Jesus said that He would build the Church upon the massive rock of Peter’s testimony that He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

And Cyprian says, **“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.”**

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 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.

In **Epistle LXXI. To Stephen, Concerning a Council.** Paragraph 1, he 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”.

**Jesus explained to Nicodemus 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.

That “a man be born of water” speaks of “That which is born of the flesh is flesh;” Then “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” refers to the spiritual birth one receives in their spirit when one believes in Jesus, and confesses Him as Lord, and is born of the Spirit.

In **Epistle LXXII. To Jubaianus, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics.** Paragraph 2, 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 no such throne is mentioned in the Scriptures also.

In Paragraph 3 he says, “**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 Paragraph 5 he says, “**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?**”

But Cyprian was a definitely believer in Jesus Christ.

In **Epistle LXXII. To Jubaianus, Concerning the Baptism of Heretics.**, Paragraph 7, he 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.**”

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.

Jesus 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.

Then in Paragraph 10 he says, **“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?”**

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;

In **Epistle LXXIII. To Pompey, Against the Epistle of Stephen About the Baptism of Heretics.**, Paragraph 6, he says, **“For it is the Church alone which, conjoined and united with Christ, spiritually bears sons;”**

And in Paragraph 7 he says, **“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. When we are born of the Spirit, we 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.

In **Epistle LXXIV. Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, to Cyprian, Against**

**the Letter of Stephen. a.d. 256., Paragraph 14, Firmilian says, “But if the spouse of Christ is one, which is the Catholic Church, it is she herself who alone bears sons of God.”**

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.

In **Epistle LXXIV. Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, to Cyprian, Against the Letter of Stephen. a.d. 256.** Paragraph 16, Firmilian says, **“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.”**

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

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, and wrote, “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.” **Against Heresies, Book 3: Chapter III**

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.”**

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.”**

And he add in paragraph 6, **“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 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. The one who believes in Jesus has passed from death to life as in John 5:24.

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.

In **Treatise III, On the Lapsed**, paragraph 17, **“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.”**

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.

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.”**

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)”**

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. But 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.

In **Treatise VIII, On Works and Alms**, paragraph 2, we read, **“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 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 XII, Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews**, paragraph 1, Cyprian

quotes from Tobias, which is an apochryphal book, and he says, **“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)

Ecclesiasticus is another apochryphal book which he quotes from, and it is also not in the canon of Scripture. His thinking about alms would lead ultimately to the belief in indulgences.

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. 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.

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, “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 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.

And we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

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 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.

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 led 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, and “all unrighteousness” in verse 9. 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. And their spirit now has eternal life. 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.