

“THE NATURAL LIKENESS OF THE SON”:
CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA’S PNEUMATOLOGY

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Abstract

In this thesis, I examine the pneumatology of Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444). Cyril was one of the foremost exegetes and theologians of the patristic period, and so was a figure of considerable importance in the history of the development of Christian theology. Of central concern for Cyril throughout his writings was the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, a fact that is unsurprising given that the archbishop came to prominence shortly after pneumatological controversies in the late fourth century were addressed through the calling of the council of Constantinople in 381.

I demonstrate in this study that Cyril's understanding of the Holy Spirit revolves primarily around his identity as the Spirit of the Son and the soteriological ramifications of the unity of the Spirit with the Son. Although Cyril is insistent that the Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, it is his relationship with the latter that receives particular attention. This accentuation on the unity that exists between the Spirit and the Son influences Cyril's interpretation of potentially problematic passages of scripture, particularly those that refer to the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to Jesus Christ. His emphasis on the unity of the Spirit and the Son also profoundly shapes his perception of the Spirit's person and his role in the salvation of humanity. He portrays the Spirit largely with respect to his likeness to the Son, and ties the Spirit's soteriological operations directly to this likeness. Cyril does not engage in the kind of trinitarian speculation regarding eternal relations as is found in Augustine's *De Trinitate*. He focuses rather on the interaction of God with the created order and what this interaction tells us about God as triune. Cyril's emphasis on the Spirit as the Spirit of the Son is borne out of his perception that the mystery of God has been revealed to us concretely in the person of Christ, and therefore that our understanding of the Holy Spirit is inextricable from the revelation of the incarnate Word and the soteriological possibilities Christ extended to all humanity. I argue that Cyril constructs a pneumatology wherein the far-reaching soteriological role of the Holy Spirit in relation to Jesus Christ is delineated, and in the process provides a conception of the Holy Spirit that is nuanced and vigorous.

My examination of Cyril's pneumatology involves analysis of his understanding of the identity and divinity of the Holy Spirit vis-à-vis the Father and the Son, the role of the Spirit in the incarnation and life of the Son, and the particular soteriological work of the Spirit in the individual believer as well as in the formation, structure, and unity of the church. Primary attention is given to three works: *De Trinitate Dialogi* (*Dialogues on the Trinity*), written 423-25; *In Joannem* (*Commentary on the Gospel of John*), written 425-28; and *In Lucam* (*Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*), written c. 430. In addition to these writings, I draw on various other commentaries written by the archbishop, as well as on his anti-Nestorian compositions.

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I am thankful for those at McMaster and elsewhere who give me the gift of their friendship. I would like particularly to thank Justin Neufeld, Justin Klassen, and Paul Doerksen, all of whom were my colleagues and friends in the department of Religious Studies and all of whom continually challenge me to be a better scholar and person.

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Note on Citations and Translations

Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Cyril's writings are my own. Translations of Cyril's *In Joannem* are based on the edition by P.E. Pusey, *Sancti Patris nostril Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Joannis Evangelium*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1872). For my translations I have consulted the two-volume English translation, *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* by S. Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, i, P.E. Pusey (Oxford: James Parker, 1874); ii, Thomas Randell (London: Walter Smith, 1885). Significant portions of *In Joannem* have also been translated by Norman Russell in *Cyril of Alexandria* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

Translations of *De Trinitate Dialogi* are based on the edition by G.M. de Durand, *Dialogues sur la Trinité*, 3 vols., *Sources Chrétiennes* 231, 237, 246 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1976, 1977, 1978).

Translations of *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias*, as well as Cyril's anti-Nestorian letters, are based on the edition by Edward Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, tomus primus, volumen primus, pars primapars septima *Concilium Universale Ephesinum* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927-9). I have also consulted the edition of some of Cyril's letters by Lionel Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). For my translations of *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias* I have consulted P.E. Pusey, *S. Cyril Archbishop of Alexandria: Five Tomes against Nestorius, Scholia on the Incarnation, Christ is One, Fragments against Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, the Synousiasts* (Oxford: James Parker, 1881). I have also consulted those portions of *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias* translated by Russell.

For my translations of Cyril's anti-Nestorian letters I have consulted John A. McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology and Texts* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004); J.I. McEnerney, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Letters 1-50* and *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Letters 51-110* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1987); and Wickham's aforementioned edition of Cyril's letters.

Translations of *In Lucam* are based on the Greek fragments we possess of this work found in the edition by Joseph Reuss, *Lukas-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984). I have endeavoured not to rely overmuch on those portions of this commentary that we possess only in a Syriac translation of the Greek. For my translations I have consulted R. Payne Smith, *A Commentary upon the Gospel according to S. Luke by S. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1859). Citations of the few fragments we possess of Cyril's commentary on Matthew are based on the edition by Joseph Reuss, *Matthäus-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957).

Translations of *Quod Unus sit Christus* are based on the edition by G.M. de Durand, *Deux dialogues christologiques, Sources Chrétiennes* 97 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1964). For my translations I have consulted John A. McGuckin, *On the Unity of Christ: St Cyril of Alexandria* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995).

Citations of Cyril's tenth paschal homily are based on the edition by W.H. Burns, *Lettres festales (VII-XI), Sources Chrétiennes* 392 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1993). I

have used an unpublished translation of the tenth paschal homily by John J. O’Keefe in my study.

All other citations of Cyril’s work are based on the edition by J.P. Minge, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, vols. 68-77 (Paris, 1859).

Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the Bible are from the Revised Standard Version.

Introduction

The Son is the pure image of the Father, and his Spirit is the natural likeness of the Son.¹
In Joannem 17.20-21

In this study, I shall examine a central component of Cyril of Alexandria's theology: his doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Cyril's legacy as a theologian of merit is not one that has been overly appreciated, either by his contemporaries or by modern scholarship. Upon his death in 444 he left behind many enemies, and the following oft-quoted remarks on Cyril's death undoubtedly reflect the opinion of some of those who were caught in the archbishop's theological line of fire:

At last with a final struggle the villain has passed away....His departure delights the survivors, but possibly disheartens the dead; there is some fear that under the provocation of his company they may send him back again to us....Care must therefore be taken to order the guild of undertakers to place a very big and heavy stone on his grave to stop him coming back here.²

Cyril has been further vilified by scholars in recent centuries, particularly in the English-speaking world. In *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon calls Cyril the "tyrant of Alexandria"³ and describes him as a ruthless politician and dogmatician.⁴ Cyril's reputation in the English-speaking world was further damaged by Charles Kingsley's work of historical fiction, *Hypatia*, in which serious questions were raised regarding the archbishop's role in her massacre.⁵ It was, in fact, at least partly due

¹ *In Jo.* 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 731⁸⁻¹⁰).

² As quoted in Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria* (New York: Routledge, 2000),

3. These remarks are attributed to Theodoret of Cyrrhus (*Ep.* 180 [PG 83, 1489C-1491A]), one of the Antiochene theologians to face Cyril's ire.

³ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: Volume II – 395 A.D.-1185 A.D.* (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), 825.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 814-26.

⁵ Cf. John A. McGuckin, "Cyril of Alexandria: Bishop and Pastor," in Daniel A. Keating and Thomas G. Weinandy (eds), *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A*

to Kingsley's characterization of Cyril that the archbishop's writings were omitted from the late-Victorian translation of patristic texts, the *Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.⁶ A negative impression of Cyril as an unscrupulous politician of questionable moral character continues to overshadow his significant theological accomplishments,⁷ and it is worthwhile, before I provide the outline of my study, briefly to recount the archbishop's life and work in order to situate him more accurately as one of the most significant theologians of the fifth century.

A Biographical Sketch

Although little is known of his father, it is known that Cyril's mother left her hometown of Memphis as an infant, under the care of her adolescent brother Theophilus, after their parents had died. Upon entering the catechumenate in Alexandria, Theophilus came to the attention of Athanasius, who took both siblings under his wing. Both were

Critical Appreciation (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), note 9, p. 208. Regarding Kingsley's account of Hypatia's death, Christopher Haas writes: "Charles Kingsley's lurid rendering of the story owes more to his polemic against Edward Pusey and the Tractarian movement than to a sober assessment of the ancient sources" (*Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997], 307).

⁶ McGuckin (2003), note 9, p. 208; Andrew Louth, "Cyril of Alexandria," in Lewis Ayres, et al. (eds), *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 353.

⁷ In his introduction to patristic theology, Maurice Wiles refers to Cyril as "unscrupulous" (*The Christian Fathers* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1982], 77). William C. Placher, in a collection of primary texts that is frequently used in introductory courses on Christianity, writes the following about Cyril: "Ambitious and scheming, Cyril is not one of the more attractive figures in the history of theology" (*Readings in the History of Christian Theology: Volume 1 – From its Beginnings to the Eve of the Reformation* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988], 71). And in a recent collection of primary texts, Bart Ehrman and Andrew S. Jacobs, while acknowledging Cyril to be brilliant, define him principally in terms of the violent events that occurred during the early years of his episcopacy (*Christianity in Late Antiquity 300-450 C.E.: A Reader* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], 182).

baptized by him, and Theophilus was taken into Athanasius' household to be groomed for an ecclesiastical career while Cyril's mother was placed under the care of a community of virgins where she remained until her marriage.

Cyril was born c. 378, and was therefore seven years old, the age at which children were first sent to school,⁸ when his uncle Theophilus was made archbishop of Alexandria. Little is known about the specifics of Cyril's early life and education, although various attempts have been made to reconstruct what he may have been exposed to intellectually as a young boy on the basis of our knowledge of educational structures in the fourth and fifth centuries and on the character of Cyril's writings.⁹ Like other children from prosperous families, both Christian and non-Christian, Cyril's primary education would have consisted in a rigorous regiment of memorisation as a means of attaining literacy.¹⁰ Once he had gained proficiency in reading and in arithmetic in his primary education, his secondary education would have had as its focus the study of classical Greek literature, including Homer, Euripides, Menander, and Demosthenes.¹¹ After secondary school Cyril would have undertaken higher education in rhetoric, a key

⁸ Cf. H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, George Lamb, trans. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 142.

⁹ Cf. E.R. Hardy, "The Further Education of Cyril of Alexandria (412-44): Questions and Problems," *Spirit* 17 (1982), 116-22; John A. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), reprint (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 4; Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 5.

¹⁰ This process is described in Marrou (1956), 150-9.

¹¹ Russell (2000), 5; Marrou (1956), 161-4. For more on the classical Greek literature and Christian education, see Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 76-81.

facet of higher studies at the time,¹² and indeed Cyril's later writings demonstrate his mastery of this art. It is also likely that Cyril studied philosophy as part of his higher education.¹³ However, as Robert Grant has demonstrated, much of his knowledge of philosophy was mediated through Christian sources, such as Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicon* and *Praeparatio evangelica* and Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus* and *Stromata*, thus illustrating that Cyril's training in, and knowledge of, philosophy was not extensive.¹⁴ In contrast, Cyril's early writings suggest that he received an extensive Christian education, perhaps at the hands of Egyptian monks,¹⁵ which provided him with a thorough immersion in the scriptures and in the writings of the church fathers, including Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Didymus the Blind (who himself died the year Cyril likely began his formal education¹⁶), the Cappadocian Fathers, Jerome, and John Chrysostom.¹⁷ No father, however, played as influential a role in Cyril's thought as

¹² See Marrou (1956), 194-205.

¹³ See *ibid.*, 206-16. Marrou here points out that philosophy was often a component of higher education.

¹⁴ "Greek Literature in the Treatise *De Trinitate* and Cyril *Contra Julianum*," *Journal of Theological Studies* 15 (1964): 265-299.

¹⁵ Lionel R. Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), xii-xiii.

¹⁶ McGuckin (2004), 4.

¹⁷ That Cyril expresses cordial familiarity with Chrysostom is somewhat surprising given that the former accompanied Theophilus to the Synod of the Oak in 403, a synod that deposed Chrysostom from the episcopal throne of Constantinople. For more on this synod and Cyril's involvement in it, see J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom: Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 211-27, 287-8. For the influence of the other fathers listed above on Cyril's thought, particularly in terms of his exegesis of scripture, see McGuckin (2004), 3; Russell (2000), 16; Robert Louis Wilken, "Cyril of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Old Testament," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, Daniel A. Keating and Thomas G. Weinandy, eds. (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 16; Lawrence J. Welch, *Christology and*

Athanasius. Many have pointed out that the predominant theological, and particularly christological, emphases in Cyril's work owe much to his familiarity with Athanasius.¹⁸ Throughout his writings, both before and after the Nestorian controversy, Cyril often appeals to the authority of Athanasius, whose theological formulations Cyril evidently understood to be the standard of Christian orthodoxy.

Three days after the death of Theophilus in 412, Cyril ascended, amidst great tumult, to the throne of St. Mark, having been groomed for the position by his uncle.¹⁹ The first years following his elevation were indeed stormy. He embarked on a campaign to seize Novatianist churches; he played a role in the temporary expulsion of Jews from Alexandria after they attacked a group of Christians; and he was implicated in the mob-violence that culminated in the slaying of Hypatia in 415. Opinion varies regarding Cyril's involvement in the latter two events. Socrates Scholasticus, a supporter of Nestorius and one of the historians upon whom we rely for our knowledge of these incidents, expresses strong animosity toward Cyril in his rendering.²⁰ That Cyril was antipathetic towards heretics, Jews, and pagans cannot be gainsaid, and that these events occurred under his tenure is indisputable. However, as Wickham argues, the picture the facts "yield is not of a fanatical priest, hungry for power, heading a howling mob, but of

Eucharist in the Early Thought of Cyril of Alexandria (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1994), 10-2.

¹⁸ Cf. McGuckin (2004); 176-7; Russell (2000), 21; Wickham (1983), xv; Steven A. McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ: A Reconstruction of Cyril of Alexandria's Christology* (Boston: E.J. Brill, 2000), 18.

¹⁹ The circumstances of Cyril's election are recounted by Haas (1997), 297-8.

²⁰ Cf. Haas (1997), 308; McGuckin (2004), 7; Wickham (1983), xvi.

an untried leader attempting, and initially failing, to master popular forces.”²¹ After his tumultuous election to the archbishopric in a city of numerous communal groups where outbreaks of violence were a prominent feature of everyday life,²² Cyril may have wanted to consolidate his position and that of the church in Alexandria. In addition to being based on his zeal for theological and exegetical truth, Cyril’s vocal opposition to heretics, Jews, and paganism in his early years might thus have been an expression of a sense of political vulnerability. Cyril appears, however, to have been incapable of harnessing violent expressions of this opposition among the Christian populace. The violent incidents of his early episcopacy, therefore, speak more to Cyril’s lack of prudence as a young archbishop than to his moral character.

More significant during this early period was Cyril’s substantial literary output.²³ Between 412, when he was consecrated as archbishop, and 423, Cyril devoted himself to extensive exegetical work. During this period he composed two major commentaries on the Pentateuch, a work entitled *De Adoratione et Cultu in Spiritu et Veritate* focused on showing the unity of the Old and New Testaments, a massive five book commentary on Isaiah, and a commentary on the minor prophets of similar size.²⁴ Between 423 and 428, when the Nestorian controversy erupted, Cyril focused his attention on the refutation of

²¹ Wickham (1983), xvi.

²² Cf. Haas (1997), 8-12.

²³ For a listing of Cyril’s early works see Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria’s Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 5.

²⁴ It is difficult to provide specific dates for these works. See George Jouassard, “L’Activité Littéraire de Saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie jusqu’à 428,” in *Mélanges E. Podechard* (Lyons: Facultés Catholiques, 1945), 159-74. He simply suggests that these works were written prior to 423.

Arianism, perhaps due to the continued influence of Arianism among simpler believers in Alexandria.²⁵ Three substantial works emerge from this period, all devoted in large part to the doctrine of the Trinity: *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate* (written between 423-25), *De Trinitate Dialogi* (423-25), and *In Joannem* (425-28),²⁶ a twelve-book commentary on the gospel of John. Cyril probably also began *Contra Julianum* during this period, a work written as a refutation of paganism.

After 428 Cyril focused almost all his attention on Nestorianism, writing numerous letters and treatises, the largest of which was *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias*, composed during the spring of 430.²⁷ It was also during this time that he composed *In Lucam*, a commentary on the gospel of Luke in the form of sermons; while only fragments of the Greek are in our possession, the entirety of the commentary is preserved in a Syriac translation. Political factors undoubtedly played some role in the controversy that erupted between the archbishop of Constantinople and the archbishop of Alexandria. However, Henry Chadwick has convincingly demonstrated that Cyril's concerns were primarily theological, and that he was genuinely troubled by the soteriological ramifications of Nestorius' christology, specifically in terms of the eucharist.²⁸ What

²⁵ Cf. Russell (2000), 21-2.

²⁶ See *ibid.*, as well as George Jouassard, "La Date des écrits antiariens de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," in *Revue Bénédictine* 87 (1977), 172-78; Wickham (1983), note 19, pp. xvii-xviii.

²⁷ Russell (2000), 130.

²⁸ "Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy," in *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 2 (1951), 145-61. See also Wickham (1983), xix-xxviii; McGuckin (2004), 21: "In the great conflict that was now to unfold, the issues cannot be reduced merely to the level of personality clashes, or even to the complex issue of the precedence of sees, or the involved political machinations of the imperial court...for what

began as an exchange of polemical letters between Cyril and Nestorius regarding whether Mary could be called *Theotokos* (God-bearer), developed into a full-blown confrontation between two christological schools of thought, the Alexandrian and the Antiochene. This confrontation culminated in the Council of Ephesus in 431, and while Nestorius was formally condemned by the council, it took two more years after the council before formal reconciliation occurred between Alexandria and Antioch.²⁹ Cyril spent the remaining years of his life clarifying his teachings (particularly to those who disagreed with his reconciliation with Antioch) and composing small treatises on such topics as christology, the Nicene Creed, and anthropology.³⁰ He died on 27 June 444, leaving behind a tremendous wealth of theological teaching.

Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology

Studies of Cyril have appeared in recent years that have endeavoured to take seriously the archbishop's significant theological contributions. These include studies of Cyril's christology by John A. McGuckin,³¹ Bernard Meunier,³² and Steven McKinion;³³ Marie-Odile Boulnois' authoritative examination of his trinitarian theology;³⁴ Lawrence

was about to clash was no less than two great schools of ecclesiastical reflection, piety, and discourse."

²⁹ For an in depth account of the Nestorian crisis, see McGuckin (2004), 20-125; Russell (2000), 31-58. See also Rodolph Yanney, "Life and Work of Saint Cyril of Alexandria," in *Coptic Church Review* 19 (1998), 24-6.

³⁰ Russell (2000), 56-8.

³¹ McGuckin (2004).

³² *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie: L'humanité, le salut et la question monophysite* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1997).

³³ McKinion (2000).

³⁴ *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Herméneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1994).

J. Welch's analysis of his eucharistic theology;³⁵ Norman Russell's translation of key Cyrillian texts;³⁶ a collection of excellent essays on various facets of Cyril's theology;³⁷ and a pivotal analysis of his soteriology by Daniel Keating.³⁸ These studies, particularly those of Boulnois and Keating, reveal Cyril to be a theologian of significant depth who was able to deal deftly with complex theological issues in nuanced and original ways.

In the study that follows, I hope to contribute further to our understanding of Cyril as one of the foremost theologians of the patristic period through an analysis of his pneumatology. Of central concern for Cyril throughout his writings, particularly in his anti-Arian compositions, was the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This is unsurprising given that the archbishop came to prominence very shortly after pneumatological controversies in the late fourth century were addressed through the calling of the council of Constantinople in 381. Here the assembled bishops endeavoured to articulate a clearer understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, and in particular, a clearer declaration of the Holy Spirit's identity and work than had been developed hitherto. Patristic trinitarian and pneumatological speculation did not cease with the conclusion of this council, as various theologians, Cyril among the most prominent, sought to develop a thorough understanding of the Holy Spirit. Pneumatological themes thus loom large in Cyril's thought, from the identity and divinity of the Holy Spirit vis-à-vis the Father and the Son,

³⁵ Welch (1994).

³⁶ Russell (2000).

³⁷ Daniel A. Keating and Thomas G. Weinandy (eds), *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (New York: T & T Clark, 2003).

³⁸ *The Appropriation of the Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

to the role of the Spirit in and during the incarnation of the Son, to the particular soteriological work of the Holy Spirit in the believer and in the church.

However, despite the centrality of the Holy Spirit in Cyril's theology, his pneumatology has yet to be the subject of intensive study.³⁹ Scholarship on Cyril has tended to be dominated by focus upon his christological insights,⁴⁰ which is perhaps understandable when one considers the tremendous influence that Cyril's christology – particularly as it was formulated during his conflict with Nestorius – had on the development of Christian doctrine. However, as already noted, Cyril's anti-Nestorian compositions comprise only a portion of his corpus, and the archbishop's pneumatology is a pivotal facet of his thought that merits attention.

I shall demonstrate in this study that the archbishop's understanding of the Holy Spirit revolves primarily around the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son and the soteriological ramifications of the unity of the Spirit and the Son. Cyril is insistent that

³⁹ Marie-Odile Boulnois (1994) has provided perhaps the most thorough treatment of Cyril's pneumatology to this point. However, while she examines in detail Cyril's perception of the relationship of the Spirit to the Father and the Son, she does not deal overmuch with the relationship of the Spirit to the incarnate Word, nor with the soteriological role of the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁰ See the aforementioned works by McGuckin (2004), Meunier (1994), Welch (1994), and McKinion (2000). See also Chadwick (1951), 145-61; Jacques Liébaert, *La Doctrine christologique de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne* (Lille: Facultés Catholiques, 1951); Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition*, John Bowden (trans) (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975); Donald Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and a Heretic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Standard accounts of the history of Christian doctrine tend also to focus predominantly on the archbishop's christological contributions. See, for example, J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines (Fifth Edition)* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 310-330; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, volume 1 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 226-66.

the Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, but it is his relationship to the latter that receives particular attention. Cyril emphasizes the unity of the Spirit and the Son for christological reasons in that he argues for the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father on the basis of their shared possession of the Spirit. But this accentuation on the unity that exists between the Spirit and the Son profoundly shapes Cyril's perception of the Spirit's person and his role in the salvation of humankind. That is, the archbishop portrays the Spirit largely with respect to his likeness to the Son, and ties the Spirit's soteriological operations directly to this likeness.

While scholars have drawn attention to the emphasis Cyril places on the unity of the Spirit and the Son, the particular pneumatological and soteriological implications of this unity have not been adequately explored. In their discussions of Cyril's pneumatology, for example, both Boulnois and Daley refer to the relationship of the Spirit with the Son, but tend to focus on the Spirit's identity and operation with reference to his relationship to both the Father and the Son.⁴¹ In my study I shall show that the thrust of Cyril's pneumatology is christological, and that, therefore, the accent for Cyril is consistently on the Spirit as the Son's own.

Given this portrayal of the Spirit as the Spirit of the Son, the question arises whether Cyril subordinates the Spirit to the Son; such an accusation was actually levelled against the archbishop during the Nestorian crisis. I shall demonstrate that, far from subordinating the Spirit to the Son, Cyril perceives the Holy Spirit to be absolutely central in the drama of human salvation as well as the formation and unity of the church.

⁴¹ Cf. Daley (2003), 130-44; Boulnois (1994), 429-82.

The shape of the Spirit's operation is, for Cyril, necessarily christological, but this fact does not compromise the magnitude and significance of the Spirit's operation as formulated by the archbishop. My task is to outline how and why Cyril emphasizes the Spirit's unity with the Son while simultaneously positioning the Spirit as soteriologically important in his own right.

My examination of Cyril's pneumatology will be structured as follows. In the first chapter I shall provide a basic outline of the Spirit's divinity and relationship with the Father and the Son in Cyril's thought. My goal in this chapter is to provide the trinitarian framework that gives shape to the archbishop's conception of the Spirit's identity and operation. Cyril's argument for the divinity of the Holy Spirit will first be examined, with particular attention paid to his soteriological arguments for the Spirit's divinity. I shall then focus on Cyril's perception of the Spirit's relationship with the Father and the Son. The archbishop is principally concerned, not with delineating the intricate details of how and in what manner the Spirit is united with the Father and the Son, such as Augustine supplies in *De Trinitate*, but with explaining how the relationship of the Spirit to the other divine persons manifests itself in the Spirit's operation in the created order. Cyril especially highlights the Spirit's relationship with the Son, basing his reflections largely on John 14-16 and Romans 8. I shall explore the ramifications of the Spirit's unity with the Son for Cyril's perception of the Spirit's identity and operation.

In the second and third chapters I shall examine Cyril's portrayal of the Spirit's activity as manifested in and during the incarnation of the Son. The archbishop argues that the sending of the Son was the means by which it was possible for humanity to be re-

created and reborn. Central to Cyril's understanding of the way in which Jesus Christ accomplishes this for humanity is the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the incarnate Word. In the second chapter I shall focus my attention on Cyril's interpretation of Christ's miraculous conception, a conception Matthew and Luke attribute to the activity of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's role in the miraculous conception was of great interest for Cyril, particularly during his conflict with Nestorius. The descent of the Spirit at Jesus' baptism – its meaning and significance – will be the focus of my third chapter, both because it is central to Cyril's thought, and because it provides a worthwhile lens through which we can understand Cyril's perception of the fall of humanity and the means by which he conceives both the Son and the Spirit to address this problem. This descent requires some explanation in Cyril's mind given that, because the Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, the incarnate Son of God would presumably have no need of being anointed by the Spirit. As he does with the miraculous conception of Christ, Cyril argues that the significance of the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus is soteriological, not ontological. His soteriological account of Christ's baptism is, however, far more comprehensive than his account of the conception. In his interpretation of the Spirit's descent upon Christ, Cyril thus positions the Spirit as playing an integral and far-reaching role in human salvation.

It is this role that will be the subject of my fourth chapter. Cyril's soteriology is frequently characterized as being focused on deification/divinization, and his consistent citations of 2 Peter 1.4 are cited to bolster this portrayal. Without denying that deification is a component of his soteriology, I shall argue that Cyril understands Christ's

incarnation and our reception of the Holy Spirit – made possible through Christ's baptism and actualized through the bestowal of the Spirit in baptism – to be directed primarily towards our adoption as children of God. I shall demonstrate the centrality of divine filiation in Cyril's soteriology, and illustrate how and why the Spirit brings humanity to divine sonship, paying particular attention to the archbishop's understanding of participation and to the relationship between the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son and divine filiation.

In the fifth and sixth chapters, I shall address Cyril's conception of the role of the Spirit in the formation of the Christian community, the church. There are a number of facets of the relationship between pneumatology and ecclesiology in Cyril's thought that require elucidation. It will be necessary first to assess Cyril's understanding of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. Of importance here will be the role the Spirit plays, according to Cyril, in the genesis of the church under the leadership of the apostles, as well as upon continued governance of the church by the apostles' successors; this will be the subject of the fifth chapter. The archbishop predicates apostolic authority on the basis of the enlightenment the apostles and their successors receive from the Holy Spirit, an enlightenment that allows them fully to comprehend the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God and to interpret the Old Testament scriptures accurately; that is, they became capable of seeing in the Hebrew scriptures the christological nuances that were placed there through the inspiration of the Spirit. The Spirit's role in the formation and governance of the church is, for Cyril, related to the Spirit's unity with the

Son. For it is this unity that makes the Holy Spirit particularly suited to reveal Christ to those entrusted with preserving and proclaiming the truth regarding Jesus Christ.

In the sixth and final chapter I shall examine the role the Spirit plays in attaining and retaining ecclesial unity, such that the church instituted when the disciples received the Spirit remains one in its belief and practice. I shall explore what Cyril understands to be the primary characteristics of ecclesial unity. This unity is, according to the archbishop, enacted corporeally through the eucharist and spiritually through the indwelling Spirit, and Cyril posits that the latter manifests itself in a binding love that unites believers to God and to one another. Moreover, he suggests that the unity of believers one to another is based on their shared experience of divine filiation, an experience that is possible because the Spirit, as the Spirit of the Son, transforms believers to become like Christ in his sonship.

My study of Cyril's pneumatology will be based primarily on his anti-Arian compositions, particularly *De Trinitate Dialogi* and *In Joannem*. Occasional reference will also be made to the *Thesaurus*, but it is widely acknowledged that this work is largely a compendium of Athanasius' *Contra Arianos*.⁴² *De Trinitate Dialogi*, a seven-book composition written (as the title suggests) in the form of a dialogue, encompasses ideas found in the *Thesaurus* while containing more original doctrinal development. Book VII of *De Trinitate Dialogi* is devoted exclusively to the doctrine of the Holy

⁴² Liébaert (1951), 22-43; Boulnois (1994), 18-9 and "The Mystery of the Trinity according to Cyril of Alexandria: The Deployment of the Triad and Its Recapitulation into the Unity of Diversity," in Daniel A. Keating and Thomas G. Weinandy (eds), *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 75-6; McGuckin (2004), 15-16; Yanney (1998), 29.

Spirit. Cyril's *In Joannem* is a magisterial exegetical oeuvre in which the archbishop uses the gospel of John as a launching point for expanding on his soteriology, christology, and trinitarian theology. Because *In Joannem* is a verse-by-verse commentary of the gospel, Cyril does not develop these themes in a systematic manner. Nevertheless, there is in *In Joannem* much material for examination, particularly for comprehending the nuances of his pneumatology; much of my study will centre on this composition. My examination, however, will not be restricted to Cyril's anti-Arian works. When necessary and helpful I shall draw on the archbishop's anti-Nestorian writings, as well as his other exegetical works, particularly *In Lucam*. Where possible I have relied on the Greek fragments we possess of the latter.

Chapter 1: The Holy Spirit & the Divine Triad

As for the Spirit being the true likeness of the Son, hear what the blessed Paul wrote, ‘For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, and these he also called.’¹

De Trinitate Dialogi VII.639D

My purpose in this chapter is to provide an outline of Cyril’s understanding of the Spirit’s divinity and his place in the divine Triad, both of which are, as will be seen, articulated in primarily soteriological terms. It will become evident throughout this chapter that the archbishop is less concerned to delineate the precise details of the Spirit’s relationship with the Father and the Son than he is to explain how this relationship manifests itself in the Spirit’s operation in the created order. Cyril is above all concerned that his readers comprehend the extensive scope of the Spirit’s transforming activity that is undertaken in the believer and in the church, and he bases his reflections on the Spirit’s divinity and his place in the divine Triad on the biblical witness.² He does not undertake the kind of pneumatological speculation that characterizes Augustine of Hippo’s *De Trinitate* regarding the Spirit’s origination. Rather, as Brian Daley points out, Cyril is not inclined “to define the Spirit’s relation to the Father or Son, in terms of causation.” The personal origin of the Spirit within God, Daley continues, is not generally one of Cyril’s primary concerns.³

¹ *DT* VII.639D (SC 246, 166).

² Cf. Brian E. Daley, “The Fullness of the Saving God: Cyril of Alexandria on the Holy Spirit,” in Daniel A. Keating and Thomas G. Weinandy (eds), *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 116, 128-9; Boulnois (1994), 428, 527.

³ Daley (2003), 130. Cf. Boulnois (1994), 500.

More important for Cyril is simply the manner in which scripture describes the Spirit and his soteriological activities. According to the archbishop, scripture reveals that the Spirit is divine, and Cyril appeals to a myriad of biblical texts to prove this point. He posits that scripture illustrates the Spirit's divinity both by referring to him indirectly as God and by ascribing to him activities that could only be ascribed to one who is God himself. In the first section of this chapter I shall sketch out a number of the principal arguments formulated by Cyril to prove that the Spirit is necessarily on the divine side of the ontological gulf that separates the created from the uncreated. These arguments are primarily formulated on soteriological grounds, and I shall particularly highlight the archbishop's position that the Spirit's role in our participation in the divine nature proves his divinity.

After looking at Cyril's defence for the Spirit's divinity, I shall proceed to examine his understanding of the place of the Spirit in the Trinity. In addition to its witness to the Spirit's divinity, scripture, according to Cyril, describes the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father. In the second section of this chapter I shall examine how Cyril articulates the Spirit's unity with the Father, paying particular attention to the biblical and soteriological thrust of this articulation.

However, Cyril insists that scripture portrays the Spirit as the Spirit of both the Father *and* the Son, and in the third section I shall examine what, according to the archbishop, the Father and the Son's dual possession of the Spirit tells us about the identity and work of the Holy Spirit. In this section I shall address Cyril's usage of the language of procession to describe the Spirit's relationship with the Father and the Son,

demonstrating that this language is not used in a technical sense, but in a manner that is intended primarily to underline the unity of the Spirit with the Father and the Son and to enunciate how this unity is made manifest in the created order.

I shall also focus specifically on arguably the most important facet of Cyril's understanding of the Spirit's place in the Trinity: the particular relationship of the Holy Spirit with the Son. Although Cyril refers to the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father, and to the Spirit as the common possession of the Father and the Son, he devotes most of his attention to the Spirit's identity as the Son's own, arguing that the unity of the Spirit and the Son is such that the Spirit bears the Son's likeness. Basing this idea on the biblical witness, particularly John 14-16 and Romans 8, Cyril emphasizes, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, that the relationship of the Spirit to the Son has profound soteriological ramifications.

The Divinity of the Holy Spirit

At the beginning of book VII of *De Trinitate Dialogi*, a book entirely devoted to the Holy Spirit, Cyril submits that his purpose is to address the "subtleties of heretics" by which they oppose "unerring and true knowledge" regarding the third person of the Trinity.⁴ He does not name his opponents, but he categorizes them into two groups. There are those who simply declare that the Spirit of God is created and originate

⁴ DT VII.631C, D (SC 246, 140).

(κτιστὸν καὶ γενητὸν).⁵ Subtler are those who believe that the Spirit is neither God nor a creature, but one who has an intermediary nature.⁶

The latter position Cyril attacks immediately for the faulty cosmological and ontological logic underlying it, arguing that there can be no intermediary position between God and creation, that, in fact, “a most complete difference (τελειωτάτη διαφορά)” separates divine nature from created nature.⁷ The Spirit is either divine, and thus eternal, or he is created. As Cyril writes in his exegesis of John 14.23, “nothing that exists escapes the distinction of having been created (τὴν τοῦ πεποιηθῆναι δόξαν) except the living God alone.”⁸ Therefore, there can be, according to Cyril, no ontological middle ground between the two.⁹

But what are we to do with the fact that scripture nowhere explicitly calls the Holy Spirit ‘God,’ a fact that all of his opponents highlight? Throughout *De Trinitate Dialogi* VII, as well as in other texts, Cyril endeavours to prove the Spirit’s divinity on the one hand by arguing that the scriptures distinguish the Holy Spirit with “divine

⁵ Ibid.632A (SC 246, 142). It is unclear why Cyril chose to use two terms, whose meaning is essentially the same, to designate the created status of the Spirit. Cf. Lampe, 310-11, 784.

⁶ On Cyril’s pneumatological interlocutors, see Boulnois (1994), 404-10. Boulnois suggests that the first error probably corresponds to an extremist position represented by the Eunomians and the Tropici of the fourth century. The second error probably corresponds to the views represented by the disciples of Eustathius of Sebaste, also of the fourth century. Whether Cyril was addressing viewpoints held by his contemporaries, or whether he was using these viewpoints simply as a foil for the formulation of his own pneumatology is unknown.

⁷ DT VII.632B (SC 246, 142).

⁸ In Jo. 14.23 (Pusey, ii. 499²⁻³).

⁹ DT VII.632C-633A (SC 246, 142-44). The cosmology Cyril briefly articulates here is one he shares with Athanasius and Athanasius’ immediate predecessors. For more on this facet of Athanasius’ thought, see Peter Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000), 149-58.

properties (θεότητος ἰδιώμασιν),”¹⁰ and so demonstrate that the Spirit is on the divine side of the ontological gulf separating God from the originate. Before approaching Cyril’s portrayal of the inter-trinitarian relations, I shall first recount some of the archbishop’s arguments for the Spirit’s divinity, arguments based entirely on the ways in which the Spirit’s work and person are discussed in scripture.

While acknowledging that scripture does not refer directly to the Spirit as God, Cyril argues that it consistently elevates the Holy Spirit to the level of divinity. He submits that the Spirit is frequently associated with God in the Old and the New Testaments. To make his case for the former he reads divergent texts from the Old Testament in conjunction with one another, a move made possible by his implicit understanding of the unity of the Bible.¹¹ For example, Cyril points to Isaiah 63.14, which, in reference to the Israelites under Moses’ leadership, states, “the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest.” He then argues for the Spirit’s divinity by pointing to Deuteronomy where reference is simply made to God being with the Israelites: “The great Moses, knowing that the Spirit is Lord and God, thus says, ‘The Lord alone led them and there was no foreign god with them’ [Deut 32.12].”¹² And though God reminds the Israelites in Deuteronomy 9.7 that they “provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the

¹⁰ DT VII.635D-E (SC 246, 154).

¹¹ Ibid.648A-D (SC 246, 190-92). On Cyril’s use of cross references and his understanding of the unity of the Old and New Testaments, see Frances M. Young. “The ‘Mind’ of Scripture: Theological Readings of the Bible in the Fathers,” in *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7.2 (2005), 134; *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 246-50; *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 262-3.

¹² DT VII.648A-B (SC 246, 192).

wilderness,” we find out from Isaiah 63.9-10 that Moses was actually referring to the Holy Spirit. For, as Isaiah writes regarding the Israelites, “they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.”¹³ Therefore, whereas Moses spoke simply of God in Deuteronomy, Isaiah fills out the divine picture by explaining that Moses’ references to God were, in fact, references to the Holy Spirit.

In the New Testament, Cyril directs our attention, for example, to Acts 5.3-4 and argues that Peter implicitly refers to the Holy Spirit as God when he says in verse three that Ananias lied to the Spirit and then clearly states in verse four, “You have not lied to men but to God.” If, Cyril argues, God is superior to the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is not consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with God, then insult would not have been given to God when it was given to the Spirit.¹⁴ The fact that, according to Peter, Ananias lied to God when he lied to the Holy Spirit is proof that the Spirit enjoys the “honour of consubstantiality (ὁμοουσιότητι τιμᾶν) with God.”¹⁵

Moreover, Cyril maintains that the Spirit’s divinity can be established by examining the divine properties accorded to him in the scriptures.¹⁶ God is characterized in the Bible, according to Cyril, as “unquantifiable (ἄποσον), infinite (ἄπεριόριστον), and inexpressibly great (ἄμέγεθες).”¹⁷ God said as much when he spoke by the prophet Jeremiah, “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” (Jer 23.24). And the apostle Paul writes of the Son that “[h]e who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that

¹³ Ibid.648B-C (SC 246, 192).

¹⁴ Ibid.636D (SC 246, 156).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.648D-649C (SC 246, 192-94).

¹⁷ Ibid.648E (SC 246, 192-94).

he might fill all things” (Eph 4.10). The archbishop maintains that the Holy Spirit is discussed in similar terms throughout scripture. In Psalm 139.7-8 the psalmist writes, “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!” And in the Wisdom of Solomon we are told that the “Spirit of the Lord has filled the world” and that he “holds all things together” (Wis 1.7).¹⁸ Such ascriptions, according to Cyril, demonstrate that the Holy Spirit surpasses all created things by nature (φυσικῶς),¹⁹ and illustrate that he “is God by his natural union (ἐνώσει φυσικῇ) with God.”²⁰

Cyril directs our attention to other divine properties accorded to the Spirit in answer to those who object that the Spirit’s createdness is explicitly declared in Amos 4.13: “I am the Lord who established the thunder and created the spirit [or wind] (κτίζων πνεῦμα), who announced to humankind his Christ, who made the dawn and the clouds, and who climbs the heights of the earth.”²¹ He acknowledges that the word πνεῦμα has a number of definitions, but argues that in Amos 4.13 πνεῦμα is clearly a reference to wind, given the context in which the term occurs. Moreover, the absurdity of suggesting that the Holy Spirit is created is evident from other scriptural texts in which the Spirit is characterized as a creator. Cyril writes: “‘The Spirit of God has made me,’ [Job] says [Job 33.4]. Nevertheless the holy scriptures maintain that God took dust from the earth and honoured humankind with the work of his hands, if he is truthful who said, ‘Your

¹⁸ Ibid.649A-B (SC 246, 194).

¹⁹ Ibid.649C (SC 246, 194).

²⁰ Ibid.649B (SC 246, 194).

²¹ Ibid.649C-652E (SC 246, 196-206). My translation of Cyril’s quotation.

hands made me and shaped me' [Ps 119.73]."²² In addition Psalm 104.29-30 declares, "When you turn your face they are troubled; when you withdraw their breath (πνεῦμα) they depart and return to their dust. When you send your Spirit (τὸ Πνεῦμα σου) they are created (κτισθήσονται) and you renew (ἀνακαινίζεις) the face of the earth."²³ According to Cyril, these verses refer to the Spirit's role in the general resurrection of the dead, and the archbishop thus argues that the Spirit's task of renewing and returning form to that which was previously corruptible is one that can only belong to God. And when David declares in Psalm 33.6 that "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were strengthened, and by the Spirit of his mouth is their power [given]," it is clear that the psalmist does not understand the Spirit to be a mere creature, but to be rather God who created all things and gives all things his power.²⁴

Cyril's defence of the Spirit's divinity on the basis of scripture's characterization of the Spirit as an omnipresent creator and re-creator points to another integral facet of the archbishop's argument for the Spirit's divinity. Cyril often refers to various soteriological operations ascribed to the Spirit in scripture as a means of demonstrating the Spirit's divinity. One of these is his role in bringing humanity to participate in the divine nature.²⁵ The concept of participation is one that will be encountered repeatedly in the pages that follow, and I shall focus more specifically on what Cyril intends by this notion in the fourth chapter. It suffices to mention at present that the archbishop understands by participation an intimacy that fosters kinship between the participator and

²² Ibid.650C-D (SC 246, 198). My translation of Cyril's quotation.

²³ Ibid.651A (SC 246, 200). My translation of Cyril's quotation.

²⁴ Ibid.652A-D (SC 246, 202-4). My translation of Cyril's quotation.

²⁵ Cf. Boulnois (1994), 421-2.

the participated, in that the former comes to appropriate characteristics of the latter. As will be seen in later chapters, the idea of participation is a crucial feature of Cyril's soteriology. It surfaces in the archbishop's argument for the Spirit's divinity, however, because, first, he understands human participation in the divine nature to be an actual partaking of God's nature, and second, because he understands scripture to articulate that it is by the Spirit that such participation occurs. That said, it should be noted that Cyril argues on the basis of the latter premise, but never, to my knowledge, *for* this premise.

Thus, in *De Trinitate Dialogi* VII the archbishop argues that the Spirit is divine because, according to scripture, "it is not otherwise possible for the saints to be equipped for the participation (μέθεξις) of God except by receiving the Holy Spirit. For we attain to be 'partakers (κοινωνοί) of the divine nature' [2 Peter 1.4]."²⁶ 2 Peter 1.4 is a text Cyril cites repeatedly throughout his writings, and we shall later see that the archbishop almost always interprets this verse with reference to the Holy Spirit, this despite the fact that neither the verse nor the context in which the verse is found refers to him. In the above quotation Cyril appears to take it for granted that 2 Peter 1.4 refers to partaking of the divine nature through the Spirit, and understands such partaking to be adequate proof for the Spirit's divinity. Similar sentiments are expressed in his exegesis of John 14.16-17:

If someone says that he [the Spirit] is not of God's substance (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Θεοῦ), how would the creature (ἡ κτίσις), receiving the Spirit, still be a partaker (μέτοχος) of God? And in what manner will we be called and be (χρηματιοῦμεν καὶ ἐσόμεθα) temples of God [1 Cor 3.16] if we receive a created or alien (κτιστὸν ἢ ἀλλογενές) spirit, and not rather that which is of God? How are partakers (μέτοχοι) of the Spirit "partakers (κοινωνοί) of the divine nature" [2 Peter 1.4], according to the words of the

²⁶ Ibid.637B (SC 246, 158).

holy writers, if he is reckoned among things that are made (γενητοῦς), and does not rather proceed (πρόεισιν) from the divine nature (θείας φύσεως) itself?²⁷

In terms of the Spirit's divinity, the central point Cyril wishes to make when he appeals to participation in the divine nature is that such participation through the Spirit can only occur if the Spirit is God. For "that which partakes (τὸ μέτοχόν) of anything as being superior in nature and distinct from what it is itself must of necessity be different in nature from that which is partaken of (τοῦ μετεχομένου)."²⁸ The Spirit cannot therefore be created, but must himself be divine.

Cyril's reference above to the Spirit proceeding from the divine nature merits brief comment for it is indicative of similar statements made elsewhere in which the archbishop endeavours to establish the Spirit's divinity with reference to his procession from the divine nature or substance.²⁹ For example, in his exegesis of John 16.14 Cyril writes:

We believe that the Spirit subsists (ὑφίσταται) in himself, and is in truth that which he is said to be (εἶναι τε κατὰ ἀλήθειαν τοῦθ' ὅπερ ἐστὶ καὶ λέγεται). Existing (ἐνυπάρχον) in the substance (οὐσίᾳ) of God, he emerges and proceeds (προκύπτει τε καὶ πρόεισιν) from it, having all [that pertains to God's substance] in himself by nature (φυσικῶς).³⁰

²⁷ *In Jo.* 14.16-17 (Pusey, ii. 469⁶⁻¹³). See also *In Jo.* 14.23 (Pusey, ii. 498¹⁹⁻²²): "For no one can be made a partaker (μέτοχος) of God's nature by another way except through the Spirit. Therefore, the Spirit is God and of God, and is not reckoned among creatures, as some people think."

²⁸ *In Jo.* 14.23 (Pusey, ii. 498²³⁻²⁶). Cf. *DT VII.642D-E* (SC 246, 178): Cyril writes that, of necessity, "the partaker (τὸ μετέχον) is of another nature (ἐτεροφυῆς) than the one who is partaken (τοῦ μετεχομένου)."

²⁹ In the quotation cited Cyril does not make a clear distinction between the divine nature (φύσις) and the divine substance (οὐσία). Indeed, the two terms were frequently equated in Greek patristic usage (see Lampe, 1496-7). Boulnois (1994) takes it for granted that Cyril refers to the same thing when he writes of the Spirit proceeding from the divine nature or divine substance (n. 5, p. 446).

³⁰ *In Jo.* 16.14 (Pusey, ii. 635¹⁴⁻¹⁸). Cf. Boulnois (1994), 446.

Cyril speaks elsewhere in his commentary on John of the Spirit “having proceeded from the divine substance (ἐκ τῆς θείας οὐσίας προελθόν).”³¹ These references to the Spirit proceeding from the divine nature or divine substance occur in the midst of accounts of the Spirit’s activity in the created order. We can participate in the divine nature, Cyril writes, because the Spirit proceeds from the divine nature;³² and the Spirit can reveal God to us because he proceeds from the divine substance.³³ For Cyril we can derive the Spirit’s identity as divine by virtue of his soteriological activities. And to articulate this divine identity Cyril chooses occasionally to speak in terms of the Holy Spirit proceeding, or coming forth, from the divine substance without specific reference to either the Father or the Son. Much more will be said shortly about the Spirit’s procession from the Father and the Son. In terms of his argument for the Spirit’s divinity, Cyril does not explain precisely what he means when he writes that the Spirit “proceeds” from the divine nature or substance. Boulnois suggests that Cyril refers to the Spirit proceeding from the divine substance to counter the Arian and Pneumatomachian position that the Spirit received his being from God as do other creatures.³⁴

Against those who denied the divinity of the Spirit, Cyril argues in a variety of ways that it is impossible, given the scriptural witness, to understand the Spirit to be created and not divine. Not only does scripture implicitly refer to the Holy Spirit as God,

³¹ *In Jo.* 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 485¹³⁻¹⁴). Cf. Boulnois (1994), 446, n. 5. See also *In Jo.* 14.11 (Pusey, ii. 432¹¹⁻¹⁵): “He [the Spirit] is truly from God by nature, not having been separated from his essence (οὐσίας), but rather proceeding (προϊόν) from it, remaining always in it.” Cf. Boulnois (1994), 524, n. 333.

³² See n. 27 above.

³³ *In Jo.* 16.14 (Pusey, ii. 635-6).

³⁴ Boulnois (1994), 446.

but it ascribes divine properties to him that, given the absolute ontological separation of createdness from divinity in Cyril's thought, demonstrate to the archbishop that the Spirit is divine and not created. Moreover, the soteriological operations attributed to the Spirit demonstrate to Cyril that the Holy Spirit necessarily proceeds from the divine substance and is therefore God. But Cyril is concerned in his writings not only to establish the divinity of the Spirit. Because God is a Trinity, it is necessary also to understand the Spirit's place in the triune Godhead and so to explain how the third person can be "ranked together and numbered with (συντεταγμένον καὶ συναριθμούμενον) the Father and the Son."³⁵ It is to Cyril's conception of the Holy Spirit's relationship to the Father and the Son that I turn in the remaining sections.

The Spirit of the Father

As with most facets of Cyril's thought, his understanding of the Spirit's relationship to the Father and the Son is not expressed and developed in a systematic manner.³⁶ He concerns himself continually with demonstrating the unity of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, but he expresses this unity in various ways, making codification of his thought complicated. I shall in this section look at the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father in Cyril's thought.

Cyril affirms throughout his works that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father, although he does not dwell overmuch on this relationship. The Father has the Spirit, Cyril writes, "not as something alien (ἐπακτόν) or from without (ἐξωθεν)...but as each

³⁵ *DT VII.633A* (SC 246, 144-46).

³⁶ Boulnois (1994), 522.

of us maintains (συνέχει) his own (ἴδιον) spirit (πνεῦμα) within him.”³⁷ While Cyril does not explain what he means when he refers to a person’s spirit, he intends his readers to understand that the Spirit is as inseparable from the Father as our own spirit is inseparable from ourselves. We can hear echoes here of 1 Corinthians 2.11 in which Paul compares the Spirit of God to a person’s own spirit: “For what person knows a man’s thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” Further echoes of this verse can be heard when Cyril equates the Holy Spirit’s ability to reveal knowledge of God with his identity as the Spirit of the Father. “Where have we come to know (ἐγνώκαμεν) the true God in essence (οὐσιωδῶς),” Cyril asks, “if the Father is God, but his Spirit is not also regarded as God (συνθεολογεῖται)?”³⁸ Elsewhere he writes: “God the Father has from himself and in himself (ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ τε καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῷ) his own Spirit (τὸ ἴδιον Πνεῦμα) – that is, the Holy Spirit – through whom he dwells in the saints and reveals mysteries.”³⁹ The Spirit can reveal these mysteries, he continues, because the Spirit is “in [the Father] essentially (οὐσιωδῶς) proceeding (προϊόντος) from him inseparably and indivisibly.”⁴⁰

The unity of the Father and the Holy Spirit in Cyril’s thought boldly manifests itself here. This unity is declared first with the use of the term ἴδιος, a term that denotes “intimacy and inseparability,” and was consistently used by Cyril and his Alexandrian

³⁷ *In Jo.* 14.16-17 (Pusey, ii. 468¹³⁻¹⁶).

³⁸ *DT* VII.634A (SC 246, 148). Cf. Boulnois (1994), 447.

³⁹ *In Jo.* 16.15 (Pusey, ii. 638⁸⁻¹¹).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 638¹²⁻¹⁴). See also *DT* VI.629A (SC 246, 134); *In Jo.* 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 487²⁴⁻²⁵). Cf. Boulnois (1994), 524, n. 334

theological forebears to express inter-trinitarian oneness.⁴¹ The archbishop further underlines the unity of the Spirit and the Father by writing that the Spirit exists in the Father on the level of substance, and by declaring that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, albeit without compromising their oneness. It would appear that we are to understand from this passage that the Spirit derives his origin from the Father, but that the Spirit is God in the same manner as the Father. Even so Cyril does not focus his attention in these texts on the intricacies of the Spirit's relationship with the Father, but on the ramifications of that relationship for his ability to reveal the Father to us.

Cyril elsewhere describes the Spirit's relationship to the Father by using the language of procession. In the above text, as well as in a number of other passages,⁴² Cyril uses the verb *πρόειμι* to denote the Spirit's procession from the Father. Cyril also, albeit less frequently, uses the verb *ἐκπορεύεσθαι*, the term used both in John 15.26 and in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed, to designate the Spirit's procession from the Father. In *De Symbolo* he thus writes that the Spirit "pours out (*προχεῖται*) or proceeds from (*ἐκπορεύεται*) the fount [or spring] (*πηγῆς*) of God the Father."⁴³ Cyril does not in his writings describe the precise nuances of his understanding of *πρόειμι* and *ἐκπορεύεσθαι* – both verbs denote the going forth of something – nor does he explain why he uses one term in one text and the other term in another. But the archbishop evidently perceives there to be a distinction between the two terms. For while Cyril only

⁴¹ Andrew Louth, "The Use of the Term ἴδιος in Alexandrian Theology from Alexander to Cyril," *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989), 198. See also pp. 200-1.

⁴² *DT* VI.629A (SC 246, 134); *In Jo.* 15.26-27 (Pusey, ii. 608²⁰⁻²²); *In Jo.* 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 487²⁴⁻²⁵). Cf. Boulnois (1994), 524, n. 334.

⁴³ *De Symb.* 30 (ACO I.1.4, 60). See also *DT* VII.655A-B (SC 246, 214). Cf. Daley (2003), 144, n. 84

ever uses ἐκπορεύεσθαι with reference to the Spirit's procession from the Father,⁴⁴ he employs πρόειμι to extend the Spirit's procession from the Father also to include the Son.

The Spirit of the Son

This brings us to Cyril's understanding of the Spirit as the Spirit of both the Father *and* the Son, which he occasionally enunciates with reference to the language of procession. Since the medieval period, defenders of the *filioque* clause have pointed to Cyril as a Greek patristic ally⁴⁵ while Eastern theologians have, predictably, insisted that this is a profound misreading of the archbishop.⁴⁶ This is a debate into which I shall not enter in these pages, for it is anachronistic to insert Cyril into a theological debate that had not yet occurred. Simply put, as Bulgakov writes, "the problem of the procession of the Holy Spirit as such did not exist for him."⁴⁷ It will, nevertheless, be necessary briefly to examine Cyril's use of the language of procession. I shall show that very little can be conclusively drawn from Cyril's portrayal of the Spirit's procession beyond the fact that the Spirit is dependent, in an unspecified manner, on the Father and the Son such that he shares their nature.

⁴⁴ Boulnois (1994), 525-6; Daley (2003), 144-5.

⁴⁵ For an account of Cyril's influence on debates regarding the *filioque* clause, see Boulnois (1994), 492-500; Bernard Meunier, "Cyrille d'Alexandrie au Concile de Florence," *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum* 21 (1989), 146-74.

⁴⁶ Cf. Boulnois (1994), 500-1 and 501, n. 240. Boulnois points to John Meyendorff, "La procession du Saint-Esprit chez les Pères orientaux," *Russie et Chrétienté* 3-4 (1950), 164-5. See also Sergius Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, Boris Jakim (trans.) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 83-4.

⁴⁷ Bulgakov (2004), 83. Cf. Boulnois (1994), 500 where she writes: "It is necessary never to forget that this problem [of the procession of the Spirit] is foreign (étrangère) to Cyril and to other Greek Fathers of his era." See also Daley (2003), 117 and 144; George C. Berthold, "Cyril of Alexandria and the *Filioque*," *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989), 147.

In the *Thesaurus*, a work written early in his episcopal career,⁴⁸ Cyril endeavours to demonstrate the Spirit's divinity with reference to the Spirit's soteriological activity as well as to the Spirit's relationship with the Father and the Son. The latter Cyril describes in terms of the Spirit's procession from both the Father and the Son:

Since the Holy Spirit who comes to us makes us conformed (συμμόρφους) to God, and since *he proceeds from the Father and the Son* (πρόεισι δὲ καὶ ἐκ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ), it is manifest that he is of God's substance (οὐσίας), proceeding by nature in it and from it (οὐσιωδῶς ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς προῖόν).⁴⁹

Elsewhere, Cyril refers variously to the Spirit proceeding *through* both (πρόεισι δι' ἀμφοῖν) the Father and the Son,⁵⁰ *from* the Father *through* the Son,⁵¹ *from* the only-begotten's substance (τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Μονογενοῦς), and simply *through* the Son.⁵²

What are we to make of these various and divergent references to the Spirit's procession? The verb Cyril uses when referring to the Spirit's procession from the Son in these texts is πρόειμι, and as Brian Daley points out, πρόειμι is a less precise and technical verb than ἐκπορεύεσθαι.⁵³ Both verbs connote the advancement and procession of something, and thinkers prior to Cyril used both with reference to the Spirit.⁵⁴ But after the Council of Constantinople in 381 and with the theological contributions of the Cappadocian Fathers, ἐκπορεύεσθαι took on a technical sense reserved for describing the

⁴⁸ The *Thesaurus* was likely written sometime between 423-425. See the introduction to this thesis above.

⁴⁹ *Thes.* XXXIV (PG 75, 585A). Emphasis mine. Cf. Boulnois (1994), 513.

⁵⁰ *R.F. ad Aug* 40 (ACO I.1.5, 56⁹). Cf. Boulnois (1994), 525, n. 338; Berthold (1989), 146.

⁵¹ *Adv. Nest.* IV.3 (ACO I.1.6, 82¹³⁻¹⁵); *In Jo.* 20.22-23 (Pusey, iii. 131²⁸⁻²⁹). Cf. Boulnois (1994), 523, n. 336.

⁵² *In Jo.* 15.26-27 (Pusey, ii. 607¹⁹⁻²¹); *In Jo.* 16.12-13 (Pusey, ii. 629¹⁵⁻¹⁸); *In Jo.* 16.14 (Pusey, ii. 636³⁻⁴). Cf. Boulnois (1994), 525, n. 337.

⁵³ Daley (2003), 145.

⁵⁴ Lampe, 437 and 1145.

eternal and ineffable origin of the Holy Spirit from the Father.⁵⁵ As already noted, Cyril himself restricts his usage of ἐκπορεύεσθαι to the Spirit's procession from the Father, indicating that he was unwilling to broaden the scope of the term beyond that officially sanctioned by the fathers of Constantinople.⁵⁶ Moreover, the fact that Cyril furnishes a multiplicity of formulas throughout his writings to designate the Spirit's procession indicates that the archbishop's usage of πρόειμι is not intended to be taken in a precise and technical sense. The ambiguity⁵⁷ that is a consequence of these multiple formulas is evidence that Cyril's primary concern is not to elaborate in detail on the role of the Father and the Son in the Spirit's origination.⁵⁸ Rather, it is probable that he uses the language of procession primarily as a means of articulating the unity of the Holy Spirit with both the Father and the Son, a unity that is on the level of substance.

⁵⁵ Boulnois (1994), 524-525. See also J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th Edition (New York: Continuum, 2000), 262-3; Yves Congar *I Believe in the Holy Spirit – Vol. III: The River of the Water of Life (Rev 22:1) Flows in the East and in the West*, David Smith, trans. (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 29-34.

⁵⁶ Daley (2003), 144-5.

⁵⁷ Cf. Boulnois (1994), 444, 527; Bulgakov (2004), 83; Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit – Vol. III: The River of the Water of Life*, 36. All of these authors point to the ambiguity of Cyril's use of the language of procession.

⁵⁸ I would suggest, therefore, that medieval *filioquists* read too much into Cyril's references to the Spirit's procession, as have some modern interpreters. Henry Barclay Swete, in his monumental history of pneumatology in the early church, suggests that Cyril's thought hardly differs from the west with regard to the origination of the Spirit; *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church: A Study of Christian Teaching in the Age of the Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), 268-9. Karl Barth, himself a vigorous defender of the *filioque*, cites Cyril of Alexandria as proof that early Greek theologians would not have been opposed to the creedal addition; *Church Dogmatics I.1: The Doctrine of the Word of God*, G.W. Bromley (trans.) (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 477. See also Aloysio M. Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit according to Saint Cyril of Alexandria* (Oña, Spain: Facultad de Teología, 1963), 40, n. 69.

But while Cyril's theology of the Spirit's procession is not developed sufficiently to allow definitive conclusions to be reached regarding the Son's precise role in the procession of the Spirit, the archbishop certainly "went further than many of his predecessors in affirming the dependence of the Spirit on the Son."⁵⁹ The archbishop consistently and effusively declares that the Spirit of the Father is also the Spirit of the Son. Indeed, he discusses the Spirit's relationship to the Son in more detail than he does the Spirit's relationship to the Father. Cyril understands the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son to be fully in accord with the biblical witness. Cyril has christological reasons for emphasizing the Son's possession of the Spirit, but it is clear the archbishop was also motivated by soteriological concerns.

With regard to his christological motivations, as I observed above, the archbishop directed most of his writings against particular heretical groups. Cyril wrote against Arianism prior to 428 and against Nestorianism thereafter. Christological concerns are paramount for Cyril in his responses to these heresies, and an argument that the archbishop frequently enunciates is that Christ's possession of the Spirit as his own demonstrates the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. A number of key scriptural texts are used with alacrity by Cyril to make his case. Most important for Cyril are the references to the Spirit as the "Spirit of truth" in John 14.17, 15.26 and 16.13. According to Cyril, by calling the Paraclete the "Spirit of truth," Jesus unequivocally

⁵⁹ Marie-Odile Boulnois, "The Mystery of the Trinity according to Cyril of Alexandria: The Deployment of the Triad and its Recapitulation into the Unity of Divinity," in Daniel A. Keating and Thomas G. Weinandy (eds), *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 106; See also Daley (2003), 147; Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit – Vol. III: The River of the Water of Life*, 36.

declared that the Spirit is his own (ἴδιον), for “the truth is nothing other than himself.”⁶⁰ Christ called the Paraclete the “Spirit of truth” in order that his disciples might understand that the coming Spirit would not be “a foreign and strange power,”⁶¹ but would be his own Spirit: “For the Holy Spirit is not considered to be foreign to the only-begotten’s substance (τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Μονογενοῦς),” Cyril writes, “but proceeds from it by nature (πρόεισι φυσικῶς ἐξ αὐτῆς), being no other than him in terms of identity of nature (ταυτότητα φύσεως).”⁶² That the “Spirit of truth” is the Spirit of the Son means, according to Cyril, that the Spirit and the Son share a common nature. And although precisely what the archbishop means by πρόειμι is not perspicuous, his primary objective above is to demonstrate that the Spirit is dependent on the Son in such a manner that he can be understood to be the Son’s Spirit.

Cyril draws on the identity of the Spirit as the Spirit of the Son as a means of demonstrating the Son’s consubstantiality with the Father. Their consubstantiality was illustrated clearly when Christ called the Paraclete the “Spirit of truth” while simultaneously declaring that the Spirit “proceeds from the Father” (Jn 15.26). As Christ clearly showed when he spoke of the “Spirit of truth,” the Spirit is the Son’s “own by nature (ἴδιον φυσικῶς).”⁶³ But by stating that the Spirit “proceeds from the Father,” Christ demonstrated that the Spirit belongs as well to the Father, and in so doing showed that a “unity of substance (τῆς οὐσίας τὴν ἐνότητα)” is shared between the Son and the

⁶⁰ *DT* VI.593A (SC 246, 28).

⁶¹ *In Jo.* 16.12-13 (Pusey, ii. 628¹¹⁻¹²).

⁶² *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 628¹⁴⁻¹⁶).

⁶³ *In Jo.* 15.26-27 (Pusey, ii. 607¹⁹⁻²⁰).

Father.⁶⁴ Cyril's argument is that the Holy Spirit cannot belong to both the Father and the Son if the Son is of a different substance than the Father. Only one who is equal in substance with the Father can share equally in the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵

The Son's possession of the Holy Spirit, a possession that demonstrates his unity with the Father, is further witnessed to by Christ's sending of the Spirit. The mere fact that Christ was able to bestow the Spirit illustrates, for Cyril, that the "Spirit is God the Father's own (ἴδιον), but no less is he also the Son's own (ἴδιόν)."⁶⁶ Indeed, Cyril proposes that Christ breathed forth the Spirit upon his disciples that we might understand that Christ "is God and of God,"⁶⁷ and that we might understand that the Spirit is the Son's just as he is the Father's.⁶⁸ He explains:

How is it, if the Son is of a different substance (ἐτεροοῦσιος) [from the Father], that he gives the Spirit of the Father as his own? For it is written, "He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" [Jn 20.22]. Therefore, will we not think, and rightly so...that the Son, being a substantial (οὐσιωδῶς) partaker (κοινωνός) of the essential excellences (φυσικῶν ἀγαθῶν) of God the Father, has the Spirit in the same manner as the Father is understood to have him? That is, [he does not have him] as something added or without...but [has him] like each of us has in ourselves our (ἴδιον) own breath (πνεῦμα) and pours it forth (προχέει) from the innermost part of our nature. It was certainly because of this that Christ breathed [the Spirit] bodily, showing that just as the breath (πνεῦμα) proceeds (πρόεισι) from the human mouth bodily, so also the [Spirit] is poured forth (προχέεται) out of him in a God-befitting manner (θεοπρεπῶς) from the divine essence (τῆς θείας οὐσίας).⁶⁹

According to Cyril, the manner in which Christ bestowed the Spirit, as described in John 20.22, clearly demonstrates that the Son has the Spirit as his very own and is therefore of the same essence as the Father. Christ intentionally breathed the Spirit out of himself,

⁶⁴ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 609⁸⁻¹³).

⁶⁵ Cf. *ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 607²¹⁻²²).

⁶⁶ *In Jo.* 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 718¹⁸⁻¹⁹).

⁶⁷ *In Jo.* 20.22-23 (Pusey, iii. 134¹⁰⁻¹⁵).

⁶⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, iii. 136³⁻⁷).

⁶⁹ *In Jo.* 14.16-17 (Pusey, ii. 468⁷⁻²¹).

Cyril posits, in order that we would comprehend that he did not receive the Spirit as something without, but that he has the Spirit as his own just as the breath we breathe is poured out from within ourselves. That is, the intimacy we experience with our breath in the innermost part of ourselves is an analogy for the intimacy that the Son has with his own Spirit. It is this intimacy with the Spirit that Christ visibly expressed when he breathed his Spirit on the disciples.

Cyril elaborates on the Son's possession of the Spirit, and his equality with the Father, with reference to Christ's statement in John 16.15 that "All that the Father has is mine." Through this statement, the archbishop writes, Christ brings to light the "supreme union (ἄκρον ἔνωσιν)" that he has with the Father.⁷⁰ Being the "fruit (καρπός) of [the Father's] substance (οὐσίας)," the Son possesses (ἐπάγεται) all that belongs to the Father,⁷¹ save that of being the Father.⁷² They share "essential equality and likeness (οὐσιώδης ἰσότης καὶ ἐμφύρεια),"⁷³ their likeness being such that the Son can be described as "the impress (χαρακτήρ)"⁷⁴ of the Father. And for Cyril this necessarily means that the Spirit of the Father is also the Spirit of the Son: "This Spirit is the only-

⁷⁰ *In Jo.* 16.15 (Pusey, ii. 637²²-638²).

⁷¹ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 637⁸⁻¹³).

⁷² Cf. *In Jo.* 1.2 (Pusey, i. 55¹⁶-56⁴).

⁷³ *In Jo.* 16.15 (Pusey, ii. 638⁷).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 639¹⁶⁻¹⁷). Cyril describes the Son similarly in *DT* VI.592D (SC 246, 26), in the midst of a discussion regarding how the Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son.

begotten's own (ἴδιον),” he writes, “for [the only-begotten] is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father.”⁷⁵

The Holy Spirit, therefore, must for Cyril be understood to be the Spirit of both the Father and the Son if we are to stay true to the scriptural witness regarding Christ's possession of the Spirit. There are, as we have seen, christological ramifications of the Father and Son's common possession of the Holy Spirit. What, however, are we to learn specifically about the person of the Holy Spirit from this common possession? Cyril does not focus overmuch on the pneumatological implications of the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. Cyril is more verbose and detailed regarding the Spirit in terms of his relationship with the Son specifically. He does, however, occasionally elaborate on the Spirit's person and work in relation to the Father and Son's common possession of him, and it is this that I shall analyze before focusing in detail on the Spirit's particular relationship with the Son.

In *De Trinitate Dialogi* VII, in the midst of an account of the Spirit's divine nature, Cyril writes that the “Spirit is from God the Father but is also the Son's own (ἴδιον)” and is “considered truly to exist as an hypostasis [i.e., as a subsistent entity⁷⁶].”⁷⁷ And as the Spirit of the Father and the Son, he possesses the same nature (φύσις) as the two divine persons whose Spirit he is.⁷⁸ One of the analogies Cyril occasionally employs to elucidate the Spirit's relationship to the Father and the Son is the relationship that

⁷⁵ In *Jo.* 16.15 (Pusey, ii. 638¹⁶⁻¹⁷). Cf. Boulnois (2003), 104: “This common possession of the Spirit appears thus as a particular case of the general rule by which everything that belongs to the Father also belongs to the Son.”

⁷⁶ Cf. Lampe, 1456.

⁷⁷ *DT* VII.640E (SC 246, 168).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 640E-641B (SC 246, 170).

fragrance has to the herbs or flowers from which it issues forth.⁷⁹ Thus he writes that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as fragrance proceeds (προϊέντων) from sweet-smelling flowers.⁸⁰ While this fragrance can be thought of as distinct from the flowers, “it does not have a different nature (φύσιν) from that which and in which it is.”⁸¹ The fragrance receives from the flowers the faculty (δύναμιν) of giving scent,⁸² and being from and in them, the fragrance expresses their qualities (ποιότητα).⁸³ Cyril acknowledges that the analogy is imperfect. But his purpose is to illustrate how the Holy Spirit “receives from (ἐκ) the Father and the Son the things that are theirs (τὰ αὐτῶν),”⁸⁴ not by “participation (μετοχῆς)” but “by nature (φυσικῶς).”⁸⁵ Just as the fragrance of flowers receives from the flowers the ability to make the flowers manifest outwardly, so the Spirit can be understood to be “the fragrance (ὁσμή) of [God’s] substance (οὐσίας), conveying (διακομίζουσα) to creatures all that is from God.”⁸⁶ And just as the fragrance of herbs imparts some of its power to garments with which it comes into contact, such that the garments themselves begin to take on the fragrance, so the Spirit, because he is from God by nature (ἐκ θεοῦ φυσικῶς), has the power “to render those in whom he abides partakers (κοινωνούς) of the divine nature through himself.”⁸⁷

⁷⁹ Cf. *In Jo.* 16.14 (Pusey, ii. 635²⁰⁻²⁸); *In Jo.* 16.15 (Pusey, ii. 639¹⁻¹⁶).

⁸⁰ *In Jo.* 16.14 (Pusey, ii. 635²²).

⁸¹ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 635²²⁻²³).

⁸² *In Jo.* 16.15 (Pusey, ii. 639¹⁻⁶).

⁸³ *In Jo.* 16.14 (Pusey, ii. 635²³).

⁸⁴ *In Jo.* 16.15 (Pusey, ii. 638²⁶⁻⁷).

⁸⁵ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 638³¹-639¹).

⁸⁶ *In Jo.* 16.15 (Pusey, ii. 639⁸⁻¹⁰). See also *DT VI.593C* (SC 246, 28).

⁸⁷ *In Jo.* (Pusey, ii. 639¹⁴⁻¹⁶).

While this analogy of the Spirit as the fragrance of God's substance provides a useful means of thinking about how the Spirit is united with the Father and the Son, and also points to the Spirit as the means by which the Father and the Son are made manifest in the created order, it does not actually tell us much about the Holy Spirit himself. It would appear that Cyril understands the Spirit to have in himself the fullness of the Father and the Son, and to receive and convey that which is theirs, but the particular identity of the Spirit remains ambiguous.

Indeed, this ambiguity is present whenever Cyril refers to the Spirit in relation to both the Father and the Son. The archbishop's reference to the Spirit as the "fragrance of God's substance" in the context of an argument to show that the Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son is reminiscent of other descriptions of the third person in Cyril's writings. In his exegesis of John 14.16-17, for example, in which Cyril emphasizes the dual relationship of the Spirit to the Father and the Son, he refers to the Spirit as the "quality of the divinity (ποιότης τῆς θεότητος)."⁸⁸ Similarly, in his exposition of John 14.23, once again emphasizing the Spirit as the Spirit of the other two divine persons, Cyril speaks of the Spirit as "the quality (ποιότης) of [God's] holiness."⁸⁹ Less frequently Cyril refers to the Spirit as the "completion (σμπλήρωμα)" of the Trinity: "It is necessary to recognize that the Spirit is of the substance (οὐσίας) of the Son. For as he is from him by nature (κατὰ φύσιν) and is sent

⁸⁸ *In Jo.* 14.16-17 (Pusey, ii. 469¹⁴⁻¹⁵).

⁸⁹ *In Jo.* 14.23 (Pusey, ii. 499⁶). See Boulnois (1994), 429, n. 448 for other similar texts in Cyril's writings.

by him to the creature, he works renewal (ἀνακαινισμόν), being the completion of the holy Trinity (συμπλήρωμα τῆς ἁγίας ὑπάρχον Τριάδος).”⁹⁰

Cyril does not fully flesh out these descriptions of the Holy Spirit. It would appear that he does not intend ποιότης to be understood in a technical sense for Cyril almost always qualifies his statements with “like” (οἶονεῖ) or “as it were” (ὥσπερ), thereby implying that he is using ποιότης in an analogous sense.⁹¹ He therefore seems to refer to the Spirit as a “quality” in a similar manner as he referred in his exegesis of John 16.15 to the Spirit as the “fragrance of God’s substance.”⁹² In each of the quotations provided above Cyril describes the Spirit as a “quality” in the context of explaining how he is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. By referring to the Spirit in these terms, therefore, he may want his readers to understand the Spirit to have all the things of the Father and the Son, in that he is united to each of them, and that he therefore manifests the Father and the Son in himself. Boulnois suggests that Cyril means by the Spirit as “quality” that he is the summary of God’s fundamental traits, the total expression of his characteristics,⁹³ but this is not made absolutely clear by the archbishop.

⁹⁰ *Thes.* XXXIV (PG 75, 608B). See also 609D. Cf. Boulnois (1994), 438, n. 502-3. Cyril speaks in similar terms near the beginning of *In Joannem*, where he writes, “when the Holy Spirit is added to the number [of the Father and the Son] and is called God along with them, the holy and adorable Trinity possesses its own proper fullness (πλήρωμα)” (*In Jo.* 1.1 (Pusey, i. 25²³⁻²⁵); ET: Daley, 133, n. 58). And in his exegesis of John 14.25-26, Cyril posits that, just like the human will that accomplishes the purposes of the mind, the Spirit is “not other by nature [to God], but a kind of part that brings the whole to completion (συμπληρωτικόν) and exists within it” (*In Jo.* 14.25-26 (Pusey, ii. 507⁴⁻¹⁰); ET: Daley, 133, n. 58).

⁹¹ Boulnois (1994), 430.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 430-1.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 431.

Cyril's references to the Spirit as the "completion" of the Trinity are even more ambiguous. From the quotation provided above, it appears that Cyril links the renewing work of the Spirit to his being the "completion" of the Trinity, but the archbishop does not elaborate on this point. We shall see in a forthcoming chapter that Cyril places a great deal of soteriological weight on the indwelling of God in the believer, and he occasionally writes that the indwelling of the Spirit necessarily results, given that the Spirit is the Father and the Son's own, in the indwelling as well of the Father and the Son.⁹⁴ It could be that Cyril's understanding of the Spirit as the completion of the Trinity is related to his perception of the Spirit's operation in the created order, for it is by him that the entire Trinity is made manifest and comes to dwell in the believer. However, Cyril does not explicitly make this connection for us.

Whatever Cyril may mean by these epithets, the point he wants to emphasize is that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. This portrayal of the Spirit as being the Father's and the Son's own provides a means for Cyril to defend the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, and allows him as well to articulate how the Spirit is united with the Father and the Son. There is, however, some ambiguity regarding the pneumatological implications of this union. He is described in these contexts, as Boulnois writes, "more as he who expresses the quality or quintessence of the divinity rather than by his personal characteristics."⁹⁵

Cyril is more specific about the person and work of the Spirit when elaborating on the Son's possession of the Holy Spirit as his own, and it is this facet of his

⁹⁴ Cf. *In Jo.* 14.23 (Pusey, ii. 497²¹-498⁶); *In Jo.* 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 722⁶⁻¹³).

⁹⁵ Boulnois (1994), 458.

pneumatology that is most significant for comprehending his perception of the identity and operation of the Holy Spirit . There are texts in which, as just seen, the archbishop discusses the Spirit as the Spirit of the Son generally with reference to the Son's common possession of the Spirit along with the Father. More frequently, however, Cyril expounds upon the person and work of the Spirit in relation to his specific identity as the Spirit of the Son. That is not to say that Cyril ever denies that the Father has the Spirit as his own. Rather, the archbishop often specifically discusses the pneumatological and soteriological implications that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son. The soteriological implications of the Son's possession of the Spirit will be discussed in detail below, particularly in the fourth chapter. As such, I will only touch here upon how the Spirit's unity with the Son is made manifest in the Spirit's operations. My focus here will be on what this possession tells us about the identity of the Spirit himself. And for Cyril, the Holy Spirit is primarily to be understood to be the "image" or "likeness" of the Son.

In addition to the scriptural texts to which we have already seen Cyril appeal, there are a number of other texts highlighted by the archbishop to illustrate that the Son has the Spirit as his own. On occasion Cyril points to the reference in Acts 16.7 to "the Spirit of Jesus" to prove that the Spirit is the Son's own.⁹⁶ The archbishop points as well to various Pauline texts wherein the Spirit and Christ appear to Cyril to be discussed interchangeably. The archbishop cites Ephesians 3.16-17 in which Paul refers to the indwelling of the Spirit and the indwelling of Christ in the same sentence; this, according

⁹⁶ Cf. *DT* VII.642A-B (SC 246, 172); *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 186¹⁻⁴).

to Cyril, demonstrates the unity of Christ with his own Spirit.⁹⁷ Similarly, Cyril cites various verses from Romans 8, particularly the way in which Paul refers interchangeably to the indwelling of the Spirit and the indwelling of Christ, and argues that Paul understands that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son and that there exists “exact likeness (ἀπαράλλακτον τὴν ὁμοιότητα) of the Son with the Spirit.”⁹⁸

The likeness between the Son and his Spirit is, in fact, an idea to which Cyril repeatedly refers. In his exegesis of John 14.16-17, Cyril draws attention to Christ’s reference to the Spirit as “another Paraclete,” and argues that the incarnate Word speaks of the Spirit in these terms in order to demonstrate the likeness of the Spirit to the Son.⁹⁹ Cyril points out that Christ himself is described as a Paraclete in 1 John 2.1.¹⁰⁰ When he describes the Holy Spirit as “another (ἄλλον) Paraclete,” Christ illustrates that the Spirit is a “proper hypostasis (ιδίαις ὑποστάσεσι)”; that is, a “distinct entity (ιδιοσυστάτως).”¹⁰¹ At the same time, by referring to him as a Paraclete, Christ wants us to understand that the Spirit “has such a great likeness (ἐμφέρειαν) to himself, and is thus able identically (ἀπαράλλάκτως) to work as he himself might work, that [the Spirit] might seem to be the Son himself and no different [from him].”¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Cf. *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, 188¹⁷⁻¹⁹); *In Jo.* 3.36 (Pusey, i. 258²³-259¹¹); *In Jo.* 14.25-26 (Pusey, ii. 508¹⁻¹⁹).

⁹⁸ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 188²⁹). See also *DT VII.639D* (SC 246, 166) where Cyril cites Romans 8.29-30 to prove that the Spirit is the “true likeness (ὁμοίωσις) of the Son.”

⁹⁹ *In Jo.* 14.16-17 (Pusey, ii. 467⁶⁻²⁹).

¹⁰⁰ 1 John 2.1: “My little children, I am writing to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have a paraclete (παράκλητον) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

¹⁰¹ *In Jo.* 14.16-17 (Pusey, ii. 467^{23, 9-10}).

¹⁰² *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 467²³⁻²⁶).

Cyril writes in his exegesis of John 14.16-17 that the Son possesses the Spirit in common with the Father. However, it is the Son's relationship with the Holy Spirit that the archbishop specifically focuses upon, and he uses Christ's promise to send another Paraclete as a springboard to discuss the profound unity that exists between the Son and the Spirit. Both the Spirit's identity and his operation are interwoven with his relationship to the Son, according to Cyril. For the Spirit, as the Spirit of the Son, bears complete likeness to the Son and does the Son's work in the world.

According to Cyril, the likeness of the Spirit to the Son is spelled out by Christ in John 14.16-18. Immediately after promising the gift of the Paraclete to the disciples in John 14.16-17, Christ states, "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you" (Jn 14.18). Cyril argues that Christ promised his own presence after promising the Spirit in order to show "that the Spirit is not something other than what he is himself."¹⁰³ Their unity is, the archbishop writes, clearly articulated by Paul in Romans 8.9-10 in which he refers interchangeably (παράμισε) to the Spirit and Christ.¹⁰⁴ We are to understand from Paul and from Christ in John 14.16-18 that the unity of the Spirit and the Son means that the Spirit manifests the Son to us and in us, and indeed that the Son dwells in us when the Spirit dwells in us. Does that mean, Cyril asks, that the Son is the Spirit and the Spirit is the Son? It does not, according to Cyril, for each person of the Trinity "subsists (ὑφίστασθαι) in their own person (ιδίᾳ¹⁰⁵),"¹⁰⁶ a point upon which the archbishop does not here elaborate. Nor does it mean that the Father and the Spirit are not united. Rather,

¹⁰³ *In Jo.* 14.18 (Pusey, ii. 471⁶⁻⁷).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 471¹⁵⁻²¹).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Lampe, 665.

¹⁰⁶ *In Jo.* 14.18 (Pusey, ii. 472³⁻⁴).

Cyril's point appears to be that, while the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, his relationship with the Son is particularly significant pneumatologically and soteriologically. This relationship shapes the Spirit's identity (he shares the Son's likeness) as well as the Spirit's interaction with the created order (the Son dwells in those in whom the Spirit dwells).

Cyril focuses on the Spirit's relationship to the Son and the soteriological ramifications of this relationship in his exegeses of John 17.18-19 and 17.20-21, and once again the archbishop emphasizes the Spirit's likeness with the Son and the soteriological implications of this likeness. In his exposition of John 17.18-19, Cyril devotes attention initially to the Father and the Son's common possession of the Spirit, a common possession that is the consequence of the Son's consubstantiality with the Father.¹⁰⁷ Cyril's concern here is to defend the Son's unity of substance with the Father against those who would suggest that Christ's reference to sanctifying himself in John 17.19 indicates his inferiority to the Father. But the archbishop proceeds to look particularly at what Christ meant when he prayed for his disciples to be sanctified. He prayed this, Cyril writes, in order that we might receive the Spirit, and the archbishop associates the sanctification that the Spirit brings with our transformation to become like the Son. To make his point he discusses the Spirit's identity vis-à-vis the Son: "His Spirit is a pure image (εἰκὼν ἀκραιφνής) of the only-begotten's substance, according to the saying of Paul, 'For those whom he foreknew he conformed to the image of his Son' [Rom 8.29].

¹⁰⁷ *In Jo.* 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 718¹²-719¹⁴).

[The Spirit] makes those in whom he abides to be conformed (συμμόρφους) to the image of the Father, that is, the Son.”¹⁰⁸

Although Romans 8.29 does not actually refer to the Holy Spirit, Cyril posits that the image of the Son to which the verse refers is the Spirit himself, and while he does not justify his interpretation it is probable that the archbishop interpreted the verse pneumatologically on the basis of the emphasis Paul places on the Spirit in the verses preceding 8.29. Whatever the case may be, Cyril describes the sanctification that occurs through the Holy Spirit with reference to the attainment of likeness with the Son, and suggests that we are conformed to the Son through the Spirit because the Spirit is the Son’s image. Moreover, Cyril describes the Son as the image of the Father. He does not, however, here elaborate on the identity of the Spirit as the image of the Son nor on the identity of the Son as the image of the Father.

Cyril speaks in a similar manner of the Son and the Holy Spirit in his exegesis of John 17.20-21. Referring once again to the sanctification of the Holy Spirit for which Christ prayed, he writes:

No one can have union (ἔνωσις) with God except through participation (μετουσίας) in the Holy Spirit, who implants (ἐντιθέντος) in us the sanctification of his own specific character (ιδίως ιδιότητος¹⁰⁹) and forms anew (ἀναπλάττοντος) into his own life (ιδίαν ζωὴν) our nature, which was subject to corruption, and so brings [it] back to God and to his likeness (μόρφωσιν)...For the Son is the pure image (εἰκὼν ἀκραιφνῆς) of the Father, and his Spirit is the natural likeness (ὁμοίωσις φυσική) of the Son. Remoulding (μεταπλάττον), as it were, the souls of humanity into himself, he engraves (ἐγχαραττεῖ) them with the likeness (μόρφωσιν) of God and seals (ἀποσημαίνεται) them with the image (εἰκονισμόν) of the most high.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 720⁸⁻¹²).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Lampe, 665-666.

¹¹⁰ *In Jo.* 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 731³⁻¹⁴). I have slightly revised Randall’s translation of this text (Randall, 547-8).

Cyril speaks in terms of the Spirit's likeness to the Son and of the Son as the image of the Father. There are echoes here and in his exegesis of John 17.18-19 of Athanasius' arguments in his *Letters to Serapion* that the Spirit is the image of the Son and that the Spirit has the same relationship to the Son as the Son does to the Father.¹¹¹ However, this comparison should not be stretched too far. Unlike Athanasius, Cyril does not actually make a direct connection between the form of the Spirit's relationship with the Son and the form of the Son's relationship with the Father. Moreover, as Boulnois points out, although Cyril does focus most of his attention in his works on the Spirit as the Spirit of the Son, he insists more fervently than Athanasius that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and that the Son's possession of the Spirit is due to his consubstantiality with the Father.¹¹²

Nevertheless, the clear emphasis in his exegeses of John 14.15-18, 17.18-19, and 17.20-21 is on the Spirit's specific likeness to the Son, a likeness that shapes the Spirit's soteriological operation. Christ is thus made present and indwells believers through his Spirit. And the sanctification that is through the Spirit is specifically directed toward the attainment of likeness with the Son, and is possible because the Spirit is himself the "image" or "likeness" of the Son. We shall see in the chapters that follow that Cyril most often describes the Spirit's soteriological operation as revolving around the soteriological possibilities that Jesus Christ made available to humanity. It is not that the Spirit is less the Spirit of the Father and more the Spirit of the Son. Rather, Cyril emphasizes the latter

¹¹¹ Cf. *Ep. Ser.* I.24; II.1.

¹¹² Boulnois (1994), 521-2.

relationship because our understanding of the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the revelation of the incarnate Word and the salvific ramifications of his life, death, and resurrection. In the pages that follow I will elaborate in more detail on the relationship of the Spirit with the Son and what this relationship tells us specifically about the identity and operation of the third person of the Trinity.

Against opponents who either rejected the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son or who denied the Son's consubstantiality with the Father, Cyril insists on the Spirit's divinity and on his identity as the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. He does not focus specifically on the intertrinitarian relations in the same manner as does Augustine of Hippo, his contemporary in western Africa. Cyril does speak in terms of the Spirit's procession, but his thought is not clearly articulated or developed, and it would appear that he refers to the Spirit's procession in relation to the Father and the Son largely as a means of establishing his unity with the Father and the Son. Cyril's insistence on the Spirit as the Spirit of both the Father and the Son is motivated, not by a desire to articulate an understanding of how the three persons interact with one another eternally, but by christological, pneumatological, and soteriological concerns. Cyril is concerned to establish the Son's consubstantiality with the Father, and in this vein he appeals to their common possession of the Spirit. But he particularly emphasizes the Spirit's relationship with the Son. Indeed, this relationship defines for Cyril the particular identity of the Spirit as the Son's likeness, and gives shape to the soteriological operations undertaken by the third person of the Trinity. In the pages that

follow we shall see that Cyril's perception of the Spirit's unity with the Son shapes his portrayal of the Spirit's interaction with the incarnate Word. Moreover, the Spirit's identity as the Son's likeness has ramifications for the transformation of the believer, as well as for the formation, governance, and unity of the church.

**Chapter 2 – The Holy Spirit and the Incarnation (Part I):
The Role of the Spirit in the Miraculous Conception of Christ**

As I have said, the Son came, or rather was made man, in order to reconstitute our condition within himself; first of all in his own holy, wonderful, and truly amazing birth and life. This was why he himself became the first one to be born of the Holy Spirit (according, I mean, after the flesh) so that he could trace a path for grace to come to us.¹

- *Quod Unus sit Christus*

Having examined Cyril's trinitarian theology, and particularly his perception of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father and, specifically, to the Son, I move now to explore Cyril's perception of the Spirit's role in the drama of human salvation, a drama in which the incarnation of the Son is, of course, central. The incarnation of the Son of God, Cyril argues, was the means by which it was possible for humanity to be re-created so as to become that which it was intended to be – made in the image of God and thus immortal, incorruptible, and free from the bondage of sin. It is my purpose in the next two chapters to examine Cyril's portrayal of the Spirit's activity both in the incarnation itself and in the life of the incarnate Word. In the account of Jesus' life as recorded in the canonical gospels, the Holy Spirit emerges as a prominent character in two particular events – the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ in the womb of the virgin and the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist. Cyril's interpretation of the descent of the Spirit upon Christ at his baptism will be the subject of the next chapter. The focus of this chapter will be on Cyril's portrayal of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the miraculous

¹ *QU 724C-D (SC 97, 334²³⁻²⁹)*. ET: John Anthony McGuckin (trans), *St Cyril of Alexandria: On the Unity of Christ* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 62.

conception of Christ, a portrayal that is rich in pneumatological and soteriological content.

Both Matthew and Luke ascribe the conception of Jesus to the miraculous intervention of the Holy Spirit, thereby connecting the Holy Spirit to the very beginning of Jesus' earthly life. Matthew's account refers to this intervention in something of a matter-of-fact manner. The reader learns from his infancy narrative that, when Mary was betrothed to Joseph but before the marriage had been consummated, Mary "was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit" (1.18). And when Joseph resolved to divorce Mary quietly, we are told that an angel came to him in a dream saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (1.20). Although Matthew continually links the Spirit to the person and ministry of Jesus throughout his gospel, his infancy narrative contains little elaboration as to the purpose or effects of Jesus having been conceived by the Holy Spirit.² Luke's infancy narrative contains more detail. In his account of the Annunciation, Luke writes that the angel Gabriel was sent to Mary in Nazareth to inform her that she had found favour with God and that she was to bear a son, who was to be called "the Son of the Most High" (1.32), and whose kingdom would have no end. When Mary questioned the angel as to the possibility of such an event given her unmarried status, the angel said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (1.35). With this

² Cf. George T. Montague, *Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1998), 302-7; Alasdair I.C. Heron, *The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit in the Bible, in the History of Christian Thought and in Recent Theology* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1983), 40.

pivotal verse Luke specifically connects the designation of Jesus as the ‘Son of God’ and as ‘holy’ with his miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit.³

This account of the genesis of the Son’s incarnation in the flesh was of great interest and concern to Cyril, particularly during his conflict over christological issues with Nestorius; concern because the central role the gospels of Matthew and Luke assign to the Holy Spirit in the Son’s enfleshment posed a potential dilemma regarding the divinity of the incarnate Word. For in his mind, if one allows for the isolated operation of the Spirit in the Word’s becoming flesh, one runs the danger of suggesting that Jesus Christ was the recipient of the Spirit’s activity as one who did not have the Spirit as his very own, this despite the fact that, according to Cyril, the scriptures understand the Spirit to be the Spirit both of the Father and the Son. Cyril is wary of any christological formulations that potentially undermine his own assertion that the divine Word truly became flesh without having his divinity compromised, and is therefore concerned to account for the Spirit’s role in the miraculous conception in a manner that is consistent with his characterization of orthodox christology.

Not surprisingly, the miraculous conception of Christ comes up for discussion most frequently in Cyril’s writings after 428, that is, after the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy, and it will therefore be these writings that will provide most of the fodder for this chapter. We shall see that Cyril accounts for the Spirit’s role in the virginal conception in one of two ways. In *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias*, as well as in letters written during the height of the Nestorian controversy, he draws attention to the unity of

³ Montague (1998), 265f; Heron (1983), 40.

the Spirit with the Son and posits that the Son's enfleshment occurred by means of the Son using his own Spirit in the womb of the virgin. I shall examine this argument in the first section below. In *In Lucam* (post-428) and *Quod Unus sit Christus* (c. 437), however, while the emphasis is once again on the Spirit's unity with the Son, in these texts the soteriological centrality of the Holy Spirit is articulated. This soteriological interpretation of the miraculous conception will be addressed in the second section of this chapter.

The Miraculous Conception in *Adversus Nestorius Blasphemias* and Related Works

The conception of Jesus frequently emerges as a topic of discussion in *Adversus Nestorius Blasphemias* as well as in the letters Cyril composed to refute Nestorius, particularly Nestorius' refusal to acknowledge the theological appropriateness of referring to Mary as the mother of God (Θεοτόκος). Cyril interpreted Nestorius' unwillingness to call the virgin Θεοτόκος to be a direct attack on what he perceived to be the orthodox understanding of the incarnation. To fail to recognize the legitimacy of calling Mary the mother of God was, for Cyril, akin to denying that the divine Word actually became flesh, that the Word was truly united with the flesh. To counter Nestorius Cyril endeavours to articulate the nature of the union of the divine and human in Christ, and this task leads him often to discuss the genesis of this union in the virgin with whose flesh the Word was united.

However, while the conception comes up for repeated comment, little reference is made to the activity of the Holy Spirit with respect to this event. Instead, Cyril almost always appropriates the enfleshment of the Word to the Word himself with scant

reference made to the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Word is thus portrayed as the primary actor in his own incarnation. A brief survey of some of his comments regarding the conception and birth of Christ in his anti-Nestorian works will illustrate this point.

In his third letter to Nestorius (dated 430) Cyril focuses entirely on the Word uniting flesh to himself in Mary's womb: "Taking flesh from the holy virgin and making it his own from the womb, he underwent a birth like us and came forth as a man from a woman."⁴ Later in the same letter Cyril writes that the Word "hypostatically united (καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἐνώσας) the human condition to himself and underwent a fleshly birth from her womb."⁵ Similar sentiments are expressed in a brief letter written in 431 to explain and defend the controversial twelve anathemas that he had earlier appended to his third letter to Nestorius. When clarifying the second anathema condemning any who would deny that the Word was hypostatically united to the flesh, Cyril makes reference to Christ's birth from a virgin. Citing 1 Timothy 3.16,⁶ wherein Paul refers to God having been 'manifested in the flesh,' he writes:

What then does 'manifested in the flesh' mean? It means that the Word of God the Father became flesh, not in the sense that his own nature was transformed into flesh through change or conversion, as we have already said, but rather that he made that flesh taken from the holy virgin into his very own.⁷

⁴ Ep. 17.3 (*Ad Nest. III*) (ACO I.1.1, 35¹⁷⁻¹⁹).

⁵ Ep. 17.11, (ACO I.1.1, 40⁷⁻⁸). John A. McGuckin provides a succinct description of what 'hypostatic union' means for Cyril: "What he means by this is to stress that the union of God and man in Christ is properly understood to have been effected precisely because it was a single individual subject (the hypostasis: God the Word) who realised the union of two different realities (divinity and humanity) by standing as the sole personal subject of both" [(2004), 142].

⁶ "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."

⁷ *Expl XII Capit.* 8 (ACO I.1.5, 18²⁻⁴). ET: McGuckin (2004), 285.

This perception of the Word as being responsible for his enfleshment is echoed in Cyril's first letter to Succensus, bishop of Diocaesarea (c. 434-438). In response to Succensus' request for christological clarification, Cyril writes: The "Word of God the Father, in an incomprehensible manner, beyond description, united to himself (ἑνωσεν ἑαυτῷ) a body animated with a rational soul, and came forth as man from a woman, not becoming what we are by any transformation of nature but rather by a gracious economy."⁸

Cyril's focus in these passages is clear. Faced with a theological adversary whom he understands to deny the union of the divine and human in Christ through a rejection of the title Θεοτόκος for the Virgin, Cyril places heavy emphasis precisely on this union, arguing that this was a union that originated in the womb of Mary. No mention is made here of the Holy Spirit's part in this union despite the fact that Matthew and Luke accord him a role in the beginning of Christ's existence in the womb.

Nor are we to find any mention of the Spirit in terms of Christ's conception in Cyril's more substantial anti-Nestorian works. In his *Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti* (written after 431), in a chapter on why it is not appropriate to refer, as Nestorius does, to Christ as a God-bearing man, he writes:

Those who have a pure faith in Christ, one that is confirmed by universally correct witness, say that it was God the Word (who is himself from God the Father) who came down in a self-emptying, assuming the form of a slave, and because he took that body which was born from the virgin as his very own, they say that he was made like us, and was called the Son of Man.⁹

⁸ Ep. 45.5 (*Ad Successum I*) (ACO I.1.6, 153¹⁻⁴). ET: McGuckin (2004), 354.

⁹ *Scholia* 17 (PG 75, 1391B). ET: McGuckin (2004), 311-312.

In a later chapter on how we are to understand John 1.14, Cyril writes that the Word made for himself “an indwelling in the temple that was born from the virgin.”¹⁰

Cyril’s most sustained attack on Nestorius is found in *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias*, a work composed in the spring of 430 in response to a series of public lectures given by Nestorius in Constantinople a year earlier.¹¹ It is divided into five books; in the first book Cyril focuses upon the title Θεοτόκος and its Christological implications, while in the second through fifth books he endeavours to articulate the manner in which the divine and the human are united in the person of Jesus Christ.¹² In the course of his argument numerous references are made to the union of the divine and human in the Virgin’s womb, but we shall see that the Holy Spirit receives little attention from Cyril who prefers to attribute the union solely to the activity of the Word.

For example, when addressing Nestorius’ arguments against the title Θεοτόκος in the first book, Cyril says nothing at all about what the Holy Spirit contributed to the union of the divine with the flesh. His comments come in response to the following passage from one of the homilies delivered by Nestorius:

I often asked them [i.e., those aligned with Cyril]...“Do you say that the Godhead has been born of the holy virgin?” At once they pounce on the phrase, “And who,” they say, “is so sick with such blasphemy as to say that in her who gave birth to the temple, in her was God conceived by the Holy Spirit?” Then when I reply to this, “What is wrong, then, about our advising the avoidance of this expression [i.e., Θεοτόκος] and the acceptance of the common meaning of the two natures?” then it seems to them that what we have said is blasphemy. Either admit clearly that the Godhead has been born from the blessed Mary, or if you avoid this expression as blasphemous, why do you say the same things as I do, yet pretend that you are not saying them?¹³

¹⁰ Ibid. 25 (PG 75, 1398B). ET: McGuckin (2004), 319.

¹¹ Russell (2000), 130.

¹² Ibid., 131.

¹³ *Adv. Nest.* I.1 (ACO I.1.6, 16²⁰⁻²⁷). ET: Russell (2000), 132.

According to Nestorius, to say that Mary is the mother of God is at worst to suggest the unthinkable blasphemous notion that she is the progenitor of the Godhead, and at best to muddy the Christological waters by not sufficiently delineating the two natures of Christ. It is for this reason that he admonishes his interlocutors to avoid the title Θεοτόκος and to accept “the common meaning of the two natures.”

Cyril’s response is to point to John 1.14 and to argue that this verse clearly demonstrates that the Word of God truly did become a human through being “hypostatically and without confusion united with the flesh.”¹⁴ The soteriological implications of such a position are then outlined by Cyril. He argues that if “the Word had not been born like us according to the flesh, if he had not partaken of the same elements as we do, he would not have delivered human nature from the fault we incurred in Adam, nor would he have warded off the decay from our bodies.”¹⁵ Unless the Word became like us, he continues, “we would not have been enriched with what belongs to him,”¹⁶ but because Jesus Christ truly is the Word made flesh we see in him “human nature as if experiencing a new beginning of the human race, enjoying freedom of access to God.”¹⁷ For humanity to be healed, the divine and the human had to be united completely in Jesus Christ, and in Cyril’s opinion, to deny that Mary is Θεοτόκος is to call this union into question. Cyril thus accuses Nestorius of portraying Christ simply as

¹⁴ ἀσυγχύτως τε καὶ καθ’ ὑπόστασιν ἐνωθῆναι σαρκί. Ibid. (ACO I.1.6: 16⁴¹). ET: Russell (2000), 133.

¹⁵ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 17²⁴⁻²⁶). ET: Russell (2000), 134.

¹⁶ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 17⁴²⁻⁴⁴). ET: Russell (2000), 135.

¹⁷ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 17³⁹⁻⁴¹). ET: Russell (2000), 135.

a God-bearing man and not truly God, and it is at this point that Cyril summarizes his position against Nestorius with the following words:

The Word that is from above and from the Father came down not into the flesh of any particular person nor into a flesh alien to humanity, as we have already said. Moreover, he did not descend on a particular individual like ourselves in order to dwell within him, as doubtless happened in the case of the prophets. On the contrary, *having made his own the body which was from a woman* (ἀλλ' ἴδιον ποιησάμενος σῶμα τὸ ἐκ γυναικός), and having been born from her according to the flesh, he recapitulated human birth in himself, he who was with the Father before all ages having come to be with us according to the flesh. This is the confession of faith that the divine scriptures have transmitted to us.¹⁸

Important to note from this quotation is that, when referring to the union of the divine with flesh, Cyril ascribes the uniting itself to the Word who “made his own the body which was from a woman.” That this took place in the womb is made clear from the fact that reference is made to Christ’s birth after we are told of the Word’s uniting activity. It would appear, therefore, that Cyril is here referring to the conception of Jesus in the womb of the virgin, the genesis of the union of the divine with flesh. Intriguingly, although Cyril is here talking about the enfleshment of the Word of God in the womb, and although the Holy Spirit is portrayed in the gospels as being actively involved in this process, Cyril says nothing at all here about the role of the Spirit in the union of the divine and human in the person of Jesus Christ. He instead attributes the act of uniting solely to the Word, who united flesh to himself in order that humanity could be healed.

This is not the only place in *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias* where the union is attributed to the Word alone without reference to the Spirit. At the beginning of the second book, when arguing against what he perceives to be Nestorius’ argument that Christ “is a God-bearing man and not truly God, a man conjoined (συνημμένον) with

¹⁸ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 18²⁻⁷). Emphasis mine. ET: Russell (2000), 135.

God as if possessing an equal status,”¹⁹ Cyril writes the following summary of his understanding of orthodox belief as formulated at the Council of Nicaea:

For we believe in one God, Father almighty, maker of all things both visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit; and following the professions of faith of the holy fathers that supplement this, we say that the Word begotten essentially from God the Father became as we are and took flesh and became man, that is, *he took for himself a body from the holy Virgin and made it his own*. For that is how he will truly be one Lord Jesus Christ, that is how we worship him as one and the same in his divinity and his humanity, that is to say, simultaneously both God and man.²⁰

Later in the same book Cyril takes on Nestorius over his use of terms like *συνημμένως* – a word that denotes a close connection but not the absolute unity for which Cyril argued²¹ - or *συνάφεια* – Nestorius’ favourite term²² that signifies a union by combination or conjunction which was used frequently by Theodore of Mopsuestia and other Antiochenes.²³ Cyril contends that these terms essentially denote nothing more than an extrinsic unity that is really no unity at all,²⁴ and he instead writes the following about how the divine and human are united in the incarnate Word, once again emphasizing the Word’s active involvement in his own incarnation:

¹⁹ Ibid. II.Prooem (ACO I.1.6, 32²⁴⁻²⁵). ET: Russell (2000), 141.

²⁰ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 32³⁰⁻³⁷). Emphasis mine. ET: Russell (2000), 141.

²¹ Cf. Lampe, 1327.

²² Cf. *Adv. Nest.* II.5 (ACO I.1.6, 41²³⁻²⁵). ET: Russell (2000), 147-148. Cyril cites the following quotation from Nestorius that is indicative of the latter’s use of this term to describe the union of the divine and human in Christ: “Say of him who did the assuming that he is God. Add with respect to that which was assumed that it has the form of a servant. Next bring in the dignity of the conjunction (*συνάφειας*), in that the sovereign power is common to both. Confess the unity of the rank, in that the dignity of the two is the same, for the natures remain.”

²³ Cf. Lampe, 1308-10; Russell (2000), note 29, 233. For a clear and detailed analysis of Cyril’s criticism of the various terms used by Nestorius to describe the union of the divine and human in Christ, and in particular his use of *συνάφεια*, see McKinion (2000), 86-105.

²⁴ Cf. *Adv. Nest.* II.5, 6 (ACO I.1.6, 41²³⁻⁴³).

In Christ's case the union does not resemble the casual joining (συνάπτοιτο) of one thing to another, whether understood in terms of spiritual concord or of physical proximity. On the contrary, as I have frequently said, *he made the body taken from the holy Virgin his own*; the Word of God, we say, was united in a true sense (ἀληθῶς ἡνωσθαι) with flesh endowed with a soul.²⁵

Book three of *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias* contains some of Cyril's most direct language about the Word being responsible for his enfleshment, language that was written in response to the following comments by Nestorius:

Abraham's seed [i.e., Jesus] is he who was yesterday and today [Heb 13.8] according to the voice of Paul, not he who said, "Before Abraham was, I am" [John 8.58]. It was not he who said, "He that has seen me has seen the Father" [John 14.9] who was like to his brethren in all things and assumed brotherhood of human soul and body. He was sent who is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) with us and was anointed "to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind" [Luke 4.18b]. "For the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me" [Luke 4.18a].²⁶

Nestorius' argument here is that the human nature of Christ can be distinguished from the divine, and of especial interest for our purposes, he points to the anointing of Jesus by the Spirit to prove his point. We will examine in greater detail Cyril's argument regarding the christological implications of the anointing of Jesus by the Spirit below in the context of the baptism of Jesus. More important at the moment is Cyril's comments made in response to the above quotation. After pointing out that, in his view, Nestorius clearly severs the natures of Christ so as to make two Sons, Cyril writes: "We affirm that the Word himself from God the Father laid hold of Abraham's seed, and made his own that which was assumed of the holy Virgin, a body having a reasonable soul."²⁷ Similar sentiments are expressed in the paragraphs that follow this statement.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid. II.6 (ACO I.1.6, 42¹⁵⁻¹⁹). ET: Russell (2000), 149.

²⁶ Ibid. III.3 (ACO I.1.6, 62²⁴⁻²⁸).

²⁷ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 62³¹⁻³³).

²⁸ Cf. Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 63²⁸⁻³⁰; 63³⁹⁻⁴²); III.4 (ACO I.1.6, 71²²⁻²⁵).

What is intriguing about Cyril's appropriation of the enfleshment to the Word here is that it comes in the midst of his attempt to address Nestorius' suggestion that the activity of the Holy Spirit in the incarnate Word, and in particular the anointing Jesus Christ received by the Holy Spirit, illustrates the divergence of the divine and human natures in Christ. Although no reference is made to the conception and birth of Jesus in the passages from Nestorius which Cyril cites, Cyril's response to Nestorius' argument is to go to the source, as it were, of the incarnation itself. We thus find him arguing for the union of the divine and human in Christ by positing repeatedly here that the Word became man by uniting the flesh from the Virgin to himself with no reference at all to the activity of the Holy Spirit. This pneumatological omission, given Nestorius' reference to Christ's anointing by the Spirit, is probably not accidental, but is likely intended to underline Cyril's point that the Word's union with the flesh meant that Jesus Christ truly was the Word incarnate and therefore divine in and of himself.

There are numerous other examples in his anti-Nestorian compositions in which Cyril characterizes the Word as the primary agent of his own incarnation by uniting flesh to himself in the Virgin's womb and undergoing a human birth.²⁹ The absence of references to the Holy Spirit in these contexts is likely intended to be for rhetorical effect, and Cyril perhaps justified this omission on the basis of his conviction, described in detail

²⁹ Cf. *Ep.* 4.4 (*Ad Nest. II*) (ACO I.1.1, 27.12-14); *Ep.* 17.3, 11 (*Ad Nest. III*) (ACO I.1.1, 35.17-19, 40.7-8); *De Symbolo* 14 (ACO I.1.4, 54); *Homilia Paschalis* XVII.4 (SC 434, 288.65-68), XX.1 (PG 77, 841C). Moreover, Cyril's emphasis on the Word as the primary agent of his own incarnation is not simply a mark of his anti-Nestorian writings. Paul Galtier points to a similar emphasis within *In Joannem*. See "Le Saint-Esprit dans l'incarnation du Verbe d'après Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," *Problemi scelti di teologia contemporanea*, *Analecta Gregoriana* 68 (1954), 387-8.

in the fourth book of *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias*, that the Spirit's operation in the life and work of Christ must be primarily ascribed to the Word given the fact that the Spirit is the Word's own and continued to be so when the Word became flesh. This principle is articulated in response to the following accusation made by Nestorius against Cyril:

Contriving greater insult against him³⁰ they separate from the divine nature the Spirit who formed (διαπλάσσαν) [Christ's] human nature (for it says, "that which is conceived in Mary is of the Holy Spirit" [Matt 1.20]); restored (ἀναπλάσσαν) to righteousness him who was formed (τὸ πλασθέν) (for it says, "He was manifested in the flesh, made righteous (ἐδικαιώθη) in the Spirit" [1 Tim 3.16]); made him fearful to demons (for he says, "it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons" [Matt 12.28]); who made his flesh a temple (for it says, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him" [John 1.32]); [and] who allowed him to ascend (for it says, "after he had given commandment to the apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up through the Holy Spirit"³¹ [Acts 1.2]). This one who bestowed such great glory on Christ they contrive to be Christ's slave.³²

It is Nestorius' contention that Cyril's christology translates into an impoverished pneumatology, and he directs the readers' attention to the many references to the activity of the Holy Spirit during Christ's life. Significantly for our purposes, in addition to pointing to Christ casting out demons by the Spirit and his ascension, Nestorius highlights Christ's miraculous conception and his baptismal reception of the Spirit. The precise nature of Nestorius' argument is difficult to pinpoint given that the above quotation is from a larger work and is provided by his interlocutor for rhetorical purposes. It appears, however, that Nestorius understands Cyril not to accord sufficient legitimacy to the Spirit's activity vis-à-vis Jesus Christ, and this translates into a denial of

³⁰ It is unclear whether Nestorius is here referring to the Word or the Holy Spirit. It would appear, given his accusation at the end of the quotation, that Nestorius is here suggesting that Cyril insults the Spirit.

³¹ Nestorius here misquotes Acts 1.2. He writes, ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις οὓς ἐξελέξατο, διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου ἀνελήφθη. Acts 1.2 reads, ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου οὓς ἐξελέξατο ἀνελήμφθη.

³² *Adv. Nest.* IV.3 (ACO I.1.6, 81¹⁻¹⁰).

the Holy Spirit's divinity. That the Spirit played a pivotal part in and during Christ's life must be recognized in order not to compromise orthodox pneumatology.

Cyril's response to Nestorius is to reverse the argument by demonstrating that it is Nestorius who denies the divinity of both the Holy Spirit and of Jesus Christ. According to Cyril, Nestorius' interpretation of the Spirit's activity leads to the conclusion that Jesus Christ stood in need of the Holy Spirit, as if he did not possess the Spirit essentially. Such an interpretation, however, is unfaithful to the entirety of the gospels' witness, which testifies both to the Word truly becoming flesh and to the inseparability of the Word from the Holy Spirit who is the Word's own. Cyril points to both of these theological axioms in the following quotation:

If therefore you know, quite reasonably, that to separate the Spirit from his divine nature is the most disgraceful of faults, it is clear that the Spirit is his [the Son's], as proceeding (προϊόν) through his ineffable nature, and is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with him. He did not need the power that is from [the Spirit] as something outside and foreign, but used him rather as his own Spirit, and renders himself fearful to the demons through him.³³

In the first sentence, Cyril emphasizes that the Spirit indeed cannot be separated from the divine nature for the Spirit belongs to the Son, coming forth from him and being of the same essence as him. Although he does not argue this point here, he does so elsewhere in book four of *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias*, where he appeals to a number of biblical texts in support of the inseparability of the Son from his Spirit; these include Matthew 10.19-20, which he reads in conjunction with Luke 21.14-15, John 15.26, and John

³³ Ibid. IV.III (ACO I.1.6, 81²⁶⁻³¹).

16.15.³⁴ The Spirit and the Son are united essentially, Cyril suggests above, the Spirit being the Son's own. Given this relationship, Cyril submits that the incarnate Son therefore did not require the Spirit as if he did not already have him. Jesus Christ instead made use of the Spirit, the Spirit being his own and one with him. Cyril does not, in this quotation, provide a lengthy argument outlining his conviction that the Son truly became flesh; this is a point he argues throughout the whole of *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias*, and I have highlighted a few texts above. The archbishop instead seamlessly proceeds from articulating the intertrinitarian unity of the Son and the Spirit in the first sentence to positing that Jesus Christ, given this unity, did not require the Spirit as one who did not have him. The Word, as Cyril argues elsewhere in the treatise, made the flesh his very own by uniting it hypostatically with himself,³⁵ and we are thus to believe that Christ "is one and the same in his divinity and his humanity, that is to say, simultaneously both God and man."³⁶ The Word did not cease being Word when he became flesh, and the Spirit did not cease being the Word's own after the incarnation. The Spirit's activity in Jesus' life, therefore, does not mean that Christ required the Spirit's power, but that he used that power because the Spirit was his own.

The manner in which we are correctly to interpret the Spirit's activities thus becomes clear. Nestorius claims wrongly, according to Cyril, that Jesus Christ was glorified by the Spirit as one who required such glorification. Cyril posits, however, that

³⁴ See *ibid.* IV.1 (ACO I.1.6, 77²⁷-78⁴); IV.2 (ACO I.1.6, 79⁴⁰-80⁶, 80²⁹⁻⁴⁰); IV.3 (ACO I.1.6, 81²⁶-82¹⁷). Cyril interprets the reference to the 'Spirit of truth' in John 15:26 to mean 'Spirit of the Son,' because the Son is the truth.

³⁵ *Ibid.* III.4 (ACO I.1.6, 71²³⁻²⁴).

³⁶ *Ibid.* II.Prooem (ACO I.1.6, 32³⁶⁻³⁷). ET: Russell (2000), 141.

a different interpretation must be proffered: “For admittedly he was glorified by the Spirit working divine signs, not as a man bearing God who gained this thing from a foreign and superior nature, as we do, but rather *as one using his own Spirit*. For he was God by nature and not other than him is his Spirit.”³⁷ Similar sentiments are expressed a few paragraphs later:

For just as the Holy Spirit proceeds (πρόεισιν) from the Father, being his by nature, so in this same manner he is also through the Son, being his by nature and consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with him. Therefore, although he was glorified through the Spirit, *it is understood that he glorified himself through his own Spirit* and not as a thing from outside, even if he was seen to have become a man like us.³⁸

Cyril is willing to acknowledge that the Spirit did indeed work in the incarnate Word; this is, after all, the witness of the gospels. But this witness needs to be properly interpreted. That the Spirit was active in the earthly life of Jesus Christ does not illustrate that the man Jesus can be differentiated from the divine Word who dwelt within him, which is, according to Cyril, Nestorius’ interpretation of these pneumatological events. Rather, in order both to preserve the inseparability of the Son and his Spirit and the reality of the Word’s kenosis, Cyril argues that the Word can not be perceived to be absent from the Spirit’s activity; indeed, it should be understood that the Word is the primary agent of the Spirit’s intervention. When the gospels thus write of Jesus being glorified by the Spirit, we are to understand that the Word was glorifying himself through his Spirit; when the gospels write of Jesus casting out demons by the Spirit, we are to understand that the Word made flesh used the Spirit as his own;³⁹ and when Christ ascended into heaven

³⁷ Ibid. IV.1 (ACO I.1.6, 77³¹⁻³³). Emphasis mine.

³⁸ Ibid. IV.3 (ACO I.1.6, 82¹³⁻¹⁷). Emphasis mine.

³⁹ Ibid. IV.III (ACO I.1.6, 81¹⁷⁻²⁶).

through the Holy Spirit, we must understand that “the Holy Spirit was in him as his own.”⁴⁰

I shall in the next chapter address Cyril’s interpretation of Christ’s baptismal reception of the Holy Spirit, and so will not discuss it here. It is enough to say here that the archbishop does not understand Jesus to have received the Spirit as one who did not previously have him. As for the Spirit’s role in the miraculous conception, to which Nestorius refers in his attack, Cyril says very little in response beyond simply asking Nestorius how the divine Word, the only-begotten of the Father, required the Holy Spirit to form his own flesh.⁴¹ The point of Cyril’s query is to emphasize, in contrast to Nestorius, that it was the divine Word himself who became flesh, and as such he would not have required the Spirit to form his flesh as if he did not already have the Spirit. But even though Cyril does not address in great detail the role of the Spirit in Christ’s conception, his line of argumentation throughout his response to Nestorius explains how he justifies portraying the Word as the primary agent in his own incarnation. It can be admitted, under Cyril’s schema, that Jesus indeed was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin’s womb, as Matthew and Luke declare. But this Spirit is the Spirit of the Word who became incarnate, and we are thus to recognize that the Spirit did not undertake this work in isolation from the Word himself. Indeed, given that the Spirit is the Son’s own, it can be maintained that the Word was the primary agent in his own conception, having used his own Spirit to unite the flesh to himself. When Cyril thus discusses the Word’s

⁴⁰ Ibid. IV.3 (ACO I.1.6, 82³²⁻³³).

⁴¹ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 81¹⁷⁻²²).

conception without reference to the Spirit, we are apparently to understand that the Spirit's activity is implied.

Cyril is wholly unwilling to countenance any perception of the Spirit's operation in and during the incarnation that could possibly undermine his assertion that the divine Word truly became flesh. According to Cyril, an improper interpretation of the activity of the Holy Spirit, such as Nestorius posits, does just that. To suggest that Jesus Christ required the Holy Spirit in any capacity is, in Cyril's mind, akin to denying the union of the Word with the flesh. "For as the Word, he is the giver of the word and the bestower of the Spirit having him as his own by nature,"⁴² and given that the Word did not himself alter when he became flesh (indeed, he could not, being impassable), the incarnate Word did not cease having the Spirit as his own. The Spirit could not, therefore, contribute anything to the incarnate Word that he did not already have essentially.

What Cyril gains by making the Word the agent of his own incarnation is clear. Over and against Nestorius' christology, Cyril lays stress both on the unity of the divine and human natures in Christ, and the unity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Any attempt to allow for the isolated operation of the Spirit in the incarnate Word evinces, Cyril suggests, a heretical christology that does not acknowledge the union of the divine Word with his flesh. To understand the Word as the primary agent of the Spirit's intervention, including at the miraculous conception, is, according to Cyril, more in line with orthodox christology and trinitarian theology. Regarding the latter, this schema is consistent with the belief that the Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father *and* the Son, that the Holy Spirit is

⁴² Ibid. IV.2 (ACO I.1.6, 80²⁹⁻³⁰).

inextricably one with the Son as the Son's own. Regarding the former, it allows for a consistent and coherent portrayal of the Spirit's operation vis-à-vis the incarnate Word without compromising the absolute unity of the divine with flesh, a unity that precludes any possibility of Christ requiring anything from the Spirit that he did not have by virtue of being the divine Word made flesh.

Thus, when faced with an opponent who seemed to emphasize the Spirit's operation to the detriment of Christ's unity, Cyril clearly perceived that his overall argument against Nestorius' christology would be best served by an account of the Word's enfleshment that focused solely on the Word. Christological gains are made, however, at the cost of pneumatological ambiguity. As noted above, Nestorius accuses Cyril of turning the Spirit into Christ's slave, and admittedly Cyril's continual emphasis on the Spirit as the Son's and as used by the Son leaves him open to such an accusation. Cyril is so concerned in his compositions against Nestorius to avoid any opening for a dualistic christology that he is unwilling to accede any ground to the Spirit with respect to the incarnation. His christology does not allow for the Spirit to contribute anything positively to Jesus Christ at his conception or otherwise. Thus, in Cyril's portrayal of the conception in the writings explored above we learn little about the Holy Spirit. There appears to be nothing distinctive about the presence and operation of the Spirit in the Virgin's womb, nothing that can tell us about the person and identity of the Holy Spirit, apart from his being the Spirit of the one incarnated. Indeed, apart from stating, on the basis of his understanding of the Spirit's relationship to the Son, that "the Word of God

the Father can not ever be understood apart from his own Spirit,”⁴³ the question of why Christ became human through the intervention of the Holy Spirit is left unanswered.

The Miraculous Conception in *In Lucam* and *Quod Unus sit Christus*

Too much, however, should not be made of this account of the Spirit’s role in Christ’s conception. Cyril bases his argument regarding the Word’s use of his own Spirit on the total unity of the Son with the Spirit. His point, therefore, is not to subordinate the Spirit to the Son, but to preserve the divinity of the incarnate Word, who is divine alongside his own Spirit. Moreover, the above account of the miraculous conception is not the archbishop’s final word on the subject. In *In Lucam* and *Quod Unus sit Christus* (*On the Unity of Christ*), Cyril directly addresses the question of why Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit. *In Lucam* is a collection of sermons composed after 428 on the gospel of Luke, preserved in part in substantial Greek fragments and in whole in a Syriac translation. Cyril’s discussion of Christ’s conception occurs in his sermon on Christ’s birth as recounted in Luke 2.1-7. Cyril’s primary purpose in this sermon is to provide a reading of Christ’s birth that preserves the unity of the divine and human natures of the incarnate Word; anti-Nestorian concerns are clearly behind this impetus. He thus lays stress in the first part on the two natures uniting in such a manner that we can speak of one Christ, one Son, and one Lord without, at the same time, doing injury to the diversity of the natures.⁴⁴ It is after laying this christological foundation that Cyril attends to the meaning of the miraculous nature of Christ’s conception in his exegesis of Luke 2.5. The issue of the conception’s meaning arises at this point due to Cyril’s

⁴³ Ibid. IV.3 (ACO I.1.6, 82²¹⁻²²).

⁴⁴ *In Luc.* 2.4 (PG 72, 484B-C).

suggestion that Luke's reference to Mary as Joseph's "betrothed" in Luke 2.5 was intended to underline the miraculous nature of Jesus' conception through the Holy Spirit prior to Mary's marriage to Joseph. Cyril explains the purport of Jesus' miraculous conception as follows:

Christ, the firstfruits (ἀπαρχή) of all and the second Adam according to the scriptures, was born of the Spirit in order that he might convey grace to us. For we also were destined no longer to be called children of men, but rather [children] of God, having received rebirth (ἀναγέννησιν) through the Spirit in Christ first, "that in everything he might be pre-eminent," as the very wise Paul says [Col 1.18].⁴⁵

Cyril's strategy is very interesting. Whereas Nestorius, as already noted, understood the Spirit's operation in and during the incarnation to have christological ramifications, Cyril adroitly posits that the Word's conception by the Spirit is more appropriately to be interpreted soteriologically. And the archbishop bases this soteriological reading of the miraculous conception on the typology of Christ as the second Adam, a typology found in Paul's letters, particularly Romans 5.12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15.20-22, 44-49. Throughout his corpus, Cyril uses the Adam-Christ typology as a primary means of explicating the soteriological meaning of the incarnation. A great deal more will be said about this typology in my examination of Cyril's interpretation of Christ's baptism in the next chapter, but the basic outline of the archbishop's understanding of Christ as the second Adam at this point will aid in comprehending the purport of Cyril's soteriological interpretation of the miraculous conception. The prevalence of the Adam-Christ typology in Cyril's writings is rooted, as Robert Wilken notes, in his penchant for portraying the salvific efficacy of the

⁴⁵ *In Luc.* 2.5 (Reuss, 225).

incarnation in terms of recapitulation and re-creation.⁴⁶ Human salvation required, according to Cyril, a sinless second Adam who could reverse the disastrous consequences of the first Adam's sin by becoming the firstfruits of human redemption. Just as Adam's actions had consequences for the human race, so that which the second Adam experienced and accomplished has soteriological implications for the renewal of humankind.

Cyril's immediate emphasis on Christ as the second Adam in his reading of the Word's conception by the Spirit in the above quotation is therefore significant. By it we are meant to understand that the Word experienced conception by the Holy Spirit representatively for the benefit of humankind. For by being born of the Spirit, Jesus became the firstfruits of all those who will themselves attain new birth through this same Spirit. Human nature experienced the generative operation first in the second Adam in order that all humanity might also experience birth in the Spirit and so become children of God. Cyril argues, therefore, that the miraculous conception of Christ opens the door to the pneumatic rebirth of all humankind. That which had been impossible for humankind because of the first Adam is now made possible because the second Adam has undergone birth through the Spirit for us. Divine filiation is thus, according to Cyril, interwoven with the Word's conception by the Spirit.

⁴⁶ Cf. Robert L. Wilken, "Exegesis and the History of Theology: Reflections on the Adam-Christ Typology in Cyril of Alexandria," *Church History* 35 (1966), 142-3; Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 93-142. See also Walter J. Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man according to Cyril of Alexandria* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1957), 160-5.

A similar, although more thorough, interpretation of Christ's conception is located in *Quod Unus sit Christus*, one of the last works Cyril composed, written in opposition to the continued influence of Diodore of Tarsus, a teacher of Nestorius.⁴⁷ Cyril's account of the miraculous conception occurs in the context of a sustained argument that the Word became flesh, was born of the Virgin, and that the title of Θεοτόκος is thus entirely appropriate for Mary. In the midst of this argument, Cyril asks why Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He poses the question as follows:

When the only-begotten Word of God wished to enter our likeness why did he not permit the laws of our human nature to apply in the constitution and generation of his own flesh? He did not commit himself to assume flesh through the marriage bed, but rather from a holy and unmarried virgin, conceiving from the Spirit when the power of God overshadowed her, as it is written. So if God did not hold the marriage bed in dishonour, but on the contrary honoured it with a blessing [cf. Heb 13.4], then why did the Word, who is God, make a virgin the mother of his own flesh with a conception straight from the Spirit?⁴⁸

Cyril commences his response⁴⁹ to this question by explaining that the Word became flesh in order to reconstitute – he uses here the verb ἀναστοιχειόω⁵⁰ – the fallen human condition, and that his conception must therefore be understood within the framework of this renewal and re-creation of the human race. Central to this renewal is the operation of the Spirit, for through him we experience spiritual rebirth (νοητὴν ἀναγέννησιν) and attain likeness (συμμορφίαν) with the one who is truly Son by nature. And attaining such likeness with the Son we become capable of calling God our Father

⁴⁷ See G.M. de Durand's introduction to the critical edition in *Deux Dialogues Christologiques*, SC 97 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1964), 59-80. See also John Anthony McGuckin's introduction to his translation of *Quod Unus sit Christus, On the Unity of Christ* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), 29-31.

⁴⁸ *Quod Unus* 724A-C (SC 97, 332¹⁰-334²⁰). ET: McGuckin (2000), 62.

⁴⁹ Found in *Quod Unus* 724C-725E (SC 97, 334-338).

⁵⁰ See Lampe, 124.

and so are freed of the corruption we inherited through our “first father,” Adam.⁵¹ The adoption of humanity as children of God, Cyril continues, was fundamental to Jesus’ mission, and he cites John 1.12-13 and Matthew 23.9 to illustrate his point. Cyril posits that the Word’s conception by the Holy Spirit should be understood soteriologically, particularly in terms of divine filiation. And the relationship between divine filiation and the miraculous conception is so fundamental for Cyril that he questions the possibility of our attaining to divine sonship apart from this event:

If we foolishly deny that the Word of God the Father became like us by such a birth...then how else could we be so conformed (μορφούμενοι) as to be called children of God by the Spirit? Whom should we then take as the first-fruits (τὴν ἀπαρχήν) of this process? Who would bring this dignity (ἀξίωμα) to us?⁵²

Cyril further explains the relationship between divine filiation and Christ’s conception by the Spirit as the text progresses. The grace of adoption extends to all humanity, he explains, “insofar as human nature had first achieved this possibility in [Christ].”⁵³ He was the first human to be born of the Spirit in order that all humanity might also be so born, and the basis of Cyril’s argument is the typology of Christ as the second Adam, as indicated by his citation of 1 Corinthians 15.47-49,⁵⁴ a key passage in which Paul uses the Adam-Christ typology. As the second Adam, the man from heaven – Jesus – was born of the Spirit in order that human nature might, in him, experience the Spirit’s adoptive operation, an experience that opens the door for all humanity to be born

⁵¹ *Quod Unus* 724D-E (SC 97, 334²⁸⁻³⁵).

⁵² Ibid. 725A-B (SC 97, 336⁴⁻¹⁰). ET: McGuckin (2000), 63.

⁵³ Ibid. 725B-C (SC 97, 336¹⁶⁻¹⁹). ET: McGuckin (2000), 63.

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 15.47-49: “The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.”

of the Spirit. And to be born of the Spirit like Jesus is to become like Jesus. Relating this text to the miraculous conception, Cyril explains that the curse of sin and corruption inherited from the earthly Adam are overcome in Christ, who was born of the Spirit that we might remain holy and incorruptible like him. The clear inference here is that our own spiritual rebirth, made possible because Christ was born of the Spirit, is inextricable from likeness with Christ who is both holy and incorruptible.

In both *In Lucam* and *Quod Unus sit Christus* Cyril detaches Christ's conception by the Spirit from his opponent's Christological misreading by arguing that the primary signification of this event is soteriological. For Cyril this signification is tied to the incarnate Word's identity as the second Adam, the firstfruits of human redemption. The typology of Christ as the second Adam provides Cyril with a hermeneutical key with which to unlock the meaning of a potentially problematic detail regarding the incarnation, and with a means of expounding upon the soteriological benefits associated with the Word made flesh. Thus, Cyril explains the Word's conception by the Spirit occurred not because Jesus Christ required the operation of the Spirit, but for the benefit of all humanity. In Christ's conception by the Spirit humanity's rebirth through the Spirit is both prefigured and enabled. In order for humanity to be born of the Spirit and thus to become children of God rather than children of Adam – and so to share the incorruptibility and holiness that is the concomitant of having God as our Father⁵⁵ – human nature first had to experience pneumatological birth in the person of Jesus Christ, the divine Word made flesh. Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, in other words,

⁵⁵ I shall deal with divine filiation in Cyril's thought in much greater detail in the fourth chapter.

that human nature might first undergo saving birth through the Spirit in him who alone did not require such a birth and who could thus accept it representatively for all humanity. Those who become children of God by grace are conformed by the Spirit to attain likeness with him who was himself conceived by the Spirit as a human, but who is the incorruptible and holy Son of God by nature. Christ is therefore the inaugurator of a new human race adopted through the Holy Spirit who conceived the incarnate Word.

Cyril's soteriological reading of the miraculous conception in *In Lucam* and *Quod Unus sit Christus* bears striking resemblance to his interpretation of Christ's baptismal reception of the Holy Spirit, an interpretation proffered in a number of places in his corpus, most extensively in *In Joannem* and *In Lucam*. Against the Arian argument that Christ's reception of the Spirit indicates his ontological inferiority, Cyril proposes that Christ received the Spirit as the second Adam and thereby paved the way for all humanity, which had lost the Spirit because of the sin of the first Adam and his progeny, to receive the Spirit anew. In the next chapter I will analyse this interpretation of Christ's baptism extensively. It suffices to say here that, while Cyril's account of human renewal through Christ's baptismal reception of the Spirit is more detailed and thorough than his portrayal of the salvific efficacy of Christ's conception, his logic in both instances is roughly the same. For in both accounts Cyril attempts to undermine his interlocutors' interpretations by arguing that the event in question must be read through the hermeneutical lens of Christ as the second Adam, and therefore that both Christ's conception and baptism are to be situated within the narrative of human salvation.

In comparison with Cyril's silence on the Spirit's role in Christ's conception in his other anti-Nestorian compositions, the archbishop's soteriological interpretation is pneumatologically rich, and indicates the salvific centrality of the Holy Spirit in Cyril's thought. While his primary purpose when discussing the conception in *In Lucam* and *Quod Unus sit Christus* is to defend christological ground, he does so by emphasizing the imperative role the Spirit plays in human salvation and by illustrating how it was that the Spirit is enabled to act through the second Adam. The focus is on Christ as the one in whom human nature is recreated and divinely adopted, but this renewal and divine filiation occur through the intervention of the Holy Spirit in the second Adam and his spiritual offspring. The incarnate Word submitted to conception by the Spirit precisely because it was his concern to raise humanity to the level of divine sonship, and Christ alone was capable of receiving through the Spirit that which was previously impossible for humans due to sin. The incarnation of the Word thus creates the means whereby we become children of God, doing so by tracing a path whereby the integral soteriological activity of the Holy Spirit can be actualized in human nature. Whereas the Word tends to overshadow the Spirit's role when Cyril ascribes primary agency to the Word in his own incarnation, in his soteriological account of the conception he portrays the Spirit as being absolutely essential in his own right for the redemption of humanity. Furthermore, the centrality of divine filiation as a soteriological category in Cyril's thought emerges clearly from his account of the Word's conception by the Spirit. Our adoption as children of God is, according to Cyril, an important purpose of Christ's mission, and such adoption is made possible through new birth in the Spirit. Cyril's notion of divine

filiation, and the role of the Spirit in our adoption, will be more thoroughly examined in the fourth chapter.

In addition to providing a dynamic pneumocentric soteriology, Cyril's soteriological reading of the Word's conception by the Spirit is a more thorough, and ultimately more satisfying, response to Nestorius' characterization of the role of the Holy Spirit in and during the incarnation than the interpretation of the conception provided in Cyril's other anti-Nestorian works. I earlier pointed out that Nestorius accuses Cyril of making the Holy Spirit little more than a servant of the Son. Cyril's consistent attribution of primary agency to the Word in his own incarnation does little to address this accusation. He effectively counters Nestorius by insisting both that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son and that the Son truly became flesh, and therefore that the Word cannot be absent from the Spirit's operation at any time, including his operation in and during the incarnation. But this insistence on the Spirit being the Son's own would likely not have dissuaded Nestorius of his earlier criticism.

Cyril's soteriological reading of the Word's conception is a different story altogether. Far from being the Son's minion, the Spirit emerges from Cyril's soteriological interpretation as being integral to the salvation of humankind, and particularly to the adoption of humanity as children of God. We learn little in this interpretation about the person of the Holy Spirit beyond his identity as the Spirit of the Son, nor does Cyril make clear how it is that the Spirit accomplishes the task of bestowing divine sonship. Nevertheless, the central role of the Holy Spirit in Cyril's soteriological thought is clearly manifest in *In Lucam* and *Quod Unus sit Christus*. Had

Cyril provided a constructive account of the Spirit's role in the Word's conception in his other anti-Nestorian works, one wonders whether Nestorius could justifiably have made his accusation.

Moreover, by interpreting the miraculous conception soteriologically, Cyril presents a coherent alternative to Nestorius' emphasis on the christological implications of the Spirit's operation. For by arguing that the Word's conception should be placed within the narrative of human salvation, Cyril effectively removes this event out of the christological realm and into the soteriological, thus undermining the very basis of Nestorius' interpretation. Cyril's soteriological reading actually contains a cogent explanation for the Spirit's activity in the womb of the virgin, something the archbishop did not provide when he emphasized the Word as the primary agent of his own incarnation elsewhere.

However, while this soteriological reading of Christ's conception presents a dynamic pneumocentric soteriology at the same time as it provides a way of countering Nestorius' christology, a number of questions are raised by it. There remains, for example, some confusion about how the divine adoption of humanity corresponds to the Spirit's role in Christ's conception. Cyril seems content to understand the two to be analogous in that they both involve birth through the Spirit, but given the categorical difference between the physical conception of Christ by the Spirit and the spiritual rebirth of human beings, the exact relationship between the two requires more elucidation than Cyril provides. In order for Cyril's soteriological reading to be coherent, therefore, Christ's conception has to be effectively spiritualized. In addition, as occurs when he

ascribes primary agency to the Word in his own incarnation, Cyril does not in his soteriological account delineate the precise role of the Spirit in terms of the person and work of the incarnate Word. He was clearly disinclined to discuss the operation of the Spirit in a manner that could be misread to suggest that Christ required the Spirit, but a more extensive examination of the Spirit's activity vis-à-vis Christ himself may have provided some clarity regarding the correlation between Christ's conception and the adoption of humans as children of God, and would have complemented the pneumatological insights proffered.

These drawbacks should not, however, obscure the overall value of Cyril's soteriological interpretation of the conception, particularly in terms of its pneumatological insights. Cyril's account of the salvific efficacy of Christ's conception underlines the central position of the Holy Spirit in his soteriological vision. In Cyril's hands the virginal conception of Christ becomes an event of soteriological significance that revolves around the critical saving operation of the Spirit by whom humans become children of God, transformed into the likeness of the incarnate Word. Such an emphasis on the Spirit's role in the drama of human salvation is indicative of the fundamental role the Holy Spirit plays in Cyril's salvific schema as formulated throughout his corpus, and will be further illustrated through an analysis of the archbishop's interpretation of Christ's baptismal reception of the Spirit.

Chapter 3 – The Holy Spirit and the Incarnation (Part II):
Christ's Baptismal Reception of the Spirit

Therefore through himself he receives the Spirit for us, and renews to our nature the ancient good.¹

- *In Joannem* 1.32-33

We turn at this point to examine Cyril's interpretation of another event in the life of Jesus with significant pneumatological implications – the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ in the form of a dove. From very early on in Christian history, the baptism of Jesus emerged as something of a problem for those trying to comprehend its meaning and import. In Mark's gospel we find a simple and straightforward account of Jesus' baptism with no explanation as to why he sought baptism from John the Baptist or what the significance was of the Spirit's descent upon Jesus as he came up from the water. There is no indication that Mark saw anything improper or problematic about Jesus' baptism. In Matthew's gospel, however, we find the first hints that the early Christian community was somewhat troubled by this event.² John the Baptist here questions the propriety of Jesus being baptized – "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (Matt 3.14). Jesus' response to John – "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness" (3.15) – satisfied the Baptist who proceeded to baptize him. However, it did little to satisfy patristic exegetes prior to, and particularly during, the trinitarian controversy who yearned to understand the purpose and meaning of Jesus' baptism

¹ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 184³⁰-185¹).

² Cf. Wilken (1971), 127-8.

soteriologically and christologically against those who saw this event as buttressing an understanding of Jesus Christ as less than God.³

The purpose of this chapter will be to analyze Cyril's interpretation of Christ's reception of the Spirit at his baptism. To accomplish this task, I shall examine two of Cyril's exegetical works – his *In Joannem* (c. 428) and his *In Lucam* (c. 430) – wherein we find detailed expositions of the Spirit's descent upon Christ. My examination will not, however, be confined to Cyril's exegetical compositions, for this event also comes up for repeated discussion in those writings specifically devoted to the refutation of Nestorius. As we shall see, Cyril is concerned in all these works to provide an exposition of Christ's reception of the Spirit that compromises neither the Son's consubstantiality with the Father nor the unity of the divine and human in Christ. Deconstructive arguments that highlight the theological absurdity of his opponents' interpretations of the Spirit's descent are to found in each of the works I shall examine, and indeed, in his anti-Nestorian writings, Cyril is content to respond to Nestorius' interpretation simply by demonstrating why his interpretation is untenable. However, in both *In Joannem* and *In Lucam* Cyril provides a positive construction of the Spirit's descent, explaining why it was necessary for Christ to receive the Spirit.

Brief attention will first be given below to Cyril's refutation of his opponents' views, with particular focus on the emphasis the archbishop places on the relationship of

³ For helpful discussions of the history of the interpretation of the baptism of Christ, see Kilian McDonnell, "Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995), 209-236; R.L. Wilken, "The Interpretation of the Baptism of Jesus in the Later Fathers," *Studia Patristica* 11 (1967), 268-77; Wilken (1971), 127-132; John O'Donnell, "In Him and Over Him: The Holy Spirit in the Life of Jesus," *Gregorianum* 70.1 (1989), 29.

the Spirit to the Son in his refutations. Although this relationship was discussed in detail in the first chapter, it will be worthwhile to examine how Cyril characterizes this relationship in the context of arguing for a theologically tenable solution to the problem of the Spirit's descent. His own constructive exposition of the Spirit's descent will, however, be of primary concern in this chapter, and for this purpose I shall focus on Cyril's exegesis of John 1.32-33 and, to a lesser degree, his exegesis of Luke 3.21-23. Cyril was reticent to suggest that the Spirit contributed something positively to Jesus Christ at his baptism for fear of the christological implications. He instead proposes that the Spirit's descent upon Christ should be interpreted soteriologically. Such a reading is not itself unique; figures such as Irenaeus and Athanasius also read the baptism of Christ soteriologically. Cyril's interpretation, however, is set apart by two features. First, his exposition is far more comprehensive than that of his predecessors in that the soteriological ramifications of the Spirit's descent upon Christ are spelled out in the light of a detailed portrayal of humanity's creation and fall. Second, and most important for our purposes, the narrative of human salvation that Cyril recounts in the context of his exposition of Christ's baptism is markedly pneumocentric. The narrative is structured around humanity's loss of the Spirit in the first Adam and its reacquisition of the Spirit through his descent on the second Adam. In the course of recounting this narrative, Cyril discusses the importance of the Spirit in humanity's creation, particularly in relation to the preservation of the image of God in which humanity was created, the state of humanity without the Spirit, and the specific soteriological activities associated with the Spirit. The person and activities of the Holy Spirit loom very large indeed in Cyril's

account of his descent upon Christ, with the result that the third person emerges from these pages as being absolutely essential in his own right for the redemption of humankind.

Of course, although Cyril's soteriological reading of the Spirit's descent provides the reader with much fodder for pneumatological reflection, the question remains whether this reading succeeds both as a viable solution to the christological and theological dilemmas posed by the Spirit's descent, and as a legitimate reading of the Spirit's activity in the life and person of Jesus Christ. These issues will be examined in the concluding pages of this chapter.

The Absurdity of his Opponents: Cyril's Attacks on Arian and Nestorian Interpretations of Christ's Baptismal Reception of the Spirit

Cyril devoted extensive space in almost all his compositions to the refutation of what he viewed as the heretical theological and christological musings of Arianism and Nestorianism. Whereas Nestorius became the focus of Cyril's theological ire after 428, his primary target prior to this date was Arianism, perhaps due to a resurgence of Arianism in Alexandria in the early fifth century.⁴ Both Arians and Nestorians proffered interpretations of Christ's baptismal reception of the Spirit that Cyril perceived to be highly problematic, and in this section I shall examine the archbishop's arguments against his opponents, arguments that set the stage for his own reading of this event.

Throughout his largest exegetical composition, *In Joannem*, Cyril constantly attacks Arian trinitarian and christological formulations, responding to these formulations by articulating his own ideas while, at the same time, explicating the gospel of John.

⁴ Cf. Boulnois (1994), 16-17.

With Arians as interlocutors, Cyril devotes significant space in the commentary to both the divinity of Jesus Christ and the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. Christologically problematic passages in the gospel of John, passages that had been raised by Arians since the time of Arius, thus emerge as exegetical priorities in this commentary. One of these problematic passages is John 1.32-33, wherein John the Baptist is recorded as testifying that he saw the Spirit descend and abide upon Jesus. It is in the context of his exegesis of John 1.32-33 that Cyril addresses the Arian interpretation of Christ's reception of the Spirit.

Having argued for the divinity of the Son and his consubstantiality with the Father in book I of his commentary on John, Cyril begins the second book with a detailed examination of John 1.32-33: "And John bore witness, 'I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained upon him. I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit."'" Cyril immediately acknowledges that the descent upon Jesus at his baptism creates some difficulty for those wanting to enunciate an orthodox doctrine of the incarnate Word. Through the voice of an unnamed Arian interlocutor Cyril recounts his opponents' arguments:

What again, sirs, do you say about this, what kind of argument will you present in order to outwit that which is written? See that he [John the Baptist] says that the Spirit came down upon the Son. See that [the Son] is anointed by God the Father, that he clearly receives that which he does not have. The psalmist bears witness with us by saying, as to him, "Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions" [Ps 45.7]. How, then, will the imperfect, and therefore anointed, Son hereafter be consubstantial (ὁμοουσιότητι) with the perfect Father?⁵

⁵ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 175⁸⁻¹⁵).

That the Spirit came upon Jesus at his baptism demonstrates to the Arians that the incarnate Son required anointing. He was not perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect, but received anointing from without, as one who was not himself perfect in essence. And inasmuch as his perfection falls short of the divine perfection of the Father, the Son cannot be understood to be consubstantial with the Father, but must be recognized as a creature and so distinct from the godhead. The appeal by Cyril's interlocutor to Psalm 45.7, a text that was problematic during Athanasius' struggles against Arianism, provides apparent biblical justification for such a reading.⁶

Cyril's initial attack against the Arian interpretation deals largely with trinitarian questions regarding the consubstantiality of the three persons of the Trinity, an argument in which he first examines the relationship of the Father and the Son, followed by an examination of the relationship of these two persons with the Holy Spirit.⁷ His rebuttal begins with an argument that the Father and Son are equal in nature, and to reinforce this point he appeals to the equality of natures found in creation, notably the equality of natures that exists amongst humans and angels – i.e., humans share the same nature as other humans and angels share the same nature as other angels.⁸ Cyril then argues that if Jesus Christ, as the scriptures declare, is the Son of God and so the offspring of God the Father, it is irrational to suggest that the Son does not share a common nature with the Father when human beings share the same nature as their offspring. To suggest such

⁶ Daniel Keating, "The Baptism of Jesus in Cyril of Alexandria," *Pro Ecclesia* 8 (1999), 203.

⁷ I have found Daniel Keating's analysis of Cyril's argumentation here to be most helpful for my own analysis. Cf. *ibid.*, 203-4.

⁸ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 176²⁻¹¹).

would be to posit that the divine nature is inferior to originate things, that the divine nature lacks a basic coherence found in created things. This is a similar argument to that posited by Athanasius in *Contra Arianos* I.27, wherein an attempt is made to illustrate the equality of nature between the Father and the Son through the, admittedly inadequate, analogy of human fathers and sons.⁹ Cyril's point here is that the Arians, by arguing against the perfection and divinity of the Son, are in essence arguing against the perfection and divinity of the Father. If the Father and the Son are of the same nature, a postulate Cyril clearly understands to be evident on the basis of the scriptures, then it cannot be maintained that the Son lacked the perfection of the Father who begat him. To suggest otherwise is to propose that the Father begat that which is imperfect. The orthodox alternative is to posit that the divine nature must exist in an equality that surpasses the equality of nature found in created things, and therefore that the Son must partake of all the perfections of the Father as being equal in nature with him.

This line of argumentation continues as Cyril appeals to the scriptural witness of the fatherhood of God. If we take seriously this scriptural witness, Cyril posits, the Arian interpretation is highly problematic. Only if the Father begets that which is consubstantial with him can he truly be a Father. For "how will God be perceived as Father," Cyril asks, "if the only-begotten is a creature and not a Son?"¹⁰ Does not the idea of Jesus as a creature mean that we falsely call God a Father? Moreover, understanding the Arians to suggest that Jesus Christ, unlike the Father, was not holy and therefore required the sanctification of the Spirit, Cyril argues that the Father, who is holy

⁹ Cf. Keating (1999), note 6 on p. 204.

¹⁰ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 177²¹⁻²²).

by nature, cannot “beget that which is devoid of holiness.”¹¹ Not only is this illogical, it is contrary to the biblical witness regarding the holiness of the godhead. Cyril cites Isaiah 6.3 here, arguing that the threefold praise of ‘holy’ by the seraphim is directed to each of the three persons of the Trinity.¹²

At this point, Cyril endeavours further to highlight the absurdity of the Arian suggestion that Christ was not holy by nature by appealing to the idea of participation. If the Son did not possess the Spirit essentially in himself, then it must be maintained that he could at any time reject the sanctification of the Spirit just as we can reject this sanctification,¹³ and nothing will differentiate the Son from ourselves ontologically. This idea must be rejected, not only because it transgresses the scriptural witness of the Son’s unchangeability – Cyril points here to Psalm 102.27, “But thou are the same,” as being directed to the Son – but also because it leads to theological absurdity. To argue that the Son participated in the Spirit is to argue that the Son became holy through the Holy Spirit,¹⁴ and therefore that that the Son is completely other in nature than the Spirit; for “the one who partakes (μετίσχοντος) is other by nature than the one who is partaken of (μετεχόμενον).”¹⁵ This line of thinking means that the Son is a creature and is, consequently, no different than ourselves. But more than that, if one takes this notion to its logical end we are left with the absurd conclusion that, although the Arian argument is

¹¹ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 177³⁰-178²).

¹² Ibid. (Pusey, i. 178⁶⁻¹²).

¹³ Ibid., (Pusey, i. 178¹⁴⁻¹⁹). As Keating (1999) points out (note 7 on 204), the notion that whatever partakes of the Spirit can also fall away from him is found in Athanasius’ *Epistola I Ad Serapionem* 27.

¹⁴ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 179⁴⁻⁹).

¹⁵ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 178²⁴⁻²⁶).

intended to portray the Son as inferior to the Father, it actually makes the Son superior.¹⁶ Citing Philippians 2.5-8, Cyril argues as follows: If Christ Jesus was in the form of God and equal to God prior to the incarnation, and if he became more holy through the sanctification he received at his baptism, then it is clear that he attained a dignity and status above that of the Father, having surpassed what he was prior to the incarnation.¹⁷ This leads also to the ludicrous conclusion that the Spirit, who bestows on the Son superiority over the Father, is himself superior to the Father.¹⁸ “Who will not shrink,” Cyril asks, “at hearing this?”¹⁹

Cyril discusses more fully the Son’s relationship with the Holy Spirit later in his exposition of John 1.32-33, arguing that this relationship precludes any suggestion that Christ could have received the Spirit as one who did not possess the Spirit essentially. He who is the giver of the Spirit cannot have received the Spirit for himself as one in need of him, and Cyril once again appeals to the logic of participation to illustrate his point: one who partakes of something cannot subsequently bestow that which he does not have by nature. It must rather be understood, on the basis of scripture, that the Spirit is not only the Spirit of the Father, but also the Spirit of the Son, and the latter postulate makes ridiculous any suggestion that the incarnate Son required the Spirit out of personal necessity. To prove his case, Cyril parades a barrage of scriptural texts that make reference to the Spirit being the Son’s own. In John 14.15-17 Jesus refers to the Paraclete

¹⁶ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 179¹²⁻¹⁵): “And being according to you changed, and having advanced unto the better, he will be shown to be not only not inferior to the Father, but even somehow to have become superior.”

¹⁷ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 179²⁰⁻²⁶).

¹⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 179²⁶⁻²⁹).

¹⁹ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 179²⁹⁻³⁰).

as the “Spirit of truth,” and Cyril argues that Jesus’ earlier reference to himself as the truth (Jn 14.6) means that the epithet “Spirit of truth” should be understood to mean the “Spirit of the Son.”²⁰ Cyril directs our attention also to the way in which Paul refers interchangeably to the indwelling of the Spirit and the indwelling of Christ in Romans 8.9-10, and argues that this demonstrates the “exact likeness (ἀπαράλλακτον τὴν ὁμοιότητα) of the Son with the Spirit,” the Spirit “pouring forth (προχεόμενον) from [the Son] by nature.”²¹ Cyril uses similar language just prior to this reference to Romans 8 when he suggests that the Spirit “emerges (προκύπτει) through” the Son.²² Such statements are intended to underline Cyril’s contention that the Son cannot be separated from his Spirit; that the two are “essentially united (οὐσιωδῶς ἡνωμένον).”²³

Cyril concludes his series of preliminary arguments against the Arian position with another appeal to Philippians 2.5-8, laying stress on Paul’s statement that Christ Jesus “emptied himself” by taking the form of a servant. It is Cyril’s contention that the Arian interpretation is incongruent with the logic of the kenosis described in Philippians 2, for it makes little sense to speak of Christ emptying himself when, through the Spirit, he actually gained as a man that which he did not have prior to the incarnation. It also contradicts the message of 2 Corinthians 8.9²⁴ by reversing the sequence of Paul’s ordering of events. Whereas Paul wrote of the rich becoming poor for our sake, the Arian

²⁰ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 188³⁻¹⁷). Cyril also cites Ephesians 3.16-17, 1 John 4.13, and 1 John 5.6.

²¹ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 188²⁹).

²² Ibid. (Pusey, i. 187²⁹).

²³ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 187²⁷⁻²⁹).

²⁴ “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he came poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.”

position makes the pre-incarnate Son poor in that he lacked that which he gained in becoming man. “What kind of emptiness (κένωσιν),” Cyril asks, “has fullness (πλήρωσις) through the Spirit?”²⁵

Cyril’s argument against the Nestorian interpretation of Christ’s baptismal reception of the Spirit bears some similarity to that proffered against the Arians, although the archbishop devotes greater attention to what he perceives to be the dualistic christology proposed by Nestorius as well as to the implications of Christ’s later bestowal of the Spirit for interpreting Christ’s baptism. One of the earliest references to the descent of the Spirit upon Christ in Cyril’s anti-Nestorian works is found in his letter to the monks of Egypt, composed in the spring of 429.²⁶ The impetus for the writing of this letter, as Cyril explains in the opening paragraphs, is the spread of Nestorius’ ideas regarding the validity of ascribing the title Θεοτόκος to the virgin. There are some monks, Cyril writes, who have become concerned about the theological appositeness of a title that is used neither in scripture nor in the creed of Nicaea, and the archbishop therefore takes upon himself the task of explaining the warrant for the title on the basis of the unity of the divine and human in Jesus Christ. It is not necessary to explicate the entirety of this letter. For our purposes, it is important simply to note that the anointing of Christ by the Spirit at the baptism of the incarnate Word is cited at this early stage of the controversy as being a point of contention between Cyril and Nestorius. Cyril’s argument in this letter against the Nestorian portrayal of the descent of the Spirit upon Christ bears much in common with his argument against the Arian portrayal of this event

²⁵ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 181²¹⁻²²).

²⁶ On the dating of this letter, see McGuckin (1994), note 1 on 245.

in his exegesis of John 1.32-33. Who was it, Cyril asks, that was anointed with the Holy Spirit according to the Nestorians – the divine Word born of God or the man Jesus? If his interlocutors answer that it was the Word who was anointed by the Spirit, then they are forced to admit that the divine Word who existed in former times is “wholly lacking in holiness, and was non-participant (ἀμέτοχος) in this gift which was later bestowed on him.”²⁷ But, he continues, that which is lacking in holiness is also changeable by nature, meaning that the divine Word can therefore not be understood to be sinless or beyond the capability of sin. Furthermore, if the divine Word was anointed and sanctified by the Spirit, might we not also say that the Father likewise requires sanctification, or perhaps that the Son is greater than the Father in that he attained a degree of holiness after his incarnation that he did not have previously when he was equal to the Father and in the form of God? And if that is the case, then the Holy Spirit must be understood to be greater than both of them given that it is he who is the source of this sanctification.²⁸

Cyril suggests that such an argument could be nothing more than “the whinings of madmen.”²⁹ But what about the possibility of assigning the Spirit’s anointing and sanctification to the one born of the holy virgin, the man Jesus Christ? Can it be that this man “was separately anointed and sanctified and was called Christ for this reason”?³⁰ If this is the case, if the man Jesus was anointed as the Christ and anointed by the Spirit,

²⁷ Ep. 1.15 (*Ad Monachos*), (ACO I.1.1, 17⁸⁻⁹). ET: McGuckin (2004), 253.

²⁸ Ibid. (ACO I.1.1, 17⁹⁻²²).

²⁹ Ibid. (ACO I.1.1, 17¹⁹⁻²⁰). ET: McGuckin (2004), 254.

³⁰ Ibid. 1.16 (ACO I.1.1, 17²³⁻²⁴). ET: McGuckin (2004), 254. See also *In Luc.* 3.21-23 (Reuss 63) where Cyril places these words into the mouth of his Nestorian interlocutor: “We say that it was the man from the seed of David, united (συναφθέντα) to him [the Word] by conjunction (συνάφειαν), who was baptized and received the Spirit.”

then, Cyril asks, was this anointing sufficient to make the man Jesus equal with God, as equally glorious as he? If his interlocutors answer affirmatively, they need to take note of 1 John 2.20, which clearly states that we too are anointed by God. It logically follows, according to Cyril, that we too must be raised to the same level as God by virtue of our anointing, for there appears to be nothing different between Jesus' anointing and our own if the man anointed and sanctified by the Spirit at his baptism was indeed simply the one born of the holy virgin.³¹

Cyril continues his attack against Nestorius' interpretation of Christ's reception of the Spirit in books three and four of *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias*, composed approximately one year after his letter to the monks. In book three the archbishop criticizes Nestorius for appearing to contend, on the basis of his separation of the divine and human natures in Christ, that Jesus Christ received the Spirit as a human being, and not as the divine Son of God.³² Cyril argues against Nestorius that Jesus received the Spirit in his humanity as well as in his divinity, and he bases his argument in book three, and indeed throughout *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias*, on a reading of John 1.32-34 that takes John 20.22 into full consideration. John the Baptist states in the former passage that he was told that the one on whom the Spirit descends would be the one who himself will baptize with the Holy Spirit, and that, having seen this occur, he declares that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.³³ The Baptist makes this declaration of Jesus Christ's divinity, Cyril argues, because it is folly to ascribe the power to baptize with the Holy Spirit to

³¹ Ibid. 1.16 (ACO I.1.1, 17²²-18³).

³² *Adv. Nest.* III.3 (ACO I.1.6, 67-68).

³³ John 1.34 reads: "And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

human nature. The man Jesus Christ upon whom the Baptist witnessed the Spirit descend must therefore be divine as well as human. Observe, Cyril continues, that the very person upon whom the Spirit descended and remained, anoints with his very own Spirit. For when he had risen from the dead, Jesus breathed on his disciples and so bestowed the Holy Spirit upon them (John 20.22). Quoting 1 Corinthians 2.12, Cyril writes that those who received the Spirit understood that they received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God in order that they might know the gifts bestowed upon them by God. The one who breathed the Spirit upon the disciples must therefore be divine, for the Spirit is the Spirit of God. “Therefore,” Cyril writes in conclusion, “when you see him anointed with his own Spirit (τῷ ἰδίῳ χριόμενον πνεύματι), remember the economy of the flesh and consider his human nature: when you see him give the Spirit, with this also marvel at God in human nature.”³⁴ Cyril’s point is that it is a mistake to misinterpret the descent of the Spirit upon Christ in such a manner that the divinity of the incarnate Word is compromised; for Christ’s reception of the Spirit and subsequent bestowal of the same Spirit on his disciples illustrates the unity of the divine and human in Christ.³⁵

Cyril’s argument regarding Christ’s reception of the Spirit at his baptism in the fourth book of *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias* proceeds along similar lines. His account of the Spirit’s descent upon Christ occurs in the context of an accusation made by Cyril against Nestorius that the latter maintains that the incarnation is defined by the “indwelling” (ἐνοίκησιν) of the Word in Jesus Christ, and furthermore, that Christ was

³⁴ *Adv. Nest.* III.3 (ACO 1.1.6, 68⁴⁻⁷).

³⁵ See also *In Luc.* 3.21-23 (Reuss, 62-4; Smith 44-6) where Cyril articulates a similar argument against the Nestorian reading of Christ’s baptismal reception of the Spirit.

empowered to perform works of power through the Holy Spirit.³⁶ Cyril maintains that Nestorius, rather confusedly, posits that the Father “commended (συνέστησεν)” Jesus Christ at his baptism.³⁷ Precisely what Nestorius means by this eludes Cyril who asks how the Father commended at the time of the baptism: did the Father “commend one who was considered worthy of divine indwelling” at the baptism as Nestorius appears to maintain,³⁸ or does the baptism of Christ reflect a different christology? To answer this question Cyril turns to John 1.32-34, and as he did in the third tome, he reads Christ’s reception of the Spirit in the light of his later bestowal of the Spirit. According to Cyril, Jesus Christ condescended to be baptized as a means of demonstrating his shared humanity with us, “for it was necessary that the Word of God the Father be known to have become man.”³⁹ But although the Word was baptized as a human like us, his divinity is revealed when he himself baptized in the Holy Spirit. It cannot be maintained that Christ gave the Holy Spirit if it was the case that the Word simply dwelt within him; for many saints have had God indwelling them, but none baptized with their own spirit nor have any saints come to dwell in another human by virtue of giving their spirit. But Christ dwells in humanity through his own Holy Spirit, sanctifying those in whom he dwells. Citing Jesus’ statement in John 15.26 that he will send the Spirit of truth to his followers – the “Spirit of truth” meaning, according to the bishop, the “Spirit of the

³⁶ Ibid. IV.2 (ACO I.1.6, 79¹¹⁻¹⁵).

³⁷ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 78³⁹; 79¹⁹).

³⁸ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 79²²⁻²³).

³⁹ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 79³²⁻³³).

Son”⁴⁰ – Cyril asks the following: “If then he [Jesus Christ] is truly not God incarnate, but rather a man having the divine indwelling as energy (τὴν θεῖαν ἐνοίκησιν ὡς ἐνέργειαν ἔχων), how does he promise to send, as his own, the Spirit of God the Father upon those who believe in him?”⁴¹ For Cyril, Jesus Christ’s gift of the Spirit to his disciples clearly demonstrates the absurdity of Nestorius’ interpretation of Christ’s baptismal reception of the Spirit.

Cyril concludes his five books against Nestorius by arguing for the unity of the divine and the flesh in Christ, and in the midst of this argument he makes another brief reference to the baptism of Christ, emphasizing again that the descent of the Spirit upon Christ, when read in conjunction with his later giving of the Spirit, demonstrates the divinity of Jesus Christ. Cyril writes that we must, as Paul exhorts, endure in the faith (Col 1.23), and in the context of the Nestorian controversy this means that a true perception of Jesus Christ must be maintained. Such a faith profits those who have it, Cyril writes, and he cites 1 John 5.5-6, 8-10 to illustrate how this is the case.⁴² These verses read:

Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood...There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has borne witness to his Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. He who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne to his Son.

⁴⁰ Cyril writes after quoting John 15.26: “See how he [Jesus] says that this Spirit who proceeds (ἐκπορευόμενον) from the Father is also the [Spirit] of truth, and that he himself is indeed the truth.” Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 79⁴⁴-80²).

⁴¹ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 80²⁻⁴).

⁴² Ibid. V.7 (ACO I.1.6, 106⁹⁻²⁶).

In answer to how it was that the Father testified to his Son, Cyril points to John the Baptist's statement in John 1.33-34, and posits that the Father bore witness to Jesus Christ through his own voice that declared Christ to be "by nature and in truth his Son (φύσει τε καὶ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν υἱός ἐστιν αὐτοῦ)."⁴³ Moreover, as 1 John 5.5-6, 8-10 state, Christ's identity as the Son of God is also made manifest through the witness of water, blood, and the Spirit, and Cyril associates the witness of the Spirit both with the Spirit's descent upon Christ, as recounted in John 1.33-34 which Cyril quotes at length, and with the bestowal of the Spirit by Christ to those who believe in him. The witness of the Spirit, Cyril argues, is a witness to the divinity of Jesus Christ. The Spirit did not witness to the sanctification and empowerment of a mere man. Rather, the one upon whom the Spirit descended is the one who himself bestows the Spirit as his very own to his disciples, a fact that clearly demonstrates the divinity of Christ. Once again, we find Cyril reading John 1.32-34 through the lens of Christ's later gift of the Spirit. "Since he is God by nature (κατὰ φύσιν)," Cyril writes in conclusion, "he richly bestows the Holy Spirit, pouring it forth (ἐκχέων) as his own (ὡς ἴδιον) into the souls of believers, making them 'partakers (κοινωνούς) of the divine nature' (2 Peter 1.4), and crowning them with the hope of the good things that are coming."⁴⁴ Only he who is fully God could bestow the Spirit in such a manner.

Cyril's logic runs roughly as follows. No interpretation of the Spirit's anointing is valid that does not recognize both the absolute union of the divine and human in Christ and the Spirit's relationship to the Son as being the Son's own. It appears that, in Cyril's

⁴³ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 106³²).

⁴⁴ Ibid. (ACO I.1.6, 106³⁵⁻³⁷).

mind, no event so illustrates the Spirit's relationship to the Son as Christ's bestowal of the Spirit upon his disciples, and it is for this reason that the archbishop consistently appeals to this bestowal of the Spirit when arguing against Nestorius' portrayal of the descent of the Spirit upon Christ at his baptism. It is Cyril's contention that it cannot be that Jesus Christ received the Spirit as one who did not have him essentially, if it was the same Jesus Christ who later bestowed the Spirit upon his disciples and continues to give the Spirit to believers that they might partake of the divine nature, dwelling in those whom he gives his Spirit. If, therefore, Jesus Christ was not God but simply had God dwelling within him, he would not have been capable of bestowing the Spirit. That he does give the Spirit as his own, however, clearly demonstrates that Jesus Christ truly was the Word made flesh.

In his exegesis of John 1.32-33 Cyril is concerned to prevent an ontological interpretation of Christ's baptismal reception of the Spirit, such as the Arians produce. Cyril endeavours to demonstrate that any reading that positions Jesus Christ as being inferior to the Father cannot stand up against scripture, the scriptural notion of the Son's kenosis, or the logic of trinitarian theology. Against Nestorius Cyril relies somewhat on the meaning of kenosis and the intricacies of trinitarian theology, but his argument largely revolves around the incongruity of Nestorius' interpretation of Christ's baptism when read in the light of Christ's later bestowal of the Spirit. Cyril's purpose is clear: by linking the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus with his bestowal of the same Spirit, Cyril seeks to argue for a single-subject christology against what he perceives to be Nestorius' attempts to isolate the Spirit's anointing solely to the human nature of Christ. Although

Cyril uses slightly different arguments against the Arian and Nestorian readings of Christ's baptism, the focus of both is to illustrate the absurdity of both readings and so to indicate that Christ's reception of the Spirit must be interpreted in a way that does not compromise the divinity of the incarnate Word. It is to Cyril's alternative interpretation of this event that I now turn.

Cyril's Soteriological Reading of Christ's Reception of the Holy Spirit

In this section my focus will be on Cyril's constructive interpretation of Christ's baptismal reception of the Spirit, as articulated in his commentaries on the gospels of John and Luke, particularly, although not exclusively, in his exegeses of John 1.32-33, Luke 3.21-22,⁴⁵ and Luke 4.1-2.⁴⁶ Of these three, primary attention will be given to Cyril's exposition of John 1.32-33 given that it contains the most extensive treatment of the Spirit's descent on Christ in the whole of Cyril's corpus, and given that a number of the ideas found in his exegesis of John 1.32-33 are reiterated in his interpretations of Luke 3.21-22 and 4.1-2. When apposite I will demonstrate and analyze how and where Cyril, in *In Lucam* 3.21-22 and 4.1-2, builds on the argument presented in *In Joannem* 1.32-33.

Cyril is concerned in these passages to provide an explanation for why the Spirit descended on Christ that does not compromise what he understands to be orthodox

⁴⁵ "Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased.'"

⁴⁶ "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit, for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry."

christology. Whereas Cyril's Arian opponents wanted to read the Spirit's descent ontologically, and his Nestorian interlocutors wanted to read this event as necessarily applying only to the man Jesus Christ, Cyril proposes that Christ's reception of the Spirit is most properly interpreted soteriologically. My tasks in this section will be to analyze how Cyril articulates his soteriological reading of this event, as well as to illustrate the significance of this reading for comprehending the archbishop's pneumatology. It is to his exegesis of John 1.32-33 that I now turn.

In his exposition of John 1.32-33, after demonstrating the absurdity of the Arian interpretation, Cyril proceeds to enunciate his understanding of why Jesus received the Holy Spirit at his baptism. Significantly, his exposition begins with an account of humanity's creation and fall as described in the opening chapters of Genesis, and this account, which contains strong emphasis on the pre-fall relationship between humanity and the indwelling Spirit, sets the stage for Cyril's explanation as to why the Spirit descended upon the incarnate Word.

Cyril commences his account by highlighting two facets of humanity's creation. He first calls attention to the fact that humanity was created in the image and likeness of God (κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν).⁴⁷ He then points to Genesis 2.7 – “And he breathed into his face the breath of life” – and argues that the breath of life (πνοὴν ζωῆς) to which the text refers was, in fact, the Holy Spirit who “sealed” (κατεσφραγίζετο) the image of God in the first man.⁴⁸ For, as Cyril explains, “the Spirit at once both put life” into Adam and “divinely marked (θεοπρεπῶς ἐνεσήμεινεν) [him with] his own features

⁴⁷ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 182²¹⁻²³).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 182²⁷⁻²⁹).

(χαρακτῆρας).”⁴⁹ As Keating observes,⁵⁰ Cyril appears here to be proposing a two-stage process for the creation of humanity; Adam was first made in the image and likeness of God and was subsequently given the Holy Spirit whose bestowal gave both life and his own divine qualities to the first human.

Cyril discusses humanity’s creation, and particularly the implications of the gift of the Spirit to Adam, in his exposition of John 14.20. Here the archbishop first endeavours to analyze what it means for humanity to be created in the image of God. He admits at the outset that pinpointing precisely what this means is difficult, for there are multiple definitions of the word εἰκών.⁵¹ Nevertheless, Cyril suggests that it is possible that the image of God is most clearly manifested in, although not exhausted by, the incorruptibility and indestructibility (τὸ ἀφθαρτον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον) that was humanity’s prior to the fall.⁵² In order for Adam to be preserved in incorruptibility, it was necessary for him to receive that which was incorruptible in its essence. Cyril expresses this idea with reference to 2 Peter 1.4, arguing that Adam attained to incorruptibility because God made him “partaker of his own nature (μέτοχον αὐτὸν τῆς ἰδίας φύσεως).” And, pointing to Genesis 2.7, Cyril argues that God make him a partaker of his own nature by breathing into Adam the breath of life, namely, “the Spirit of the Son, for he is himself life along with the Father, holding all things together in being (εἰς τὸ εἶναι).”⁵³ The archbishop posits, therefore, that the image of God in humanity is intimately tied to

⁴⁹ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 182²⁹⁻³¹).

⁵⁰ Keating (1999), 205.

⁵¹ *In Jo.* 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 484⁴⁻⁷).

⁵² Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 484⁷⁻¹⁰).

⁵³ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 484²¹⁻²⁵).

participation in God, for in order to image God truly we must share in the divine nature through the indwelling Spirit.⁵⁴

But lest it be thought at this point that Cyril envisions the incorruptibility bestowed through the indwelling Spirit to be a static state of immortality, as if Adam accepted this incorruptibility passively through his participation in the divine nature, the archbishop writes the following regarding the implications of Adam's reception of the Spirit, the "breath which proceeds (προελθόν) from the divine essence"⁵⁵:

But when he [Adam] was given a soul, or rather had come to his state of perfect nature (τῆς τελείας φύσεως) by means of both soul and body, the creator implanted (ἐνέπηξεν) the Holy Spirit – that is, the breath of life – as a seal (σφραγίδα) of his own nature (τῆς ἑαυτοῦ φύσεως), by which Adam was moulded unto the archetypal beauty, and perfected according to the image of his creator, sustained (διακρατούμενος) unto every form of goodness by the power of the Spirit who dwelt (ἐνοικισθέντος) within him.⁵⁶

The bestowal of life by the Holy Spirit is understood by Cyril to be interwoven with the formation of the soul by the Spirit to attain likeness to the beauty that is God, manifested in humanity's progression in holiness, a progression that is made possible by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The incorruptibility that is part and parcel of being created in the image of God, therefore, has profound moral implications that cannot be divorced from the life given by God through the Holy Spirit. As Walter Burghardt points out, in Cyril's thought "[i]ncorruptibility and corruption frequently have connotations absent from immortality and death; they engage the spiritual, they touch sanctity and sin."⁵⁷

⁵⁴ In his monograph on Cyril's conception of the image of God, Walter J. Burghardt (1957) argues that this notion of imaging God through participation in him is a consistent, indeed dominant, theme in Cyril's theology of the image of God. Cf. pp. 11, 89.

⁵⁵ *In Jo.* 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 485¹³⁻¹⁴).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 485¹⁵⁻²²).

⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*, 99.

Incorruptibility is the consequence of sharing in God's life and thus of becoming holy, and as such, according to Cyril, it transcends biological life while still encompassing it.⁵⁸

Similar ideas are expressed in Cyril's exegesis of John 1.32-33, where he discusses the moral implications of the life given to Adam through the indwelling Spirit with reference to the "saving commandment (ἐντολὴν σώζουσιν)," an apparent reference to God's directive not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.⁵⁹ Cyril emphasizes that Adam's continuance in incorruptibility was contingent on his continuance in holiness, a holiness manifested in fidelity to the creator. It was incumbent on Adam to guard the state in which he was created, a state made possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And he was preserved in this state, "excellent in the divine image,"⁶⁰ for as long as he remained obedient to God. As he does in his exposition of John 14.20, Cyril here stresses the inextricability of sanctity and the incorruptibility made possible through Adam's participation in the divine nature. a participation attained through the indwelling Spirit.

The correlativity of sanctity and incorruptibility plays out negatively, according to Cyril, when Adam sinned, and the archbishop's account of humanity's fall contains prominent pneumatological overtones that are noteworthy for his comprehension of the meaning of Christ's baptismal reception of the Spirit. Cyril writes that Adam, perverted by the wiles of the devil, contravened the law assigned to him, and that God consequently

⁵⁸ Cf. Daniel Keating's account of Cyril's interpretation of John 14.20 in *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004), 24-5.

⁵⁹ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 183¹⁻²).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 183³⁻⁴).

recalled the grace that had been given to him. The consequence was death – “He who was made unto life then first heard, ‘Dust you are and to dust you will return’”⁶¹ – for with Adam’s disobedience his “likeness to God (ἡ πρὸς θεὸν ὁμοίωσις) was defaced (παρεχαράττετο)” and the divine features (χαρακτῆρες) that had been Adam’s at creation were no longer bright (λαμπροί), but became fainter and darkened.⁶² Adam’s sentence of death, Cyril argues, was directly related to his descent into sin. For sin prevented likeness to God, not simply in terms of holiness, but in terms of divine incorruptibility.

The introduction of sin, and therefore of death, however, did not immediately result in the departure of the indwelling Holy Spirit from humankind, according to Cyril. The archbishop does not provide an in depth explanation as to why this was the case, why, that is, Adam’s disobedience resulted in death but not in the loss of the Spirit. The clear association Cyril envisions between incorruptibility and holiness mean, for him, that death was a natural consequence of disobedience, even for one who had the indwelling of the Spirit. And it would appear that, according to Cyril, Adam’s disobedience did not translate into a descent into sinfulness. For Cyril argues that it was only when sin had truly attained dominion over humankind that the Spirit ceased to dwell within human beings. He writes:

When the human race had reached a great multitude, and sin prevailed over all, the soul of each being manifoldly (πολυτρόπως) spoiled, [human] nature was stripped of the ancient grace. And the Spirit departed completely, and the rational creature fell into the most extreme irrationality (τὴν ἐσχάτην ἀλογίαν), ignorant even of its creator.⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 183⁸⁻⁹).

⁶² Ibid. (Pusey, i. 183⁹⁻¹²).

⁶³ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 183¹²⁻¹⁸).

Cyril provides an elaboration of the Spirit's departure in the next paragraph:

The first man – being earthly and from the dust, and having free will (ἐξουσίᾳ) to choose between good and evil placed in his own power, and being lord of the inclination toward each – was caught in bitter deceit, and having inclined toward disobedience, fell to the earth, the mother from which he was generated. And overcome now by corruption and death, he conveyed this penalty to the whole race. With the evil growing and increasing in us, and our minds continually descending to the worse, sin reigned, and thus human nature was stripped (γυμνῇ) of the Holy Spirit who dwelled within. For the Holy Spirit of wisdom will flee treachery and will not dwell in a body that is subject to sin, as it is written (Wisdom 1.4-5).⁶⁴

Humanity was created with the power to choose between good and evil – elsewhere Cyril directly connects free will to the image of God, though he does not do so here⁶⁵ – but Adam used this power poorly by turning to disobedience. The consequence of this sin, as already noted, was Adam's loss of incorruptibility, and it was this penalty of death that was communicated to Adam's descendants. But as sin gained hegemony among human beings, who kept advancing into greater levels of disobedience and who thus ceased to focus their minds on God, the Holy Spirit departed completely. And as Cyril writes in regarding humanity's degeneration in his comments on John 7.39, the departure of the Spirit meant that humanity, who was able to persevere in holiness only by the indwelling Spirit, now became, in addition to being already under the penalty of death, "prone to every sin," incapable of maintaining stability in good things.⁶⁶

As is clearly evident from the above analysis of his account of the creation and fall, Cyril hangs a great deal of anthropological and pneumatological weight on Genesis 2.7. While Cyril was not the only Father to read this verse pneumatologically – figures

⁶⁴ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 183²⁸-184⁸).

⁶⁵ Cf. Burghardt (1957), 49.

⁶⁶ *In Jo.* 7.39 (Pusey, i. 691²⁴⁻²⁵).

such as Origen⁶⁷ and Didymus the Blind⁶⁸ viewed the text's mention of the breath of life to be a direct reference to the Holy Spirit – he was among a minority. Even so, no figure in the patristic period placed as heavy an emphasis upon this verse as did Cyril.⁶⁹ Cyril posits that Genesis 2.7 tells us something crucial anthropologically, namely, that the Holy Spirit was absolutely central to the original make-up of humankind. Humanity's natural and divinely-ordained state, according to Cyril, was one in which the Spirit dwelled within. It was through the Spirit's indwelling that Adam participated in the divine nature and so shared by grace in the incorruptibility and holiness that are God's by nature. And Cyril's pneumocentric reading of human origins leads into an account of Adam's fall that is structured around humanity's loss of the Holy Spirit, a loss that Cyril understands to be the nadir of humanity's degeneration. The human dilemma, according to Cyril, can be characterized primarily as humanity's sin-induced Spirit-less existence.

It is only after setting the stage with this account of humanity's creation and fall that Cyril embarks on constructing his soteriological reading of the Spirit's descent upon Christ. His introductory statement sets the tone:

The creator of all, having been long-suffering, finally took pity on the corrupted world, and being good, hastened to unite the flock on earth that had run away with that above. He resolved to transform (μεταστοιχειοῦν) humanity to its original image (ἀρχαίαν

⁶⁷ Cf. Marie-Odile Boulnois, "Le soufflé et l'Esprit: Exégèses patristiques de l'insufflation originelle de Gen. 2, 7 en lien avec celle de Jn 20, 20." *Recherches Augustiniennes* 24 (1989), 27-9. Boulnois points to *De Principiis* I.3.6.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 29-30. Boulnois cites Didymus' *De Trinitate* II.7.6 and the fifth book of *Adversus Eunonim*, previously attributed to Basil but now believed to be written by Didymus.

⁶⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 30. Boulnois writes: "Cyrille d'Alexandrie est l'auteur qui semble s'être le plus intéressé à cette question... Nous sommes donc en présence d'un thème majeur de l'anthropologie de Cyrille."

εἰκόνα) through the Spirit. For in no other way would the divine features (χαρακτῆρας) shine forth in humankind, just as they did originally.⁷⁰

It was noted in the previous chapter that Cyril's predilection is to portray human redemption in terms of creation – re-creation categories.⁷¹ The quotation above is a good example of this tendency. The emphasis for Cyril is on God's desire to reform human nature to the state in which it existed at its creation when the image of God was preserved in humanity through the indwelling Holy Spirit, by whom alone the image of God attained actualization. Human salvation, therefore, is necessarily tied to the reacquisition of the Holy Spirit. As Cyril writes in his exegesis of John 14.20 with reference to the centrality of the Spirit's return for human redemption, "In no other way could humans, whose nature is defiled, escape death except by recovering (ἀνεκομίσσαιο) that ancient grace and so partake (μετέσχε) once more in God."⁷²

It is Cyril's contention that the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ at his baptism must be understood within the context of the soteriological objective of humanity's reacquisition of the indwelling Spirit, and to make his case the archbishop appeals to the typology of Christ as the second Adam:

Therefore it is fitting to explain what God prepared for this [i.e., the transformation of humankind through the Holy Spirit], how he planted (ἐφύτευσε) in us this perfect grace (ἄσυχον τὴν χάριν), how the Spirit was once again rooted (ἐρριζώθη) in humankind, [and] by what manner human nature was transformed (ἀνεμορφώθη) to its former state. [...] Because the first Adam did not preserve (διέσωσε) the grace (χάριν) that God had given to him, God the Father contrived to send the second Adam from heaven. For he sent to us in our likeness his own Son who is immutable and unchangeable by nature, who does not know sin at all, so that, just as through the disobedience of the first [Adam]

⁷⁰ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 183¹⁸⁻²⁴).

⁷¹ Cf. Wilken (1966), 142.

⁷² *In Jo.* 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 485³⁰-486³).

we came under God's wrath, so through the obedience of the second [Adam] we might both escape the curse and its evils might cease.⁷³

Reference was made in the previous chapter to Cyril's use of the Adam-Christ typology to explain the soteriological efficacy of Christ's miraculous conception. Although Cyril's use of the typology in that instance bears similarity to his use of the typology with reference to Christ's baptism, it is in the latter case that the archbishop most fully expounds on the soteriological implications of Christ's identity as the second Adam, particularly in terms of the reintroduction of the Holy Spirit to the human race. The central soteriological dilemma, as Cyril characterizes it above, is humanity's descent from its original created state, a state in which the Spirit was "rooted" in humankind. For reasons already discussed, Adam did not maintain the divinely-ordained state in which he was created. God's plan to reverse this situation revolves around the sending of the second Adam who, being the divine Son of God made man, is uniquely suited for this purpose. For the one who was sent in our likeness, who became a human being like us, is also he who is immutable and unchangeable by nature. Whereas the first Adam disobeyed God, and so did not maintain the gift of the indwelling Spirit, the second Adam does not know sin, and so can, by his obedience, reverse this state of affairs.

It is with this notion of Christ as the second Adam in mind that the baptismal descent of the Spirit upon Christ is to be understood. For, as Cyril argues, the incarnate Word could not have received the Spirit as one who did not already possess him as his own. He who is the giver of the Spirit cannot have received the Spirit for himself, for one who partakes of something cannot subsequently bestow that which he does not have by

⁷³ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 183²⁵⁻²⁸; 184¹⁰⁻¹⁸).

nature.⁷⁴ To support his argument Cyril cites Acts 16.7, with its reference to the “Spirit of Jesus,” as scriptural evidence that the Spirit of the Father is also the Spirit of the Son.⁷⁵ He then proceeds to argue, with appeals both to John the Baptist and to the miraculous conception of Jesus, that the Arian suggestion that Christ received the Spirit as one in need of the Spirit makes little sense scripturally. Cyril points to Jesus’ statement in Matthew 11.11 that “among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist,” and then refers to John’s statement prior to Jesus’ baptism in which he declares himself unworthy to stoop down and untie the thong of Christ’s sandals. How is it not absurd to believe, Cyril proceeds to ask, that although John was filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother’s womb (cf. Luke 1.15), his master, Jesus, first received the Spirit when he was baptized? Moreover, the fact that John received the Spirit as a gift and that Jesus possessed the Spirit in his essence is evident from Luke’s account of the miraculous conception. The angel Gabriel did not tell Mary that Jesus would be filled with the Holy Spirit, which was what he told Zechariah concerning John. Rather, Mary was told that Jesus would be born holy,⁷⁶ which Cyril interprets to mean that Jesus was born holy by nature, and therefore not as one requiring the Holy Spirit to make him holy.⁷⁷

This line of argumentation is developed further later in Cyril’s exegesis of John 1.32-33. Cyril asks his interlocutors how the Word could be understood to be apart from

⁷⁴ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 184¹⁸⁻²¹).

⁷⁵ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 185²⁹-186⁴).

⁷⁶ Cyril is here apparently reading the last clause of Luke 1.35 – τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται Υἱὸς Θεοῦ – as “the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God,” in contrast to the way the Greek is translated in the RSV, “the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”

⁷⁷ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 186¹⁰⁻³¹).

his own Spirit, noting that it would be absurd to separate the spirit of a person, which is in him, from that person. The Holy Spirit, Cyril argues, cannot be separated from the Son; the two are essentially united (οὐσιωδῶς ἡνομένον).⁷⁸ Through the Son the Spirit proceeds (προκύπτει), and the Spirit is in the Son by nature (φυσικῶς).⁷⁹ That the Spirit is indeed the Spirit of the Son is proven by scripture, and Cyril cites numerous passages to make his point. For example, Cyril points to John 14.15-17, and highlights Jesus' reference to the Comforter as the "Spirit of truth." Because Jesus refers to himself earlier in the passage as being the truth (John 14.6), it is clear to Cyril that the 'Spirit of truth' should be understood to mean the 'Spirit of the Son.'⁸⁰ Cyril also cites Ephesians 3.16-17,⁸¹ Romans 8.9-10,⁸² and 1 John 4.13⁸³ – all of which make reference to Christ dwelling within humans through the Holy Spirit – to bolster his case for the unity of the Spirit with the Son.⁸⁴ Pointing particularly to the way in which Paul refers interchangeably to the indwelling of the Spirit and the indwelling of Christ in Romans 8.9-10, Cyril posits that there is an "exact likeness (ὁμοιότητα) of the Son with the

⁷⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 187²⁷⁻²⁹).

⁷⁹ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 187²⁹-188¹).

⁸⁰ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 188³⁻¹⁷). Cyril also cites 1 John 5.6 to bolster his argument.

⁸¹ "...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith..."

⁸² "But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness."

⁸³ "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit."

⁸⁴ In his argument against Nestorius' alleged attempt to separate the Word from the man Jesus Christ in *In Lucam* 3.21-23, Cyril cites John 16.15, Romans 8.8, and Galatians 4.6 to illustrate the unity of the Spirit with the Son. Cf. *In Luc.* 3.21-23 (Reuss, 63).

Spirit,”⁸⁵ the Spirit being the Son’s own (τὸ ἴδιον αὐτοῦ), “proceeding (προχέμενον) from him by nature (κατὰ φύσιν).”⁸⁶ Romans 8.15, with its reference to the “Spirit of adoption,” understood by Cyril to be another reference to the Spirit being the Son’s, is cited as well to augment his case.

We have encountered similar arguments by Cyril for the Spirit to be regarded as the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, and we shall do so again below when attention is paid to Cyril’s soteriology and ecclesiology. In the context of the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at his baptism, Cyril is simply underlining what he perceives to be the folly of the Arian position regarding this descent. The sheer weight of the scriptural evidence, Cyril argues, demonstrates that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father *and* of the Son, If the Spirit is the Son’s own, it is absurd to interpret the baptismal descent of the Spirit upon Christ as meaning that the incarnate Son received the Spirit for the first time, as one who did not have the Spirit in himself essentially. If the scriptures do not separate the Spirit from the Son, what warrant do we have to interpret the descent of the Spirit upon Christ as if they are separate?

Cyril proposes that the descent of the Spirit must be interpreted with this biblical witness in mind. And he explains precisely how this event should be interpreted with reference to the Adam-Christ typology:

When the Word of God became man he received the Spirit from the Father as one of us – not receiving him for himself personally, for he was the giver of the Spirit – but that he who knew no sin might preserve (διασώσῃ) to our nature that which he received as man, and root (ρίζωσῃ) again in us the grace that had departed. For this reason, I think, the holy Baptist profitably added, ‘I saw the Spirit come down from heaven and remain upon

⁸⁵ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 188²⁷⁻²⁸).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 188²⁹).

him.’ For he had departed from us because of sin. But he who knew no sin became one of us in order that the Spirit might become accustomed (προσεθισθῇ) to remain in us, not having cause for departure or withdrawal in him. Therefore through himself he receives the Spirit for us, and renews (ἀνανεοῖ) to our nature the ancient good.⁸⁷

In the context of responding to Arian arguments regarding the trinitarian and christological implications of the descent of the Spirit upon Christ, Cyril extracts this passage out of the dogmatic frame of reference of his opponents, and instead argues that this descent must be read soteriologically,⁸⁸ that it must be read “in the light of the transformation and renewal of creation.”⁸⁹ The purpose of Jesus’ reception of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, Cyril emphasizes, was the renewal of humanity to its original created state when the image of God shone brightly in Adam through the indwelling Holy Spirit. For while the first Adam sinned, and so did not maintain the intimacy of the indwelling Spirit in his nature, Cyril stresses that the second Adam did not know sin. As one of us (ὡς εἷς ἐξ ἡμῶν), although as one who was sinless, Jesus received the Holy Spirit. Thereby the Spirit was reintroduced, as it were, to human beings in the person of Jesus Christ who, as the Divine Word made flesh, was uniquely capable of maintaining the indwelling Holy Spirit. In Jesus Christ, therefore, the Holy Spirit once again becomes intertwined with human nature, and as such, in the sinless Jesus the Spirit becomes once again accustomed to remain in humankind.

Cyril’s exposition on the descent of the Spirit on Christ in his commentary on John 7.39 serves to underline these points:

⁸⁷ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 184¹⁸-185¹).

⁸⁸ Wilken (1967), 272.

⁸⁹ Wilken (1971), 134.

Therefore, the only-begotten was made man like us, in order that good things might return in him first and that the firmly rooted (ρίζωθεῖσα) grace of the Holy Spirit might be securely preserved (φυλάττοιτο) in our whole nature; [it is] as if the unchangeable (ἀμετάπτωτον) nature of the only-begotten Word of God the Father is lent to us, because human nature was condemned in Adam for not being able to be steadfast (ἀδιαπτώτως) in that it sunk down most easily into perversion.⁹⁰

Although Cyril is clear throughout his discourse that Christ was no less human than Adam, in the Word made flesh was found the immutability and sinlessness that was lacking in Adam. And because immutability was interwoven with human nature in Christ, his reception of the Holy Spirit translated into the Spirit being once again fixed firmly to the whole of human nature. The Spirit was thus preserved in the human nature of the unchangeable Jesus Christ in direct contrast to Adam, who was capable of change for the worse, and who proved himself woefully incapable of preserving the grace of the indwelling Spirit.

Jesus Christ thus received the Holy Spirit, not for his own sake, but for the sake of all humanity. In his exegesis of John 1.32-33 Cyril writes that the Word of God, although being God and lacking no good thing, became a man lacking in all things in order that humanity might be re-created in and through him. The descent of the Spirit upon Christ must therefore be read with God's soteriological purposes in mind. For with his reception of the Spirit, Jesus received as a man that which humanity required for its renewal. "Therefore, just as he who is life by nature died in the flesh for our sake," Cyril writes, "in order that he might conquer death for us and raise up our whole nature together with himself (for we were all in him in so far as he became human), so also he

⁹⁰ *In Jo.* 7.39 (Pusey, i. 694³⁻¹¹).

received the Spirit for our sake, that our whole nature might be sanctified.”⁹¹ Precisely what Cyril means by the statement that all humanity is in Christ is not elaborated upon here, nor does he develop the connection he makes between the death and resurrection of Christ and his reception of the Holy Spirit. It would appear that Cyril has in mind the following schema: Just as Adam originated a race prone to disobedience and lacking the grace of the indwelling Spirit, so Jesus Christ originated in himself, through his reception and preservation of the indwelling Spirit, a redeemed humanity, renewed and recreated to its original created state of participation in the divine nature. “As on the firstfruits (ἀπαρχῇ) of our renewed nature,” Cyril writes regarding the Spirit’s descent in his exegesis of John 17.18-19, “the Spirit descended on Christ first.”⁹²

Much of what Cyril has to say in his exegesis of Luke 3.21-23 and 4.1-2 regarding the descent of the Spirit upon Christ is very similar to his reflections in his exposition of John 1.32-33. Although he is responding to Nestorian ideas in *In Lucam*, Cyril appeals, as he did against the Arians in his exegesis of John 1.32-33, both to the Word’s immutability and to his full incarnation as a means of attacking the heretical notion that Jesus Christ submitted to baptism in order to attain that which he did not have previously in his essence. In terms of Cyril’s comments regarding the Spirit’s relationship with the Son, we find nothing that we have not seen already. On the basis of an appeal to scripture, the Holy Spirit is declared to be the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, and Cyril here emphasizes that the Spirit’s activity in creation and in the faithful is undertaken at the bidding of the Son. The Spirit did not cease being the Spirit of the

⁹¹ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 185⁵⁻⁹).

⁹² *In Jo.* 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 726²⁸⁻²⁹).

Son when the Word became flesh for the incarnate Word did not cease being Word when he became man; and indeed, Cyril stresses that it was as a man that the Word gave the Spirit, apparently alluding to the breathing of the Spirit upon the disciples by Jesus in John 20. Moreover, as was the case in his exegesis of John 1.32-33, Cyril here posits that the re-creation of the human race was inaugurated with the descent of the Spirit upon Christ, who received the Spirit for our sake as the second Adam. That which Christ received at his baptism he received, not for himself, but for all humankind, for by receiving these things as the second Adam he inaugurated the renewal of humanity.

But Cyril is not content in his exposition of Luke 3.21-23 simply to account for Christ's reception of the Spirit with the use of the second Adam typology, but argues that Christ was baptized and received the Spirit as a model for us to follow so that we might understand the great grace associated with baptism. This emphasis on Christ's baptism being a prototype for our own leads Cyril specifically to locate baptism as being the place wherein Christians receive the Holy Spirit just as Christ received the Spirit at his baptism. While the idea that we receive the Spirit in baptism may have been implicit in Cyril's explication of John 1.32-33, it is not made as explicit there as it is in his exegesis of Luke 3.21-23. The latter thus contains greater emphasis on how Christ's baptism relates to our own.

God in his love, Cyril explains, provided a means for humankind to attain salvation and life, and central to God's soteriological plan is baptism: "For believing in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and making this confession before many witnesses, we wash away all the filth of sin, and are enriched by the communication of the Holy Spirit,

and made partakers (μέθεξις) of the divine nature, and gain the grace of adoption.”⁹³ In order that we might understand the importance of baptism and so submit to it, Cyril argues that Christ himself submitted to baptism. The Word of the Father, Cyril writes, humbled himself by assuming our likeness, and in so doing, he became for us the example of every good work. Therefore, so that we might “learn both the power itself of holy baptism, and how much we gain by approaching so great a grace,”⁹⁴ he himself was baptized. It was not, of course, that Jesus Christ required baptism for himself. As the divine Word of God, he did not need to receive the Spirit, it was not necessary for him to be made a partaker of the divine nature, nor did he require the grace of adoption. But we do require these things, all of which are bestowed in the waters of baptism, and all of which are central to our redemption. The incarnate Word thus submitted to baptism, and in his baptism the mystery and greatness of Christian baptism was revealed so that we might follow in the footsteps of the one who himself was baptized.

At first glance, it would appear that Cyril here provides a somewhat different account of the baptism of Christ and the subsequent descent of the Spirit upon him from what we find in his exegesis of John 1.32-33. While the focus there is upon Christ as the second Adam who submitted to baptism and received the Spirit representatively for the whole human race, the focus in his exegesis of Luke 3.21-23 is upon baptism in general, particularly the soteriological benefits associated with submitting to baptism after the

⁹³ *In Luc.* 3.21-23 (Reuss, 63). ET: Smith, 46-7. As will be seen in another chapter, Cyril often links the Spirit with the reference to our partaking of the divine nature in 2 Peter 1.4 and with our adoption by God; both of these will be the subject of thorough examination below.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* (Reuss, 63). ET: Smith, 47.

example of Jesus Christ. As such, the representative emphasis appears to fall to the background.

But as his exegesis of the baptism of Christ in *In Lucam* 3.21-23 continues, we see Cyril linking the soteriological benefits associated with baptism to Christ as the second Adam. As such, Cyril argues that Christ's baptism is not only the prototype of our own, but it in fact was of soteriological consequence in that Christ received baptism and the Holy Spirit representatively. Immediately after his description of Christ's baptism as the model of our own, Cyril turns to the descent of the Spirit upon Christ, and writes that the Spirit again came down upon Christ as a "second firstfruit of our race (ὡς ἐν ἀπαρχῇ τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν δευτέρᾳ)," receiving the Spirit not for his sake but for our own, "for by him and in him are we enriched with all things."⁹⁵ Christ did not receive the Spirit at his baptism simply as an example of our own reception of the Spirit at our baptism. Rather, Cyril argues that the descent of the Spirit upon Christ marked the renewal and re-creation of humanity as a whole, and that the Spirit descends on us at our baptism because the Spirit descended upon Christ at his baptism. Consequently, that which we receive through the bestowal of the Spirit at baptism is made possible only because Christ received it first. Citing the Father's declaration in Luke 3.22 – "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased" – Cyril argues that, while the Son never ceased being the Son by nature, he was declared to be the Son of God when the Spirit descended upon him, not as receiving adoption for himself, but that he might be the

⁹⁵ Ibid. (Reuss, 63).

firstfruits of our adoption as children of God.⁹⁶ Thus, taking Christ as our pattern we are to draw near to the grace of baptism and lift up holy hands to God the Father “that he may open the heavens also to us, and send down upon us too the Holy Spirit to receive us as sons.”⁹⁷ Cyril concludes the sermon with the following words: “For he has been made our firstfruits (ἀπαρχή), and firstborn (πρωτότοκος), and second Adam (δεύτερος Ἀδάμ), for which reason it is said that ‘in him all things have become new’ (2 Cor 5.17). For having put off the oldness that was in Adam, we have gained the newness that is in Christ.”⁹⁸ Similar sentiments are expressed in the opening paragraphs of Cyril’s exegesis of Luke 4.1-2: “He who is the firstborn (πρωτότοκος) among us, when he became man among many brethren, descending in emptiness, received the Spirit first – although he was himself the giver of the Spirit – in order that the dignity and the grace of participation (κοινωνίας) with the Holy Spirit might come to us.”⁹⁹

Cyril’s reading of Christ’s reception of the Spirit is a detailed and thorough exposition of an event that had caused no small consternation to his theological forebears. Cyril’s opening foray against the Arian position in *In Joannem* 1.32-33, as noted above, deals largely with trinitarian questions regarding the consubstantiality of the three persons of the Trinity. As he does later against Nestorius, Cyril builds a case here for why the interpretation of the Spirit’s descent upon Christ posited by his interlocutors is theologically impious and absurd, arguing essentially that the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father – the focus of the first book of the commentary on John – precludes the

⁹⁶ Ibid. (Reuss, 64).

⁹⁷ Ibid. (Reuss, 64). ET: Smith, 47.

⁹⁸ Ibid. (Reuss, 64). ET: Smith, 48.

⁹⁹ *In Luc.* 4.1-2 (Reuss, 64).

suggestion that Jesus Christ required the Spirit as lacking that which the Spirit could provide. Cyril does not at this point in his exposition appeal to the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Son as he does in his anti-Nestorian compositions as a means of proposing the implausibility of his opponents' ideas, but relies both on the implications of the Son's relationship with the Father and on the logic of the kenosis described in Philippians 2 to argue against the Arian interpretation of Christ's reception of the Spirit.

This argument, however, is not the focal point of Cyril's exposition of John 1.32-33, but serves largely as an opening through which the archbishop positively constructs an explanation, given the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, for why the incarnate Word received the Spirit at his baptism. Because of his conception of the Son's relationship with the Father, as well as his conception of Jesus Christ truly being the Word-made-flesh, Cyril is absolutely unwilling to suggest that the pneumatological anointing the incarnate Word received at his baptism was christologically necessary, such that it supplied something which was lacking. The event must be read, Cyril posits, in a manner that is faithful to orthodox trinitarian and christological reflection. Cyril's solution is to read Christ's reception of the Spirit through the lens of the typology of Christ as the second Adam, and so to locate this event within the drama of human salvation. It is for this reason that John 1.32-33 becomes for Cyril a springboard for recounting the creation and fall of humankind, which becomes in Cyril's hands a tale of humanity's acquisition and subsequent loss of the Holy Spirit, whose centrality in this

account is unique in patristic thought.¹⁰⁰ Cyril's interpretation not only circumvents any attempt to interpret the pneumatological anointing of Christ ontologically, but also provides a coherent solution as to why Jesus submitted to baptism and why the Spirit descended upon him even though the incarnate Word required neither baptism nor the anointing of the Spirit. His account does even more than this, however. For in Cyril's interpretation of the Spirit's descent upon Christ we find the flowering of ideas found among his forebears, but articulated by Cyril in such a manner that the Spirit's descent is accorded a soteriological and theological significance unprecedented in the patristic period.

The distinctiveness of Cyril's interpretation can be illustrated through a brief description of the manner in which the Spirit's descent was interpreted by two key patristic theologians, Irenaeus of Lyons and Athanasius. In its bare essentials, Cyril's account of the Spirit's descent in *In Joannem* was prefigured by both Irenaeus and Athanasius. In book three of *Adversus Haereses*, Irenaeus deals with the question of why the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism, and posits the following explanation:

For God promised that in the last times he would pour the Spirit upon his servants and handmaids, that they might prophesy; wherefore he also did descend upon the Son of God, made the Son of man, becoming accustomed in fellowship with him to dwell in the human race, to rest with human beings, and to dwell in the workmanship of God, working

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Wilken (1967): 268-77 and Kilian McDonnell, "Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995), 209-36 for concise but thorough accounts of the history of the patristic interpretation of the baptism of Jesus.

the will of the Father in them, and renewing them from their old habits into the newness of Christ.¹⁰¹

Irenaeus here argues that Christ's reception of the Holy Spirit at his baptism was soteriologically necessary for, in Christ, the Spirit becomes habituated to dwell within human beings. The outpouring of the Spirit upon humanity, promised in the Hebrew scriptures, is only possible because the Spirit first came to dwell in the incarnate Son of God.¹⁰² Cyril's account of the Spirit's descent in *In Joannem* bears some resemblance to Irenaeus' emphasis here upon the Spirit becoming accustomed to dwelling in humanity by first dwelling within Jesus Christ.¹⁰³ At the same time, however, Cyril's account differs from that of Irenaeus in that Cyril argues that the Spirit did not descend upon Christ in order to become accustomed to dwelling in humankind, but to become *re-*accustomed to such indwelling.¹⁰⁴ This is a seemingly subtle distinction, but by arguing that humanity's natural state is one of total intimacy with the life-giving Spirit, by positing that human salvation is inextricably tied to the renewal of this intimacy, and by emphasizing that Christ was receiving as a human what humanity once had but lost, Cyril gives Christ's reception of the Spirit a soteriological centrality that is not found to the same extent in Irenaeus' account.

¹⁰¹ *Adv. haer.* III.17.1. The translation is a modification of that provided in ANF, vol. 1, *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, James Donaldson and Alexander Roberts, ed. (reprint Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1995), 444.

¹⁰² Daniel A. Smith, "Irenaeus and the Baptism of Jesus," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997): 629.

¹⁰³ The resemblance between *Adv. haer.* III.17.1 and Cyril's *In. Jo.* 1.32-33 is noted by Keating (2004), 28.

¹⁰⁴ As Marie-Odile Boulnois (1989) points out, in contrast to Cyril, Irenaeus did not read Genesis 2.7 pneumatologically (pp. 5-9). See also G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (Toronto: William Heinemann, Ltd, 1936), 37.

Cyril's interpretation of the Spirit's descent likewise bears similarities to the soteriological explanation provided by Athanasius in *Contra Arianos* I.46-52, an explanation that, like Cyril's own, is developed in response to the Arian threat. Athanasius' interpretation of Jesus' baptism comes in the context of trying to provide an alternative exegesis of Psalm 45.7: "Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows." This text, as we have already seen, was one of those cited by Cyril's unnamed Arian interlocutor above as being a scriptural proof-text for the ontological inferiority of the Son.¹⁰⁵ Athanasius likewise accuses his Arian opponents of reading Psalm 45.7 in relation to the Spirit's anointing of Jesus Christ at his baptism, and of arguing that this anointing illustrates that the Son was not God. Athanasius' response to this interpretation is to argue that Christ's anointing by the Spirit should be read not as having ontological, but soteriological ramifications. He was not anointed, Athanasius writes in *Contra Arianos* I.46, in order that he might become God (he was this before), nor in order that he might become king (he was king eternally). Rather, Christ,

being God, and ever ruling in the Father's kingdom, and being himself he that supplies the Holy Spirit, is nevertheless here said to be anointed, that, as before, being said as man to be anointed with the Spirit, he might provide for us humans, not only exaltation and resurrection, but the indwelling and intimacy of the Spirit.¹⁰⁶

Athanasius expands on this idea in I.47 where he argues "that the Spirit's descent on [Jesus] in Jordan was a descent upon us, because of his bearing our body."¹⁰⁷ Jesus was anointed, not for his own sake, but for our sanctification "that we might share in his

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 175⁸⁻¹⁵).

¹⁰⁶ *C. Ar.* I.46 (PG 26, 108A-B). The translation is a modification of that provided in NPNF, 2nd series, vol. IV, *St. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds (reprint Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 333.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* I.47 (PG 26, 108C). ET: NPNF, vol. IV, 333.

anointing.” He continues: “For when the Lord, as man, was washed in the Jordan, it was us who were washed in him and by him. And when he received the Spirit, it was us who by him were made recipients of it.”¹⁰⁸

Athanasius’ argument up to this point is based upon his assertion that the Son is consubstantial with the Father and therefore could not advance in holiness when the Spirit descended upon the Son become man. The case is also made, in the lines that follow the above quotation, that the Son’s relationship with the Spirit further precludes an Arian interpretation of Christ’s anointing. Citing John 16.7, 14 and 20.22,¹⁰⁹ Athanasius argues that the Spirit is the Son’s and that the Spirit is himself given by the Son. If both of these inferences are true, the Arian case is further weakened, and the only explanation of the Spirit’s descent upon Christ that remains, according to Athanasius, is soteriological:

And if, as the Lord himself has said, the Spirit is his, and takes of his, and he sends it, it is not the Word, considered as the Word and wisdom, who is anointed with the Spirit which he himself gives, but the flesh assumed by him which is anointed in him and by him; that the sanctification coming to the Lord as man, may come to all people from him.¹¹⁰

Such is the basic outline of Athanasius’ interpretation of the baptismal descent of the Spirit upon Christ. Whether Cyril was influenced by Athanasius’ interpretation is very difficult to determine. Cyril’s interpretation of the Spirit’s descent does bear a certain resemblance to Athanasius’. Like Athanasius, Cyril is keen to provide an account

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. I.47 (PG 26, 108C-109A). ET: NPNF, vol. IV, 333.

¹⁰⁹ John 16.7: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” John 16.14: “He [the Spirit] will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” John 20.22: “And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

¹¹⁰ *C. Ar.* I.47 (PG 26, 109C). ET: Modified from NPNF, 2nd series, vol. IV, 334.

of the descent that does not have ontological implications, and thus, like Athanasius, Cyril suggests that the Spirit's descent must be explained soteriologically. At the same time, however, Cyril greatly expands on Athanasius' characterization of this event. While it is unfair to suggest with Wilken that Athanasius "does not succeed in giving theological significance to the Baptism of Christ,"¹¹¹ it certainly is the case that, although both Athanasius and Cyril provide a soteriological interpretation of the Spirit's descent, Cyril's portrayal of this event – with its emphasis upon Christ's anointing as being a central component of the renewal and re-creation of the human race, restoring that which is integral to human nature – is such that the theological and soteriological significance of the descent is more profoundly expressed by Cyril than by Athanasius. Indeed, it has been justifiably suggested that "Cyril's teaching represents one of the most theologically profound reflections on the baptism of Jesus in early Christian literature."¹¹²

Most significantly for our purposes is the fact that, as Keating observes, the characteristic feature of Cyril's exposition of the Spirit's baptismal descent on Christ "is the prominence he accords to the Holy Spirit in the narrative of salvation."¹¹³ In his retelling of the fall of humanity in the context of his exposition on the Spirit's descent, Cyril emphasizes, on the basis of his reading of Genesis 2.7, that humanity was created with the intention of participating in the divine through the indwelling of the life-giving Holy Spirit, but that this intimacy with the Spirit was disrupted by humanity's

¹¹¹ Wilken (1967), 271. Widdicombe (2000), 226-7 on the significance of the descent of the Spirit on Christ in Athanasius' thought.

¹¹² McDonnell (1995), 222. A similar judgment is expressed by Wilken (1967), 271-2.

¹¹³ Keating (2004), 30.

degeneration in sin. The cataclysmic effect of human sin was, in Cyril's retelling of the fall, the departure of the Spirit, for with this departure humanity descended into the depths of mortality, unable to ascend to the good. And the image of God in which humanity had been created became marred, unable to be healed and restored without the presence of the Spirit, who had sealed the image within human beings through his indwelling presence. In sum, Cyril portrays fallen humanity as being much less than it was created to be, largely because it was created in a state of intimacy with the divine Holy Spirit. Human salvation is therefore understood by Cyril to be contingent on humanity re-acquiring intimacy with the Spirit, for the image of God can only be remade through the indwelling of the Spirit.

The centrality with which the Spirit is accorded a place in Cyril's soteriological scheme is illustrated in a telling comment already cited above from his exegesis of John 1.32-33 in which the archbishop refers to the soteriological importance of the Spirit's descent upon Christ in the same breath as the death and resurrection of Christ:

Therefore, just as he who is life by nature died in the flesh for our sake, in order that he might conquer death for us and raise up our whole nature together with himself (for we were all in him, in so far as he became human), so also he received the Spirit for our sake, that our whole nature might be sanctified.¹¹⁴

This quotation, when read in the light of Cyril's recounting of the narrative of salvation in his exposition of John 1.32-33, suggests that Cyril perceives the salvific effects of the Spirit's descent upon Christ to be as significant as the death and resurrection of the incarnate Word, the reintroduction of the indwelling of the Spirit in humanity being as

¹¹⁴ *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 185⁵⁻⁹).

soteriologically requisite as the immortality gained by Christians through the resurrected saviour.

Cyril's reflections on the Spirit's descent in *In Joannem* go far beyond his reflections on the same event in the anti-Nestorian writings examined above, save for his interpretation of Christ's baptism in *In Lucam*. Although in *In Joannem*, Cyril's interpretation is developed in response to Arianism, just as his interpretation after 428 were developed in response to Nestorius, the christological concerns that plagued Cyril after 428 are absent from the commentary, meaning that Cyril has the luxury of tackling the issue without the constraints of having to respond to Nestorius' specific christological formulations. Thus, Cyril appears to be content to respond to Nestorius' characterization of the Spirit's descent on Christ simply by pointing out the absurdity of his opponent's argument both in terms of christology and trinitarian theology. He sees no need to provide the kind of constructive exposition of the Spirit's descent as he does in the *Commentary on John*, although such a constructive exposition may have been apposite. Why Cyril did not include such an interpretation of the Spirit's descent against Nestorius in his specifically anti-Nestorian writings cannot be known with certainty.

Had he done so, however, one wonders whether Nestorius could have justifiably made the accusation, recounted in the previous chapter, that Cyril's pneumatology was faulty for it made the Spirit out simply to be the servant of the Son. I argued in the previous chapter that Cyril's characterization of Christ's miraculous conception indicates the centrality of the Spirit for his soteriology. The archbishop's soteriological interpretation of the Spirit's baptismal descent on Christ reinforces and underlines the

prominent role accorded to the Holy Spirit in the salvation of humankind. In his exegesis of John 1.32-33, Cyril presents the Spirit as being integral, in his own right, in the creation and redemption of human beings. It is the Spirit who is depicted as being life-giving, as being he by whom humanity attains holiness, as being the seal of the image of God within humanity, and as being he through whom humanity participates in the divine. And it is, in Cyril's account, the incarnate Word who serves as the vehicle for the Spirit, for it is through his indwelling of Jesus Christ that the door is once again opened for humanity to have intimacy with the Spirit. This point, however, should not be exaggerated. In other places in the *In Joannem*, Cyril emphasizes, as he does in his anti-Nestorian writings, that it is the Son who bestows the Spirit upon his followers, and such a position precludes any insinuation of passivity on the Son's part. But it should be highlighted that, in his exegesis of John 1.32-33, Luke 3.21-23, and Luke 4.1-2 Cyril evidences a pneumatology that is robust and nuanced.

Moreover, in his exposition of Luke 3.21-23 Cyril emphasizes, in a manner not found in *In Joannem*, the relationship between our own baptism and that of Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus received the Spirit at his baptism, so we receive the Spirit at our baptism. Although Cyril is clear in his exegesis of John 1.32-33 that Jesus Christ received the Holy Spirit in order that we all might receive the Spirit, he does not there describe the manner in which humanity receives the Spirit in the here and now. It could perhaps be assumed from the fact that Cyril devotes extensive attention to our reception of the Spirit in the context of the Spirit's descent on Christ at his baptism that we are meant to understand that our reception of the Spirit also takes place at our baptism. But this is not made

explicit. Cyril is much more forthright about the relationship between Christ's baptism and our own in his exegesis of Luke 3.21-23. Here the archbishop argues that the Spirit who descended upon Christ at the Jordan also descends upon our baptism. Moreover, the fact that Christ was declared to be the Son of God upon the Spirit's descent, although he did not cease being the Son by nature, illustrates to Cyril that we are adopted through the Spirit to be children of God at our baptism. In short, although Cyril does not, in his exposition of Luke 3.21-23, ignore the second Adam typology he relied upon so heavily in his exegesis of John 1.32-33 – indeed, it was seen that Cyril uses this typology with reference to Luke's account of Christ's baptism – the emphasis is squarely placed on the relationship between Christ's baptism and our own. Thus, although in both his commentaries on John and Luke Cyril reads the descent of the Spirit at Christ's baptism soteriologically, it is in his commentary on Luke that it is made explicit that our reception of the Holy Spirit, a reception made possible by the descent of the Spirit on Christ, attains actualization in the waters of baptism. This is a point that needs to be remembered as we enter into a discussion of Cyril's understanding of the soteriological activities of the Holy Spirit.

According to Cyril's Arian opponents, the descent of the Spirit upon Christ was proof positive that the Son was not consubstantial with the Father, for one who is consubstantial should not require the sanctification of the Spirit. According to Nestorius, the descent of the Spirit upon Christ was yet another illustration of the impropriety of emphasizing the union of the divine and human natures at the expense of recognizing the

radical discontinuity between these two natures. For Nestorius, the only way to make sense of the descent of the Spirit upon Christ is to recognize that the Spirit descended, not upon the divine Word, but upon the man Jesus who himself required the sanctification and operation of the Spirit. Cyril has little patience with either of these interpretations, arguing instead that the incarnate Word's reception of the Spirit at his baptism can be read in a manner that neither compromises the Son's divinity nor the unity of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ.

Although Cyril does not articulate precisely how the Spirit's descent can be positively read in his anti-Nestorian works, he does ruminate on the Spirit's relationship to the Son, arguing that the fact that the Spirit is the Son's own precludes any suggestion that the Son received what he did not have previously at his anointing. Cyril bases his argument that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son on New Testament texts, principally John 15.26 and 16.13-14, that suggest as such. But, for Cyril, the most definitive demonstration of the Spirit being the Son's own is the bestowal of the Spirit upon the disciples by Jesus Christ, as recounted in John 20.22. If the incarnate Son is he who gives the Spirit in order that we might participate in the divine, it is absurd to posit that Jesus Christ himself participated in the Spirit as one who did not have him essentially.

This emphasis on the Spirit being the Spirit of the Son is prominent in both Cyril's *In Joannem* and *In Lucam*, arising at moments when the archbishop is keen to demonstrate the theological irrationality of his opponents' interpretations. But unlike in his anti-Nestorian compositions, Cyril is not content in his exegetical works simply to illustrate the absurdity of his interlocutors' ideas, but constructs a substantial

interpretation of why the Spirit descended upon Christ at his baptism in a manner that enables him to manoeuvre through the theological and christological pitfalls of his opponents. Paul's second Adam typology proves extraordinarily useful for Cyril in this vein. For by reading Christ's reception of the Spirit in the light of this typology, Cyril preserves both the Son's consubstantiality with the Father, as well as the unity of the divine and human in Christ, while at the same time placing this event in a prominent and integral position within the narrative of human salvation.

In Cyril's hands, the Spirit's descent on Christ becomes an event of tremendous salvific significance, comparable in its soteriological importance to the death and resurrection of the incarnate Word. The significance of the Spirit's descent on Christ lies in the story of humanity's creation and fall, recounted in detail by Cyril in the context of his exposition of the descent. The fall of humanity, according to Cyril, is characterized primarily by humanity's loss of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Cyril posits that one of the primary objectives of the incarnation was humanity's reacquisition of the Holy Spirit, and that it was for the purpose of humanity once again having intimacy with the indwelling Spirit that Jesus Christ received the Spirit at his baptism.

While aspects of this interpretation of the Spirit's descent on Christ are to be found in thinkers prior to Cyril, his account eclipses that of his predecessors in terms of the overwhelming emphasis placed by him on the importance of the Spirit's descent for the renewal of humankind to the state it once had when Adam enjoyed intimacy with the indwelling Spirit.¹¹⁵ The result of such a pneumocentric re-telling of the drama of human

¹¹⁵ Keating (2004), 30.

salvation is that we are given a very clear picture of Cyril's understanding of the specific soteriological work of the Holy Spirit. Out of the midst of Cyril's exposition of the Spirit's descent upon Christ we find the Holy Spirit being depicted as absolutely integral to the redemption of humankind. The Spirit emerges, not as the servant of the Son, as Nestorius accused Cyril of suggesting, but as a figure of tremendous importance in his own right.

At the same time, Cyril's account of the Spirit's descent is not without one weakness, a weakness that is essentially the same as that noted above in the context of our examination of his account of the miraculous conception. And that is that Cyril's construction leaves no room for interpreting Jesus' reception of the Spirit in terms of Christ's earthly ministry.¹¹⁶ Cyril's argument that Christ received the Spirit representatively as the second Adam enables the archbishop to provide a thorough and substantial soteriological account for why the incarnate Word received the Spirit at his baptism. However, it would appear that the archbishop is comfortable only to countenance a representative reading of the Spirit's descent for fear that opening the door to any suggestion that the Spirit contributed anything to the incarnate Word could jeopardize orthodox trinitarian theology. Yet, as Keating observes in his analysis of the baptism of Christ, a representative interpretation of this event does not necessarily "account adequately for the words of Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth in Luke 4.18."¹¹⁷ It is debatable whether Cyril's christological principles would have allowed for anything but a soteriological reading of the Spirit's descent upon Christ. Keating

¹¹⁶ Keating (2004) notes the same weakness in Cyril's account (cf. pp. 31, 36).

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 36.

suggests that there would have been room, given Cyril's own principle of the economy, for him to have recognized a particular reception of the Holy Spirit in the messianic career of the Word,¹¹⁸ but the fact remains that Cyril is silent on this subject. We are left, therefore, with an account of the Spirit's descent upon Christ which preserves the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, as well as the unity of the divine and human in Christ, but which is not necessarily capable of sustaining any possibility of the Spirit contributing something positively to the incarnate Word in his earthly ministry. This weakness in Cyril's account should not, however, blind us to the substantial pneumatological insights contained in it, insights that have been recounted above in detail.

Having thus examined Cyril's argument that human recovery of the indwelling Holy Spirit was a central soteriological objective that lay behind the incarnation of the Word, I shall now turn to look specifically at the salvific activity of the Spirit who comes to believers in the waters of baptism. Of particular concern for my examination will be the Spirit's role in human adoption as children of God, a role to which we have already seen Cyril refer in the context of describing the soteriological efficacy of Christ's conception and baptism.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 4 – Divine Filiation: The Transformative Work of the Holy Spirit

There was no other way for us who have borne the image of the man of dust to escape corruption, unless the beauty of the image of the man of heaven is imprinted upon us through our having been called to sonship. For having become partakers of him through the Spirit, we have been sealed into likeness to him, and mount up to the archetypal form of the image, in accordance with which divine scripture says we were also made. For scarcely do we thus recover the ancient beauty of our nature, and are conformed to that divine nature, than we become superior to the evils that arose from the fall.¹

- *In Joannem* 1.12

In this chapter I shall examine the actualization of the pneumatic indwelling in humanity. In particular, I shall explore in detail the relationship between divine filiation and the Holy Spirit in Cyril's soteriology. I have to this point of my study demonstrated that the archbishop understands the Spirit to be soteriologically pivotal. We have seen how Cyril accounts for the Holy Spirit's role in Christ's virginal conception and Christ's baptismal reception of the Holy Spirit by placing both of these events within the narrative of human salvation, a narrative structured around humanity's reception, loss, and reacquisition of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Particularly in his interpretation of Christ's reception of the Spirit, Cyril emphasizes that humanity was created for communion with God, and that this communion was enacted through the indwelling Holy Spirit, breathed upon Adam at creation. In this context Cyril characterizes the human dilemma primarily in terms of humanity's loss of the Spirit through sin, emphasizing that this loss resulted in corruptibility and sinfulness, both concomitants of the cessation of participation in the divine nature through the indwelling Spirit. For Cyril the restoration of the indwelling Spirit was, therefore, a central objective for the incarnate Word who received the Spirit as the second Adam for our sake.

¹ *In Jo.* 1.12 (Pusey, i. 133¹²⁻²²). ET: Russell (2000), 100.

In this chapter I shall illustrate that the Spirit's soteriological centrality revolves in large part around the role he plays in our adoption as children of God, a role to which I referred briefly in the second chapter when recounting the soteriological interpretation Cyril gives to Christ's miraculous conception. I wish in what follows to demonstrate the centrality of divine filiation in Cyril's pneumatology and soteriology, and to analyse in detail the means by which the Spirit brings humanity to divine sonship, paying particular attention to the notion of participation in Cyril's thought as well as to the emphasis the archbishop places on the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son for comprehending the Spirit's soteriological role.

The shape of my examination will be as follows. Before looking at the ramifications of the Spirit's bestowal on humanity, I shall commence with a brief account of how the Spirit is bestowed. I shall in this section illustrate that it is Cyril's contention that the Holy Spirit is bestowed in the waters of baptism and that, while he makes some references to the Spirit's operation in and through the eucharist, the predominant emphasis is on baptism as the means by which the Spirit comes upon believers and thus works in them.

Having done that I shall demonstrate the centrality of divine filiation in Cyril's soteriology and pneumatology. This will be accomplished by a comparison of the soteriological efficacy of Adam's reception of the Spirit with that of our reception of the Spirit in the Christian economy. A comparison of Adam's experience of the indwelling of the Spirit with that of Christians will illustrate that Cyril understands our reception of the Spirit to result in more than simply a return to our original created state. He posits,

rather, that through the Spirit, we can now attain to that which transcends Adam's experience of the Spirit – divine sonship. In this section I shall demonstrate that Cyril understands divine filiation to be a prerogative exclusive to the Christian – as opposed to the Adamic – dispensation of the Holy Spirit, and that, given the emphasis the archbishop places on the soteriological centrality of humanity's renewed reception of the Spirit, our adoption as children of God is, for him, a primary facet of his soteriology.

After this comparison of Adam's reception of the Spirit with our own, I shall examine how, according to Cyril, the Holy Spirit transforms believers so that they become children of God. My examination will begin with an account of Cyril's notion of participation in the divine nature, a notion to which the archbishop continually refers, particularly with reference to the Holy Spirit. Divine filiation is, as we shall see, tied to this participation through the Spirit, and it is therefore necessary to explore this idea in more detail to comprehend more fully how Christian participation in the Spirit brings about divine sonship by grace.

This examination of participation will be followed by an analysis of a number of texts in which Cyril describes the process of transformation that culminates in our becoming children of God through the Spirit. I shall show that the Spirit's role in this transformation is directly tied to his identity as the Spirit of the Son, and that his transforming adoptive operation revolves around the person of Jesus Christ, whose Spirit he is. We are, through the Spirit, drawn into an experiential filial relationship with God, a relationship made possible by the incarnation of the Son and enacted by the Son's Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, the Waters of Baptism, and the Eucharist

In this section I shall briefly examine Cyril's perception of how and when we receive the Spirit. It is this reception through which the Spirit undertakes his transformative work within us. I have shown already that Cyril, in the context of interpreting Christ's baptismal reception of the Spirit, proposes that our own reception of the Spirit occurs in imitation of Christ's. Cyril therefore draws a clear line between baptism and the gift of the Spirit. Few scholars, however, have demonstrated the connection Cyril establishes between baptism and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. In the past either it has been assumed that Cyril envisions a baptismal framework for the bestowal of the Spirit² (i.e., that this is clearly articulated in his writings), or his baptismal theology has been subsumed under his eucharistic theology.³ My aim in this section is to demonstrate that Cyril understands the primary locus of the dispensation of the Spirit to be baptism. At the same time, however, I shall point out that the archbishop does not limit the dispensation to baptism, but that he suggests, albeit in a manner that is not fully developed, that the Spirit also operates in and through the eucharistic meal. In sum, I shall illustrate that Cyril consistently posits that the Spirit's operation is inseparable from the church's liturgical life.

² In *The Appropriation of the Divine Life* Keating argues that, according to Cyril, the Spirit is given primarily through baptism, and does so against claims by scholars such as Meunier that the Spirit's role can be subsumed under the eucharist (cf. pp. 54-64). Unfortunately, Keating does not clearly develop the connection between the Spirit and baptism.

³ Cf. Marie-Odile Boulnois, "L'eucharistie, mystère d'union chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Les modèles d'union trinitaire et christologique" in *Revue des sciences religieuses* 74.2 (2002), 155-6.

In my examination of Cyril's interpretation of Christ's baptism I noted that he establishes a direct correlation between Jesus' reception of the Spirit at baptism and the baptismal reception of the Spirit by believers, particularly in his exegesis of Luke 3.21-23. The incarnate Word's reception of the Spirit was, Cyril posits, both the means and the model of our own reception, and therefore we ourselves receive the Holy Spirit in the waters of baptism in the same manner as Jesus Christ. There are a number of other places in Cyril's writings where he explicitly connects the divine bestowal of the Spirit with baptism.

Cyril interprets John 13.8b – in which Christ responds to Peter's objections to having his feet washed with the statement, "If I do not wash you, you have no part of me" – as having baptismal and pneumatological implications.⁴ According to Cyril, to have no part of Christ is to have no part in the eternal life that comes from Christ who is life. And taking the washing of the disciples' feet to be a type of baptism, he argues that this account tells us that a person must be entirely washed of sin and error before attaining the eternal life made possible by Christ. "For," Cyril writes, "the uncleansed cannot enter the mansions above, but those who have a clean conscience through love of Christ, and have been sanctified in the Spirit through holy baptism."⁵ Cyril is not clear whether there is a connection between the "love of Christ" and the sanctification through the Spirit, nor does he present us with a full baptismal theology here. But he is clear that the Spirit's sanctifying operation occurs in the waters of baptism.

⁴ *In Jo.* 13.8 (Pusey, ii. 347²⁴-348⁸).

⁵ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 348⁵⁻⁸).

Similar sentiments are expressed in the fragments we possess of Cyril's exegesis of Matthew 20.1-16, in which he uses the parable of the labourers in the vineyard as a springboard to expound upon the drama of human salvation.⁶ In the midst of this exposition Cyril makes reference to the gift of the Holy Spirit to humanity, and lists the soteriological efficacy of the Spirit's operation. He writes that it is by the Spirit that Christians are conformed (συμμόρφους) to God, for through the Spirit divine features (χαρακτῆρας) are engraved (ἐγχαράττουσα) on our souls.⁷ For it is through the Holy Spirit that we "become partakers (κοινωνοί) of the divine nature (2 Peter 1.4) and are able to cry 'Abba, Father' (Rom 8.15; Gal 4.6)."⁸ The connection Cyril establishes here between participation in God and divine filiation is one that, as I shall examine in detail below, he establishes recurrently throughout his writings. For my present purposes, I want simply to highlight that Cyril posits that this profound transformation occurs in and through the waters of baptism. It is "by baptism and union (συναφείας) with the Spirit," Cyril writes, that we "become partakers (κοινωνοί) of the divine nature and are called sons of God."⁹ According to the archbishop, we are united with the Holy Spirit upon baptism, and so partake of the divine nature and are adopted as children of God. The καί between "baptism" and "union" should not be read as constituting two absolutely separate soteriological events, as if we become partakers of the divine nature and are adopted by baptism *as well as* by union with the Spirit.¹⁰ Such a schema lacks

⁶ *In Mt 20.1-16* (Reuss, 228-230). Cf. Meunier (1997), 197-198.

⁷ *In Mt 20.1-16* (Reuss, 229).

⁸ *Ibid.* (Reuss, 230).

⁹ *Ibid.* (Reuss, 229).

¹⁰ Meunier (1997), 197.

theological logic and, as we shall see, does not accord with Cyril's soteriology as a whole, particularly given the strong connection the archbishop repeatedly makes between the Holy Spirit, participation in the divine nature, and divine filiation.

A passage from Cyril's *In Joannem* will further establish the association he makes between baptism and the Holy Spirit. In his exposition of John 20.17, Cyril explains why the resurrected Jesus did not allow Mary Magdalene to touch him in the garden outside his tomb, and intriguingly, his exegesis focuses on baptism and the eucharist. Before the plan of redemption had been enacted through his death and resurrection, Cyril writes, Jesus allowed all people, including sinners, to touch his holy body and thereby to gain a measure of sanctification. But once he had risen from the dead and had thus demonstrated to all his superiority over death, a fact that had hitherto been hidden from most people, Christ no longer allowed the impure to come into contact with his body. Thus, Christ gives us here a type of what takes place in the church in much the same way, Cyril suggests, as the Mosaic law's prohibition that uncircumcised men were not to eat of the slaughtered passover lamb is a type of the church (Ex 12.48). As such, fallen humanity pales in comparison to the inherent purity of God, making it incumbent upon humans to attain purity – that is, to be 'circumcised' – before approaching the holiness of Christ's body. This "real circumcision" – Cyril here points to Romans 2.29¹¹ – occurs through the Spirit, and takes place in the waters of baptism: "We cannot be circumcised in spirit (ἡ ἐν πνεύματι γένοιτο περιτομή) if the Holy Spirit has not come to live in us

¹¹ "He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal."

by faith and holy baptism.”¹² According to Cyril, Mary was not permitted to touch Christ’s body because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given by the Father through the Son, and Mary required the requisite sanctification through the Spirit before she could come into contact with the body of the incarnate Word. In like manner those who believe in Christ’s divinity and who have made a profession of faith as catechumens are not permitted to approach the altar where Christ comes to us in the bread and wine. For the Spirit “does not dwell in those who have not been baptized” and catechumens have not therefore been made holy through the Spirit who cleanses in baptism.¹³ Cyril writes that the celebrant declares, “Holy things to the holy” at the eucharistic feast precisely because the sanctified and holy elements are only to be given to those who are themselves sanctified and holy through the Holy Spirit.¹⁴

Cyril places clear emphasis in this passage on baptism as being central to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, Cyril’s ambiguous statement that the Spirit dwells in us by “faith and holy baptism” raises the question of the relationship between faith, baptism, and the bestowal of the Spirit in Cyril’s thought.¹⁵ Are we to understand Cyril to posit here a dual means of pneumatic indwelling, such that the Spirit dwells in us by faith and also through baptism? The answer becomes clear as the passage progresses. Faith, Cyril explains, brings one to the catechumenate and thus to the path that culminates in the gift of the Spirit in baptism. It is perhaps because he understands faith as the gateway, as it were, leading toward the indwelling Spirit that Cyril says that the Spirit

¹² *In Jo.* 20.17 (Pusey, iii. 119⁴⁻⁶).

¹³ *Ibid.* (Pusey, iii. 119²³⁻²⁴).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* (Pusey, iii. 119²⁴⁻³⁰).

¹⁵ See also *In Is.* 26.1-8 (PG 70.573A) for a similar statement.

dwells in us by faith and baptism on the one hand while declaring on the other that it is only through baptism that the indwelling Spirit is bestowed. Whatever the case may be, the clear emphasis in the passage is on baptism as the vehicle through which the Spirit is bestowed.

Cyril's comments on faith and the gift of the Holy Spirit in his exposition of John 20.17 are but one example of the frequent association the archbishop makes between the two. In his exegeses of John 1.12-13 and 3.36a, texts that highlight faith as the means by which we attain eternal life, Cyril explicitly ties the soteriological efficacy of faith to the activity of the Holy Spirit, despite the fact that none of these verses refers to him.¹⁶ By doing so Cyril remains faithful to the passages' emphasis on faith at the same time as he subtly redirects his readers toward the centrality of the Holy Spirit, and thus baptism, for human salvation. His point in these expositions appears to be that faith saves because it is inextricable from the transformation that transpires through the gift of the Spirit, a gift given in baptism. Thus, the soteriologically operative mechanism of faith, as it were, is the Holy Spirit. Faith does not save independently of baptism; to have saving faith is to have the indwelling Spirit given in baptism. Although Cyril does not always make this baptismal dimension of faith explicit, his consistent linkage of saving faith with the activity of the Holy Spirit would in all probability have been understood by his readers to be a clear emphasis on the gift of the Spirit in baptism, which was posited by the

¹⁶ Cf. *In Jo.* 1.12, 13 (Pusey, i. 132-138); 3.36a (Pusey, i. 258-259).

archbishop in his exposition of John 20.17 to be the fullest expression of faith, as noted above.¹⁷

Thus, Cyril most prominently emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is bestowed in the waters of baptism.¹⁸ But while this association between baptism and the Spirit is made, he nowhere, to my knowledge, explains precisely how this occurs. He appears content simply to associate the gift of the Spirit with baptism, in much the same manner as he is content to state that the eucharistic elements are the body and blood of Christ without explaining how this occurs.

However, Cyril does not limit the operation of the Spirit solely to baptism. He refers as well, albeit less frequently and in a much less straightforward manner, to the Spirit's activity in the eucharistic feast. It is outside the scope of this study to discuss Cyril's eucharistic theology in detail;¹⁹ I will instead focus on those facets that provide insight into the archbishop's pneumatology. That the eucharist has efficacy for the body and the gift of the Spirit in baptism has efficacy for the soul is consistently voiced when the archbishop enunciates his understanding of the eucharist. Christ comes to be in us "divinely through the Holy Spirit" and corporeally "by his holy flesh and precious

¹⁷ Other references in which Cyril associates faith with the Holy Spirit include *In Luc.* 7.17-23 (Smith, 141-142); 7.24-28 (Reuss, 76-77); *In Jo.* 1.9 (Pusey, i. 103); 6.27 (Pusey, i. 444); 7.24 (Pusey, i. 632); 7.38 (Pusey, 688); 10.10 (Pusey, ii. 220); 14.4 (Pusey, ii. 406); 16.7 (Pusey, ii. 620); 16.8-11 (Pusey, ii. 624); 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 731); 19.30 (Pusey, iii. 97-98); *DT* I: 407B-408A (SC 231, 190-194); *In Is.* 55.1-2 (PG 70.1220A).

¹⁸ Cf. Keating (2004), 90f.

¹⁹ Cyril's eucharistic theology has been the subject of significant study. For more on his understanding of the eucharist, see Chadwick (1951); Gebremedhin (1977); Joseph Mahé, "L'Eucharistie d'après saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," in *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 8 (1907): 677-96; Welch (1994).

blood.”²⁰ We are thus “brought to life and blessed both spiritually (πνευματικῶς) and corporeally (σωματικῶς).”²¹ For because humanity was dead in soul and body, “it was absolutely necessary, not only that our souls should be recreated (ἀνακτιζεσθαι) into newness of life by the Holy Spirit, but also that this coarse and earthly body should be sanctified by a coarser but analogous participation (μεταλήψεως) and called to incorruption.”²²

It would appear, given such statements, that Cyril understands baptism and the eucharist to be parallel but distinct means of transformation. Both involve the indwelling of Jesus Christ, but one is a spiritual indwelling through the Holy Spirit and the other is a bodily indwelling through Christ’s body and blood. The former, we shall see in greater detail below, involves sanctification, re-creation, and particularly divine adoption, while the latter involves the bestowal of incorruptibility to corruptible flesh. But, as Keating points out, Cyril’s thought is not this tidy and straightforward, and if we press this parallel structure too far we cease to be faithful to the archbishop’s sacramental theology.²³

For example, while Cyril does lay particular stress on the somatic effects of the eucharist throughout his writings, it would be a mistake to assume that the archbishop simply has in mind the injection, as it were, of immortality into the mortal body through the eucharistic elements. Rather, when describing the soteriological efficacy of the eucharist in his exposition of John 6, Cyril argues that the life we receive through the

²⁰ *In Luc.* 22.17-22 (Reuss, 209-210).

²¹ *Ibid.* (Reuss, 208-209).

²² *In Jo.* 6.53 (Pusey, i. 531¹²⁻¹⁶). ET: Russell (2000), 116.

²³ Keating (2004), 94-5.

body and blood of Christ cannot be separated from “saving sanctification”²⁴ and the “life of holiness.”²⁵ The eucharist expels not only death, according to the archbishop, but also the sinful diseases that are in us. Similar sentiments are expressed in the fragments we possess of Cyril’s exegesis of Matthew 26.26-28. In this exposition the archbishop refers to believers being “sanctified corporeally and spiritually (σωματικῶς καὶ πνευματικῶς)” through the eucharist.²⁶

Cyril’s perception of the soteriological efficacy of the eucharist, therefore, transcends mere somatic concerns to encompass the transformation of the whole person, body and soul. However, Cyril does not adequately work out the relationship between the Spirit and the transformation made possible in and through the eucharistic elements. In his exegesis of John 6.63 – “It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life” – Cyril intimates that the bestowal of life that occurs through the eucharist is connected to the operation of the Holy Spirit (the archbishop here reads the references to ‘spirit’ in this verse to refer to the third person of the Trinity). To understand Christ’s reference to the Spirit in John 6.63, Cyril argues, it is necessary that the unity of the Son and the Spirit be kept in mind. For when Christ says that it is the Spirit that gives life, he is essentially saying that it is he himself who gives life. He is able to refer to himself as Spirit, Cyril suggests, because he is not, even in his incarnate state, other than the Spirit. He thus “calls himself Spirit from his own Spirit.”²⁷

Cyril’s point seems to be that the Son works in complete unity with the Holy Spirit, and

²⁴ *In Jo.* 6.56 (Pusey, i. 536¹⁰⁻¹¹).

²⁵ *In Jo.* 6.53 (Pusey, i. 529²²⁻²⁴).

²⁶ *In Matt.* 26.26-28 (Reuss, 255).

²⁷ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 552²⁰⁻²¹).

in the case of the bread and wine of the eucharist, it is the Son who works with the Spirit to make that flesh life-giving. The archbishop thus writes that “he [i.e., the Son] completely fills his own body with the life-giving energy of the Spirit”²⁸ and submits that it is “the power of the Spirit [that] makes the body life-giving.”²⁹

Cyril’s thought is not completely clear in this passage, but it appears that he envisions the Spirit to play some role in the saving transformation that occurs through the eucharist. It is the Spirit, alongside the Son with whom he is united, that gives life in and through the eucharistic elements. And while Cyril does not elaborate in his exegesis of John 6.63 on what characterizes this life, it would be consistent with his thought as expressed throughout his works, including in his exegesis of the rest of John 6, that this life is inextricable from holiness. It could be, therefore, that Cyril conceives the Spirit to transform believers who partake of the eucharistic meal, and that he does so by working in concert with the Son to make the flesh of the incarnate Son life-giving.³⁰

Moreover, there is one text, found in the archbishop’s exegesis of Matthew 26.26-28, in which Cyril appears to suggest that the Spirit is bestowed through the eucharist. Christ “gave us, therefore, his own body and blood,” Cyril writes, “so that through them also the power of corruption might be destroyed, and that he might dwell in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, and that we might become partakers (μετόχους) of sanctification

²⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 552²³⁻²⁴).

²⁹ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 553¹¹⁻¹²).

³⁰ If this does faithfully represent Cyril’s thought regarding the Spirit’s eucharistic activity, one wonders what the archbishop might have gained had he developed this idea in conjunction with his interpretation of the miraculous conception.

and might be called both heavenly and spiritual (πνευματικοί).³¹ As Keating points out, this is one of the few texts in Cyril's corpus in which the suggestion is made that the Spirit is given through the body and blood of Christ.³² The fact that similar sentiments in other Cyrillian works are wanting means, however, that caution should be exercised in placing too much weight on this passage. Furthermore, Cyril does not develop his perception of the Spirit's operation in the eucharist in his exegesis of Matthew 26.26-28.³³ Precisely what the archbishop intends by the statement above is ambiguous, and we cannot draw any major conclusions from it.

Cyril's perception of the Spirit's role in and through the eucharist, as can be seen, is neither straightforward nor clear. He appears to understand the Spirit to play a role, but the parameters of this role are not clearly worked out. Cyril is, however, much more effusive about the gift of the Spirit through baptism, and this fact indicates that we are to understand the archbishop's comments regarding the transformative work of the Spirit as having reference largely to a baptismal context. It is this transformative work, particularly the Spirit's central role in our adoption as children of God, that will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

³¹ *In Matt.* 26.26-28 (Reuss, 256). ET: Keating (2004), 83-84.

³² Keating (2004), 84.

³³ Cyril does make the following comment in his exposition of Matthew 26.26-28 that appears to be related to the quotation provided above: "For it was necessary that he [Christ], through the Holy Spirit, be in us, mixed (συνανακίρνασθαι) with our bodies in a manner suitable to God by his holy flesh and his precious blood." Cf. *In Matt.* 26.26-28 (Reuss, 256). It has been suggested that this text indicates a direct reference by Cyril to the epiclesis in the Alexandrian liturgy – see Meunier (1997), 167 – and it is certainly possible to see in this sentence a perception of the Spirit as very much active in and through the eucharist. However, the integrity of this particular sentence has recently been persuasively called into question by Keating, who has demonstrated that the likelihood that this particular text is corrupt is high. See Keating (2004), 82-4.

Divine Filiation and Deification

I have focused my examination thus far on the actual bestowal of the Holy Spirit, with only cursory references to the various soteriological activities that Cyril associates with the third person of the Trinity. It was seen in the previous chapter that Cyril argues that a central soteriological objective of the Incarnation was the restoration of pneumatological intimacy with humanity; Christ's reception of the Spirit at his baptism opened the door to our reception of the Spirit, and so to the restoration of humanity to its original condition. But Cyril is not content to limit the soteriological ramifications of the Spirit's reintroduction to humanity merely to the renewal of humankind to its original state. For the archbishop posits that human reception of the Spirit after the resurrection actually culminates in the attainment of that which was not hitherto possible, even for Adam. Namely, in the words of John 1.12, Christ "gave power to become children of God," a status Adam never achieved.

According to Cyril, our adoption as children of God was a central motive behind the incarnation. Christ was thus born of the Spirit precisely that we might, in receiving the Spirit, ourselves be reborn as children of God, Christ being the firstfruits of divine sonship. The Word became flesh, Cyril writes elsewhere, in order "that he might condemn sin in the flesh, that he might destroy death by his own death, and that *he might make us sons of God*, regenerating those on the earth to supernatural glory in the Spirit."³⁴ In addition to positioning divine filiation as central to the incarnate Word's

³⁴ *In Jo.* 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 482¹⁰⁻¹³). Emphasis mine.

mission, Cyril associates our adoption as children of God with the activity of the Holy Spirit.

This emphasis on the Spirit as the means by which we are adopted as children of God is articulated repeatedly by Cyril when describing the soteriological efficacy of receiving the Spirit. Indeed, we find the archbishop emphasizing our relationship to God as his children even in texts in which he refers to our deification through the Spirit. Cyril has been characterized by scholars as being primarily concerned with human deification through the incarnate Word, as being one who “represents the pinnacle in the development of teaching on *theosis*.”³⁵ In a recent study on the doctrine of deification in the Greek patristic period, Norman Russell writes: “Cyril took over Athanasius’ scheme of salvation, the descending and ascending movement between the poles of human createdness and divine uncreatedness that Athanasius had derived from Irenaeus. The Word became human that humanity might become divine.”³⁶ However, as Keating points out, Cyril very rarely uses the technical vocabulary of deification (θεοποιέω/θεοποίησις) to describe human salvation; such terminology is restricted in large part to early works such as the *Thesaurus* and *De Trinitate Dialogi*, and even in these texts Cyril uses these terms in a measured manner.³⁷ There are, by my count, five texts in which Cyril uses the

³⁵ P.B.T. Bilaniuk as quoted by Keating (2004), 11.

³⁶ *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004), 191.

³⁷ Cf. Keating (2004), notes 23-29, pp. 10-11. In his essay, “Divinization in Cyril: The Appropriation of Divine Life,” in Daniel A. Keating and Thomas G. Weinandy (eds), *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 176-8 Keating convincingly argues that Cyril ceased using the technical vocabulary for deification after the outbreak of the Nestorian crisis. He writes: “In the face of Nestorius’ charge that he (Cyril) was teaching an ‘apotheosis’ (ἀποθέωσις) of

technical language of deification with reference to the Spirit's soteriological activity,³⁸ but significantly, in the majority of these texts the emphasis is on divine filiation, not on deification.³⁹ For example, Cyril uses the characteristic vocabulary of deification in a passage from the *Thesaurus* in which he discusses the Spirit's soteriological operation. Although reference is made to deification, the emphasis is placed on our adoption as children of God:

For we have been adopted (υιοποιηθέντες) through entering into a relationship (σχέσει⁴⁰) with God and have been deified (θεοποιούμεθα) by him. For if we are called sons of God through having participated (μετασχόντες) in God by grace, what kind of participation (μετέχειν) do we attribute to the Word, that he should become Son and God? We are [these things] through the Holy Spirit; to think this of the Son would be absurd.⁴¹

Cyril's primary purpose in the passage cited above is to defend the divinity of the Son as well as his eternal Sonship. This defence revolves around the difference between our identity as gods and sons of God and the Son's identity as God and as the Son of God, both of which he is by nature. Of significance for our purposes is that, although he refers

Christ's flesh (i.e., that Christ's flesh became divinity), Cyril defended a proper understanding of the Word's divinization (θεοποίησις) of his own flesh on the one hand, and on the other counter-charged Nestorius with teaching that the Incarnation was the divinizing of a mere man. But given the entanglement of this terminology in the debate with Nestorius over the Incarnation, Cyril evidently refrained from this point onwards to employ the vocabulary of divinization to describe our share in the divine life" (177). However, as Keating admits, this does not explain Cyril's guarded usage of the technical vocabulary of deification in his early works. Russell (2004), 192-3 suggests that this restricted usage may be due to hostility to Apollinarianism as well as sensitivity to Christians not of the Alexandrian tradition.

³⁸ *Thes.* 25 (PG 75, 45A); *Thes.* 335 (PG 75, 569C); *Thes.* 349 (PG 75, 592D); *DT* VII.640A (SC 246, 166); *DT* VII.644CD (SC 246, 180). In addition to these texts, Cyril uses θεοποιέω/θεοποίησις language to denote human salvation in approximately five other texts. Cf. Keating (2004), notes 24-25, p. 10.

³⁹ *Thes.* 25 (PG 75, 45A); *Thes.* 335 (PG 75, 569C); *DT* VII.644CD (SC 246, 180).

⁴⁰ Cf. Lampe, 1358.

⁴¹ *Thes.* 25 (PG 75.45A). ET: Russell (2004), 194 (slightly modified).

to our deification through the Spirit, the accent is placed, not on attaining the status of gods, but on the filial relationship we now have with God through the Holy Spirit.

Such is also the case in a passage from *De Trinitate Dialogi* VII in which Cyril defends the Spirit's divinity on the basis of his role in our deification:

But it is inconceivable that a created being should have the power to deify (θεοποιός). This is something that can be attributed only to God, who through the Spirit infuses (ἐνιέντι) into the souls of the saints a participation (μέθεξιν) in his own specific character (τῆς ἰδίας ιδιότητος). When we have been conformed (σύμμορφοι γεγονότες) by the Spirit to him who is the Son by nature (κατὰ φύσιν), we are called gods and sons on account of him. And because we are sons, as scripture says, "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying 'Abba! Father!'" [Gal 4.6].⁴²

Cyril posits here that believers partake of the Spirit's "own specific character," and that this translates into the transformation of the believer so that they bear likeness to the Son. The implication is that the specific character of the Holy Spirit is bound up with the Son; this is an idea I will explore in great detail below. More significantly for our immediate purposes, while Cyril refers in the text above to being called gods through this process of transformation, this point does not receive attention. Rather, the accent is placed on divine filiation, as evidenced by the citation of Galatians 4.6.

In neither of these passages does Cyril spell out the relationship between deification and our adoption as children of God. It may be that Cyril understands our adoption as children of God to be the culmination of our deification, but this is not clear from the passage quoted above. Whatever the case may be, it is telling that Cyril explicates the Spirit's role in human deification with particular focus on the adoption of

⁴² *DT* VII.644CD (SC 246, 180). ET: Russell (2004), 195 (slightly modified).

humanity as children of God, an adoption made possible through participation in the Spirit.

These texts are typical examples of the emphasis Cyril consistently places on divine filiation as central to human participation in the Holy Spirit. The archbishop never denies that we are made gods by the Spirit, even when he ceases to use the characteristic vocabulary of deification.⁴³ But his focus throughout his writings is continually on the latter part of this soteriological equation when discussing the Spirit's role in human salvation. For Cyril, divine filiation appears to encompass, and be the culmination of, other salvific operations he attributes to the Spirit. Our participation in the divine nature through the Spirit thus seems to be directed primarily, not towards our divinization, but towards our adoption as children of God. And it is in the process of becoming children of God that we are made holy by the Holy Spirit.

The Bestowal of the Spirit to Adam and the Bestowal of the Spirit in the Christian Economy

I shall in the remainder of this chapter analyse Cyril's understanding of divine filiation through the Holy Spirit. In this section I shall set the stage for understanding the significance of divine filiation in Cyril's thought through a comparison of his interpretations of Christ's bestowal of the Spirit in John 20.22 and the bestowal of the Spirit to Adam. It will be seen that Cyril understands Christ's breathing of the Spirit on his disciples to inaugurate the re-creation of humankind. It was at this moment, according to the archbishop, that humanity returned to its original created state of

⁴³ Cf. *In Jo.* 1.9 (Pusey, i. 103⁶⁻¹⁸) where Cyril writes that we are, through the Spirit, called both gods and sons of God.

intimacy with the Holy Spirit, a state Adam enjoyed when God breathed the Spirit upon him (Genesis 2.7). I shall demonstrate Cyril's conviction that John 20.22 marks the recapitulation of Genesis 2.7, and I shall do so by describing the points of affinity which the archbishop notes between the two pneumatic bestowals. Such a demonstration will underline the significance of divine filiation in Cyril's thought, for while he notes the broad affinities between Genesis 2.7 and John 20.22, emphasizing that recipients of the Spirit after Christ benefit from the indwelling Spirit in the same manner as Adam did at creation, he argues as well that one thing separates our experience of the Spirit from Adam's: our adoption as children of God. Thus, after examining the affinities Cyril posits between Genesis 2.7 and John 20.22, I shall analyze why the archbishop understands divine filiation to be a prerogative exclusive to the Christian dispensation of the Spirit and how it is that the Spirit accomplishes this operation. In the course of this examination, the centrality of divine filiation both for Cyril's pneumatology and soteriology will become evident.

As seen in the previous chapter, the restoration of the Spirit to humanity was made possible in the waters of the Jordan when Jesus was baptized and received the Spirit himself as the second Adam. According to Cyril, potentiality attained actuality with the divine bestowal of the Spirit upon Christ's followers, which the archbishop locates in the events recounted in John 20. For him, this incident of bestowal is the primary incident; it was here, when Jesus breathed the Spirit upon his disciples, that the Holy Spirit was reintroduced to humanity, and the disciples thus became the firstfruits of

recreated humanity.⁴⁴ But if the Spirit was primarily bestowed with this incident, what then occurred at Pentecost? Cyril proposes that Pentecost was the occasion when the pneumatic grace, already given to the disciples, was made manifest to all in order that everyone might understand that the Spirit had once again been given to humanity.⁴⁵ It was the gift of tongues, not the gift of the Spirit, that the disciples received in the upper room, and this gift was intended to demonstrate to others that the Spirit truly dwelt in the disciples.⁴⁶

Why Cyril elevated John 20 over Acts 2 and how this relates to the relationship of the Spirit to divine filiation becomes more clear once we take cognizance of his pneumatological reading of Genesis 2.7, recounted in the previous chapter. Cyril consistently proposes that Jesus' breathing of the Spirit on the disciples was an intentional recapitulation of Adam's reception of the Spirit, when the Spirit was breathed upon him. There are, Cyril argues, a number of affinities between John 20.22 and Genesis 2.7 that indicate that the two are to be read together.⁴⁷

There is, for example, a physical affinity, so to speak, between the two bestowals of the Spirit, in that both involved the outward breathing of the Spirit. In *De Trinitate Dialogi VII*, after discussing Adam's reception of the Spirit as described in Genesis 2.7,

⁴⁴ In *Jo.* 20.22 (Pusey, iii. 135¹³).

⁴⁵ For an account of how various thinkers during the patristic period interpreted the relationship between John 20 and Acts 2, see M.-G de Durand, "Pentecôte johannique et pentecôte lucanienne chez certains Pères," *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 79 (1978), 97-126. He includes a brief examination of Cyril on pp. 116-18.

⁴⁶ See *In Jo.* 20.22 (Pusey, iii. 137¹⁴-138¹²) for Cyril's full argument regarding the relationship between John 20 and Acts. 2.

⁴⁷ See Boulnois (1989), 30. She writes that of the seventeen texts she has located in which Cyril exegetes Genesis 2.7, the archbishop explicitly links John 20.22 to Genesis 2.7 nine times.

Cyril argues that Christ's bestowal of the Spirit on his disciples was linked to the original bestowal at creation. Desiring to bring humanity to its original beauty, Christ thus gave the Spirit "in a manner no different from that which occurred at the beginning. For he breathed upon the holy apostles saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"⁴⁸

Cyril highlights a further point of affinity when he notes that the Word acted as the mediator of the Spirit in both dispensations. In his exposition of John 20.22, as a means of demonstrating the similitude between this verse and Genesis 2.7, Cyril argues that it was in fact the divine Word who created Adam, gave him a soul, and breathed his own Spirit into the first man.⁴⁹ The Father was not, of course, absent from this process; all divine activity, as Cyril frequently writes, occurs by the Father through the Son.⁵⁰ But it was the Word, "the power of the Father,"⁵¹ who created the world and humankind, and who gave his own Spirit to Adam.⁵² When Christ breathed the Spirit on his disciples he was intentionally re-enacting what he had already done at humanity's creation in order that we might understand that, in the same way as humanity "was formed and came into being, so likewise is it renewed."⁵³ The divine Word breathed the Spirit on Adam at

⁴⁸ *DT VII.638C-D* (SC 246, 162). See also *DT IV.532C-533a* (SC 237, 222-224); *In Jo. 7.39* (Pusey, i. 695¹²⁻²¹).

⁴⁹ *In Jo. 20.22* (Pusey, iii. 134²⁸-135³).

⁵⁰ For an example of Cyril's perception of the trinitarian movement of the Spirit see *In Jo. 1.1* (Pusey, i. 35⁵⁻⁶): "For the Holy Spirit is one, and the sanctification is one and perfect, [which is] freely given by (παρά) the Father through the Son (δι' Υιοῦ)."

⁵¹ *In Jo. 20.22* (Pusey, iii. 134²⁶).

⁵² Cf. *De Dogm. 2* (Wickham (1983), 188-90) where Cyril writes that the breath of life bestowed on Adam was "the Spirit furnished through the Son to rational creation and shaping it into the sublimist, that is the divine, form." ET: Wilken (1983), 191.

⁵³ *In Jo. 20.22* (Pusey, iii. 135¹⁷⁻¹⁸). Cf. *De Dogm. 2* (Wickham (1983), 190-2): "But seeing that God the Father was pleased 'to sum up all things in Christ' [Eph 1.10] (meaning bring them back to the primal state (τὸ ἀρχαῖον) by re-establishing in us the

creation, and the divine Word made flesh breathed the Spirit on his disciples after his resurrection.

This point is significant for understanding the soteriological efficacy of each bestowal of the Spirit. Cyril posits that the Word's role as mediator has implications for understanding the shape of the Spirit's transforming operation in Adam and in those recipients of the Spirit under the Christian dispensation. Specifically, all who receive the Spirit from the Son are transformed so as to attain likeness with the Son. According to Cyril, Adam himself attained likeness with the Son when the Spirit was bestowed upon him. This point is indicated in the archbishop's exegesis of John 14.20 and more explicitly articulated in his exposition of John 17.18-19. In the former,⁵⁴ Cyril discusses what it meant for Adam to have been created in the image of God, and posits that we are to understand that he had a similitude (ἐμφερείας) to God, particularly in terms of divine incorruptibility.⁵⁵ Describing Adam's creation with words familiar to us from the previous chapter, Cyril writes that it was not possible for humanity to preserve this similitude on its own – incorruptibility being proper to God alone – and that it was thus necessary for Adam to be divinely preserved in this state. It was for this reason that, after creating humanity in his own image, God breathed the "breath of life" into Adam's face

Holy Spirit who had taken flight and quitted us) he breathed it into the holy apostles with the words 'Receive the Holy Spirit' [Jn 20.22]. Christ's act was a renewal of that primal gift (τῆς ἀρχαίας δωρεᾶς) and of the in-breathing bestowed on us, bringing us back to the form of initial hallowing and carrying man's nature up, as a kind of first-fruits amongst the holy apostles, into the hallowing bestowed on us initially at the first creation." ET: Wickham (1983), 191-3.

⁵⁴ *In Jo.* 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 483³¹-486⁴).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 484⁸⁻¹⁰).

(Gen 2.7) and so made him a “partaker (μέτοχον) of his own nature.”⁵⁶ I will address such references to partaking in the divine nature in more detail below. More significant for the moment is Cyril’s explanation that Adam’s attainment of incorruptibility was due to the fact that he received the Spirit of the Son, a point the archbishop makes when he argues that Genesis 2.7’s reference to the “breath of life” is to be interpreted as “Spirit of the Son” since the Son is life (ἡ ζωή) by nature.⁵⁷ Adam’s participation in the divine nature through the Holy Spirit thus resulted in his attainment of that which the Son is essentially.

Moreover, Cyril argues that Adam did not only receive life through the Spirit of the Son, nor was incorruptibility the only trait typifying humanity’s similitude with God. For when the Holy Spirit was bestowed on humankind like a seal (σφραγῖδα) of God’s own nature, humanity was “shaped into the archetypal beauty (πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον διεπλάττετο κάλλος)” and so empowered to attain every form of excellence.⁵⁸ The divine life imparted to Adam through the Spirit was thus commensurate with an ontological and moral transformation in that the indwelling Spirit, whom Cyril had earlier identified as the Spirit of the Son, brought Adam to likeness to God, a likeness that manifested itself, or was intended to manifest itself, in holiness.

I would suggest that one should read this reference to being “shaped into the archetypal beauty” in the light of his earlier emphasis in the passage on the Spirit being the Spirit of the Son. To be “shaped into the archetypal beauty” would therefore be a

⁵⁶ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 484²¹⁻²²).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 485¹⁷⁻²²).

veiled reference to the Son, whose Spirit Adam received. The fact that Cyril connects this transformation to Adam's reception of the "breath of life" suggests that the archbishop understood this transformation to be related to the Spirit's identity as the Son's own, as was the case with Adam's attainment of life. And if this is the case, then Cyril here posits that the pneumatic transformation experienced by Adam was one intended to bring him to likeness with the Son, not merely in terms of incorruptibility, but in terms of holiness.

That this is more than mere conjecture is indicated by Cyril's exposition of John 17.18-19. In this passage of exegesis, which was briefly examined in the first chapter, Cyril provides an account of Adam's creation that includes a brief discussion of the Spirit's relationship to the Father and particularly to the Son as a means of illuminating the significance of Adam's reception of the Spirit.⁵⁹ The Spirit is the Father's own, Cyril argues, but he is no less the Spirit of the Son, as demonstrated by John 14.16 and 16.12-13. He does not rigorously argue this point, but is content simply to cite these two passages and to write that the Son's identity in substance with the Father can mean only that the Spirit is the Son's. The clear point Cyril wants to make in this discussion is that humanity's reception of the Holy Spirit is tied to the Spirit's identity as the Son's own. He thus posits that it is through the Son that the Father bestows the Spirit upon humanity, and he points once again to John 14.16, as well as to John 16.7 as proof texts.

Cyril brings his portrayal of the intertrinitarian relationships, as well as his conception of the trinitarian framework of the Spirit's bestowal, to bear on his account of

⁵⁹ *In Jo.* 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 718¹²-719¹⁴).

humanity's creation, an account structured around a pneumatological reading of Genesis 2.7.⁶⁰ He writes that the bestowal of the Holy Spirit to Adam when God breathed upon him demonstrates that the life given to Adam was interwoven with sanctification and with Adam's experience of the divine nature. The Spirit was given to Adam at creation, Cyril continues, because it was only through the Spirit shaping (μόρφωσιν) him that Adam could become beautiful (περικαλλές), and it is at this point that the archbishop directly ties the transforming work of the Spirit in Adam to his identity vis-à-vis the Son. He writes, with reference both to Adam's reception of the Spirit and to the soteriological importance of humanity being renewed through reacquisition of the indwelling Spirit:

For since his Spirit is the perfect image (εἰκὼν) of the only-begotten's essence – according to Paul's saying, 'For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son' [Rom 8.29] – so he makes those in whom he indwells to be conformed (συνμόρφους) to the image of the Father, that is, the Son.⁶¹

Cyril here equates the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, who images the Son, with bringing Adam to likeness⁶² with the Son, who images the Father. The Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son (and so the perfect image of the Son) is therefore, for Cyril, of great consequence for the Spirit's operation in Adam. It structured the Spirit's activity, for as the Son's Spirit he moulded Adam after the Son, a moulding that manifested itself in holiness. As Cyril writes following the above quotation, to be conformed to the image

⁶⁰ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 719³⁰-720⁷).

⁶¹ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 720⁸⁻¹²).

⁶² The term σύμμορφος denotes the state of being similar in form or shape to something, and so to be like something. See Lampe, 1284.

of the Son is to be capable of overcoming sin and of lifting the mind above all fleshly lusts.⁶³

Central to the Spirit's transforming operation in the first human, therefore, was the transformation of Adam into likeness with the Son. Turning our attention now to Cyril's portrayal of human reception of the Spirit in the Christian economy, we find that the archbishop frequently characterizes the Spirit's transforming work in similar terms to those he uses when describing the Spirit's work in Adam. That is, just as Adam's reception of the Holy Spirit from the Son was to result in his being conformed to the Son's likeness, so humanity's reception of the Spirit from Jesus Christ is to culminate in transformation into Christ's likeness. And because Christ is the Son incarnate, Cyril posits that this transformation into Christ's likeness is essentially a return to humanity's original state. Referring to John 20.22, Cyril writes the following in *De Trinitate Dialogi* VII regarding the bestowal of the Spirit to the disciples and to all Christians:

By this Spirit and in himself, [Christ] transforms them to their original condition (εἰς εἶδος τὸ ἐν ἀρχαῖς) – that is to say, after himself – and therefore [transforms them] to likeness with himself by sanctification. He thus carries us back to the original image (εἰκόνας), the imprint (χαρακτῆρα) of the Father. For the Son is truly and to a great exactitude of similarity, the imprint.⁶⁴

While this last sentence reads somewhat awkwardly in translation, the point Cyril is trying to underline is that humanity was originally created to bear the likeness of the Son, who himself fully images the Father. Christ's gift of the Holy Spirit was intended to return humanity to this "original condition." Similarly, in his exegesis of John 20.22,

⁶³ *In Jo.* 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 720¹⁴⁻²⁴).

⁶⁴ *DT* VII.639B (SC 246, 164¹⁰⁻¹⁶). The last sentence reads as follows: Χαρακτῆρ μὲν γὰρ ὁ ἀληθινὸς καὶ εἰς λῆξιν ἀκριβείας τῆς κατ' ἐμφέρειαν νοουμένης αὐτός ὁ Υἱός.

after explicitly referring to the Son as the creator of humanity, Cyril writes: “As [humanity] was formed according to the image of the creator, so also now it is transformed (μεταπλάττεται) to likeness (ἐμφέρειαν) with the maker by participation (μετουσίᾳ) in the Spirit.”⁶⁵ Cyril makes here a direct association between Adam’s formation and humanity’s re-formation through the Spirit, whose transforming activity is interwoven with his relationship to the Son who bestowed him first at creation and again in a locked room in Jerusalem.

Both bestowals of the Spirit, Cyril emphasizes, were thus directed towards conforming humanity to the Son. In the case of Adam, as already seen, Cyril perceives such conforming to be manifest in incorruptibility, holiness, and knowledge. In terms of the new dispensation of the Spirit, a similar portrayal of what it means to be transformed into the likeness of Christ is put forward. Cyril writes with reference to John 20.22 that the disciples were regenerated “into incorruption and glory” when the Spirit was breathed upon them.⁶⁶ This regeneration is coupled, as seen in the above quotation from *De Trinitate Dialogi* VII, with sanctification and therefore with the re-attainment of the holiness lost when the Spirit departed from humanity.⁶⁷ In short, the same pneumatic benefits enjoyed by Adam were also enjoyed by the disciples who received the Spirit from the same source.

Such affinities posited by Cyril between Genesis 2.7 and John 20.22 indicate that he understands Christ’s gift of the Spirit to be a restoration of humanity to its pre-fall

⁶⁵ *In Jo.* 20.22 (Pusey, iii. 135¹⁸⁻²²).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* (Pusey, iii. 135²⁹).

⁶⁷ See also *In Jo.* 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 717¹⁵⁻¹⁸).

condition, and indeed, he often characterizes the pneumatic renewal of humankind in this manner. “The only-begotten became man,” Cyril writes, “and finding humankind deprived of its former and original good, he hastened to transform [humanity] again to that [good], and sent [to humanity] from the source of his own plenitude, saying: “Receive the Holy Spirit” [John 20.22].”⁶⁸ According to Cyril, therefore, when Christ gave the Spirit anew to the disciples they, and all recipients of the Spirit thereafter, were restored to the state in which humanity was created when the “breath of life” was breathed into Adam’s nostrils.

At the same time, however, and it is this point I particularly want to highlight, Cyril does not limit the soteriological ramifications of the incarnation and the gift of the Spirit solely to the restoration of humanity to its created state. When Adam received the Spirit at his creation he became a partaker of the divine nature and was sanctified through the third person of the Trinity, both of which are now also possible for humanity since Christ bestowed the Spirit anew. I have just outlined the strong affinities Cyril perceives to exist between Genesis 2.7 and John 20.22, and how these affinities demonstrate for him that Christ intended to restore humanity to its original state. Given this, and given Cyril’s emphasis that divine filiation occurs through the indwelling Spirit, it might be assumed that Adam himself experienced adoption as a child of God when the breath of life was breathed into him. It was, after all, the Spirit of the Son he received, and it was

⁶⁸ *DT* IV.532D (SC 237, 222³³-224³⁷). For other examples of similar language see *In Jo.* 1.14a (Pusey, i. 138-140); 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 182-185); 6.53 (Pusey, i. 530-532); 7.39 (Pusey, i. 691-697); *De Dogm.* 2 (Wickham (1983), 190-2). See also Wilken (1971), 115-116. Wilken points to *In Jo.* 1.34 (Pusey, i. 183); *In Is.* 45.9 (PG 70:961B); *Glaphyra in Gen.* I (PG 69:16).

toward likeness with the Son that the Spirit led him. It is thus perhaps reasonable to think that Cyril understands Adam's conformity to the Son to have included Adam becoming a son himself. However, nowhere does Cyril write that Adam was divinely adopted when he received the Spirit.

Unsurprisingly, the archbishop posits that neither did the Old Testament prophets attain to divine filiation even though they did experience the Holy Spirit. Although the indwelling Spirit departed from humanity after sin gained hegemony, the Spirit was not completely absent from human affairs, and indeed, Cyril posits that he came upon the Hebrew prophets and upon John the Baptist. But while it is true that the prophets and the Baptist received the Spirit, their experience of the third person differed, according to Cyril in his exposition of John 7.39,⁶⁹ drastically from that of the Christian. The prophets of old merely received from the Spirit a certain comprehension of future events and a knowledge of the divine, neither of which are insignificant, but neither of which approximates the ramifications of the gift of the Spirit in the Christian economy. For the Spirit now dwells within us (Cyril suggests that he did not in the Old Testament prophets), and in contrast with those born of women, the Christian "has been 'begotten (γεγέννηται) of God' [1 Jn 3.9], as it is written, and has become a 'partaker (κοινωνός) of the divine nature' [2 Pet 1.4]."⁷⁰ The profundity of the Christian reception of the Spirit in comparison to the experience of prophets is underlined in his exegesis of Luke 7.28. Cyril argues that Christ understands the least in the kingdom of heaven to be greater than John the Baptist and prophets before him because Christians have received the Spirit of

⁶⁹ *In Jo.* 7.39 (Pusey, i. 696⁴-697¹⁸).

⁷⁰ *In Jo.* 7.39 (Pusey, i. 697¹⁶⁻¹⁷).

the Son and been adopted as children of God through the Spirit by whom they partake of the divine nature. Divine filiation, Cyril insists, is a prerogative exclusive to Christians: “The blessed John and all those who came before him were born of women. But those who belong to the faith are no longer said to be born of women, but, as the wise evangelist says, are born of God [John 1.13].”⁷¹ The emphasis is placed on the Christian’s filial relationship with God as being a central component of Christ’s bestowal of the Spirit, a relationship not previously possible.

But if divine filiation is unique to Christian experience of the Spirit, what are we to make of Isaiah’s account of God begetting and raising children in reference to Israel (Is 1.2)? Does Isaiah refer here to divine filiation? Cyril addresses this verse and its relationship to divine filiation both in his commentary on Isaiah as well as in his exegesis of John 1.13. According to Cyril, Isaiah 1.2 should be interpreted to mean simply that “Israel was received by grace and made worthy to be treated as children begotten by God.” Israel did not truly become children of God, but were merely granted the grace to be treated as such. “Through faith in Christ, however,” he writes, “we have experienced the true spiritual rebirth, begotten by water and the Spirit.”⁷² Cyril suggests that Christian sonship is “true” sonship in comparison to the sonship experienced by Israel. That is, while Israel was graciously looked upon as children by God, Christians truly *are* children of God through the Spirit, a point to which I shall return shortly.

⁷¹ *In Luc.* 7.28 (Reuss, 76). See also *In Matt.* 11.11 (Reuss, 196).

⁷² *In Is.* 1.2 (PG 70.17C). ET: Robert Wilken (ed. and trans.), *Isaiah: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 19-20.

Cyril is insistent that divine filiation is unique to followers of Christ, at least in relation to the experience of the Spirit under the old covenant. But Adam's experience of the Spirit was much different from that of his descendents, as we have seen. Unlike the Old Testament prophets, Adam did have the indwelling Holy Spirit of the Son; his experience was not limited to the noetic realm, as Cyril suggests was the case for the prophets, but included sanctification and participation in the divine nature, both of which occur under the Christian dispensation of the Spirit. However, Cyril provides no indication that Adam experienced divine sonship when he received the Spirit at the beginning of time. The archbishop frequently provides narratives of humanity's creation, and in almost every case Cyril provides a pneumatological interpretation of Genesis 2.7. While he does not, to my knowledge, explicitly state that divine filiation was impossible for Adam, he never posits that Adam became a child of God through the Holy Spirit.⁷³ In *De Dogmatum Solutione* Cyril writes without explication that Adam was created in the Son's image (εἰκόνα τοῦ υἱοῦ) in order that "the mark of sonship (ὁ τῆς υἰότητος χαρακτήρ) should be evident in us."⁷⁴ The implication of this statement is that humanity was created with the capacity to become children of God, but that Adam did not

⁷³ Other Cyrillian accounts of Adam's creation and reception of the Holy Spirit (in addition to his comments on John 14.20 and 17.18-19) wherein no reference is made to Adam experiencing divine filiation through the Spirit, include: *In Jo.* 1.14 (Pusey, i. 138¹⁹-139¹³); 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 182²⁰-183¹²); 7.39 (Pusey, i. 691¹⁷⁻²⁰); 20.22 (Pusey, iii. 134²⁸-135³); *DT* IV.532C-533A (SC 237, 222²³-224⁵); VI.590E-591A (SC 246, 20³⁹-22⁵); VII.638C-D (SC 246, 162²⁷⁻⁴⁰). Cf. Aloysio M. Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit according to Saint Cyril of Alexandria* (Oña, Spain: Facultad de Teología, 1963), 14-16; L. Janssens, "Notre filiation divine d'après Cyrille d'Alexandrie," *Ephemerides theologiae Iovaniensis* 15 (1938), 255-59, 260-61; Wickham (1983), n. 12, pp. 198-9. All of these scholars highlight the notable absence of divine filiation with reference to Adam in Cyril's thought.

⁷⁴ *De Dogm.* 4 (Wickham (1983), 198). ET: Wickham (1983), 199.

experience this sonship himself.⁷⁵ Apart from this statement, Cyril is largely silent on the topic of divine filiation with reference to the first human. This silence, especially when read against his consistent association of our adoption as children of God through Christ's gift of the Spirit, strongly suggests that Cyril understands divine filiation to be a significant prerogative of the Christian economy not attained by the first human whose experience of the Spirit most closely approximates our own. Like Adam we are sanctified and transformed by the indwelling Holy Spirit, by whom we participate in the divine nature. And like Adam our sanctification, transformation, and participation is tied to the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son. A crucial distinction between the two dispensations exists, however. For while Adam was conformed to the Son through the Spirit, he never attained to divine sonship in the process.

We have seen that Cyril's soteriology is characterized by his penchant for portraying the salvific efficacy in terms of recapitulation.⁷⁶ The archbishop emphasizes in particular that humanity's recovery of the indwelling Holy Spirit was central to Christ's mission, and Cyril positions Christ's baptism and his breathing of the Spirit upon his disciples as the means by which humanity was able to return to its created state of intimacy with the Spirit. However, Cyril proposes that the consequences of Christ's bestowal of the Holy Spirit not only encompass, but also transcend those of the Son's original bestowal of the Spirit upon Adam. Christ did restore humanity to its original created state when he breathed the Spirit upon his disciples, thus making them the firstfruits of re-created humanity. But this pneumatic gift simultaneously made them, and

⁷⁵ Cf. Wickham (1983), n. 12, pp. 198-9.

⁷⁶ Cf. Wilken (1966), 142-143; Wilken (1971), 93-142; Burghardt (1957), 160-5.

makes all who receive the Spirit, children of God. The renewed gift of the Spirit inaugurated, therefore, the true re-creation of humankind, a re-creation to a hitherto unknown status of divine sonship.

I would argue that the emphasis Cyril consistently places on the soteriological necessity of humanity receiving the Spirit anew, coupled with his insistence that human reception of the Spirit under the Christian dispensation now results in divine sonship, indicates that the archbishop perceives divine filiation to be a primary soteriological concomitant of the Spirit's activity after Christ. Christ did not come simply to return us to Adam's state; he came to elevate us to an experience of God and a status that Adam did not have. As Cyril writes in his exegesis of John 13.36, Christ "consecrated a new way for us of which human nature knew nothing before,"⁷⁷ and this new way is bound up with the renewed presence of the indwelling Spirit,⁷⁸ received by Christ at his baptism as the second Adam and bestowed upon humanity by Christ, whose Spirit he is.

Divine Sonship through the Spirit of Christ

Having demonstrated that Cyril understands human adoption as children of God to be a central component of the Spirit's soteriological operation unique to the Christian dispensation, I turn at this point to look specifically at how the Spirit transforms human beings such that they become children of God through him, as well as at why divine filiation is possible now when it was not previously. My examination will begin with an analysis of Cyril's notion of participation, which, as we shall see, is tied to human adoption as children of God. I shall then proceed to discuss the process of divine filiation

⁷⁷ *In Jo.* 13.36 (Pusey, ii. 392¹⁶⁻¹⁷). See Wilken (1971), 116.

⁷⁸ *In Jo.* 13.36 (Pusey, ii. 392¹⁷-393¹⁴).

itself, analyzing both how the Spirit accomplishes this transformation and how, concretely, this transformation manifests itself. We shall see that divine filiation encompasses and is the culmination of human participation in the divine nature through the Holy Spirit, a participation that Adam likewise experienced. However, our participation in the divine nature differs from Adam's. The cause of this difference is the incarnation of the Word of God. For while all recipients of the Holy Spirit, including Adam, received and receive the Spirit of the Son, it is only those after Christ who receive the Spirit of the Son of God made man, and for Cyril this is a crucial point.

The Notion of Participation in Cyril's Thought

The idea of participation in Cyril's thought has been the subject of significant study in recent years, and much has been made of the prominence of this idea throughout the archbishop's corpus; my purpose is not to reproduce the insights of previous scholars who have provided extensive examinations of the notion of participation in Cyril's thought.⁷⁹ I am interested, rather, to demonstrate the relationship the archbishop establishes between participation in the Holy Spirit and divine filiation.

The prominence of the notion of participation in Cyril's thought is perhaps best demonstrated by his habitual citations of, and allusions to, 2 Peter 1.4, with its reference to becoming "partakers (κοινωνοί) of the divine nature." In a recent study, Norman

⁷⁹ For a careful and in depth examination of the notion of participation in Cyril's thought, see Daniel Keating, *The Appropriation of the Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*, particularly 144-190. See also Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004), 191-204 and "Partakers of the Divine Nature (2 Peter 1.4) in the Byzantine Tradition," in J. Chrysostomides (ed), *Kathegetria: Essays Presented to Joan Hussey* (Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1988), 51-67.

Russell writes that Cyril cites or alludes to 2 Peter 1.4 more frequently than any patristic writer before him, or any Greek writer after him until the fourteenth century.⁸⁰ Cyril does not, however, restrict himself to the terminology of 2 Peter 1.4 when discussing our participation in God. The New Testament uses terms from two primary word groups – μετέχειν and κοινωνεῖν – to denote the partaking of, or participating in, something.⁸¹ Cyril freely appropriates this terminology⁸² to express his own conception of participation, using terms from both word groups synonymously.⁸³

⁸⁰ Russell (2004), 192. See also Russell (1988), 52. Texts in which Cyril cites 2 Peter 1.4 include *DT* IV.529D-E (SC 237, 214); IV.530B-E (SC 237, 216-218); VI.589B-590A (SC 246, 16-18); VI.598C-E (SC 246, 44-46); VII.637B-C (SC 246, 158); *In Matt.* 11.28 (Reuss, 201); 20.1-16 (Reuss, 230); *In Luc.* 2.25-35 (Smith, 61); 3.16 (Reuss, 61); 3.21-22 (Reuss, 63); 4.1-2 (Reuss, 64); 4.18 (Reuss, 236); 5.24 (Reuss, 248); 7.24-28 (Reuss, 76-77); 22.7-16 (Reuss, 207); *In Jo.* 1.13 (Pusey, i. 136); 3.5 (Pusey, i. 219); 6.35 (Pusey, i. 476); 6.37 (Pusey, i. 479); 7.24 (Pusey, i. 639); 10.14-15 (Pusey, ii. 232); 14.4 (Pusey, ii. 406); 14.16-17 (Pusey, ii. 469); 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 484, 486, 487, 488); 15.1 (Pusey, ii. 534); 16.12-13 (Pusey, ii. 626); 16.15 (Pusey, ii. 639); 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 720, 722); 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 734, 737); 17.22-23 (Pusey, iii. 2, 3); 20.22-23 (Pusey, iii. 133); *In Rom.* 8.8-9 (Pusey, iii. 214); *In Cor.* 6.15 (Pusey, iii. 264); 7.21 (Pusey, iii. 273); 15.20 (Pusey, iii. 304); *In Heb.* 10.29 (Pusey, iii. 410); *HP* X.1.620D-621B (SC 392, 214-216); *Adv. Nest.* II.13 (ACO I.1.6, 52); II.14 (ACO I.1.6, 53); III.2 (ACO I.1.6, 60); III.3 (ACO I.1.6, 63); V.1 (ACO I.1.6, 93); V.7 (ACO I.1.6, 106). Bernard Meunier lists also *Glaph Gen* I (PG 69.29B-C); *Glaph Ex* III (PG 69.497C, 517B); *In Is.* 8.14 (PG 70.233B); 61.1-3 (PG 70.1353A-B); *Thes* 13.225C, 228B; 34.597C, 604D (PG 74). I am indebted to both Meunier and Daniel Keating for most of the texts listed above. See Meunier (1997), note 1, pp. 163-4; Keating (2004), note 1, p. 144. I have, however, included a number of texts that neither scholar mentions. Although comprehensive, this list is not exhaustive.

⁸¹ Keating (2004), 148-150. Keating points specifically to 1 Corinthians 10.14-22; 2 Corinthians 13.13; Philippians 2.1; Hebrews 2.4, 6.4; and, of course, 2 Peter 1.4. See also William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 438-9 and 514 to see the New Testament usages of terms connected with the word groups listed above. For the patristic usage of these terms, see Lampe, 762 and 864.

⁸² I will denote the term used by Cyril when reference is made to specific texts.

⁸³ Space does not allow for an in depth comparison between New Testament notions of participation and that promulgated by Cyril.

Most interesting for our purposes is that Cyril largely develops his idea of participation pneumatologically. A substantial proportion of Cyril's references to participation occur in relation to the Holy Spirit, and the centrality of the Spirit in the archbishop's conception of participation comes through clearly in his usage of 2 Peter 1.4. Almost every time Cyril cites or alludes to 2 Peter 1.4 he does so with reference to the soteriological activity of the Spirit,⁸⁴ this despite the fact that the Spirit is mentioned neither in this verse, nor in the surrounding context. Nowhere to my knowledge, however, does Cyril furnish a sustained argument that speaks to his pneumatological reading of 2 Peter 1.4, yet he is emphatic that the "partaking of the divine nature" to which this verse refers must be understood with reference to the Holy Spirit.

Daniel Keating succinctly outlines a number of central features in Cyril's understanding of participation that are helpful for our purposes. He posits that there are in Cyril's thought two levels of participation: a foundational level and a dynamic level. The former refers to the participation that all things have in the Son who is life;⁸⁵ the latter is a participation that is, according to the archbishop, through the Spirit. Keating suggests that the foundational level of participation is based on the archbishop's understanding that the Word not only created all things, but also sustains them. Cyril describes this work in terms of the Word "mingling" (ἐγκαταμινύς) himself with created things that do not have life in themselves in order that they might have life.⁸⁶ In humanity's case, there is a participation in the Word that is greater than that of other

⁸⁴ See Meunier (1997), 163-164.

⁸⁵ Keating (2004), 156. He points in this section to Cyril's exegesis of John 1.3-10 (Pusey, i. 74-130).

⁸⁶ Keating (2004), 156, pointing to Pusey, i. 74.

created things. Humanity, “according to a certain ineffable mode of participation” (κατὰ τινὰ μετουσίᾳς ἄρρητον τρόπον), receives both life and light, the latter referring to rationality, through the Word.⁸⁷

Certain facets of this foundational level are worth noting before we move on to Cyril’s portrayal of dynamic participation. First, Cyril understands that humans have a share of the Word; the life and light that each of us has is a direct result of our reception of the Word who is Life and Light. Participation, therefore, is understood by the archbishop to be an actual partaking of that which is divine. Second, Keating highlights Cyril’s emphasis that to participate in something is necessarily to be distinct from that in which one participates.⁸⁸ This emphasis comes across especially in the archbishop’s defence of the Word’s divinity in *In Joannem* 1.4 (i.e., the Word gives life to those who participate in him, and this can only be accomplished by one who is divine⁸⁹), but it serves to underline a central principle for Cyril. While participation in the divine truly involves sharing in the divine, it does not entail the confusion of ontological properties such that the one who participates becomes in essence what the participated is by nature. The participator and the participated remain necessarily distinct, even though the

⁸⁷ Keating (2004), 158, pointing to Pusey, i. 87-88.

⁸⁸ Keating, 157, pointing to Pusey, i. 78.

⁸⁹ Cyril writes: “For if the Word was in things that are made, as Life by nature (ζωὴ κατὰ φύσιν), mixing (ἀναμιγνύς) himself with things that are by participation (διὰ μετοχῆς), then he is different from those in whom he is believed to be... Therefore, if the Word who gives life to them, is in things originate by participation (μεθεκτός), he himself will not also be among those who participate (ἐν τοῖς μετέχουσιν), but evidently different from these. But if this is so, then he is not originate (γενητός), but is in them as life by nature.” ET: Keating (2004), 156-7. The quotation is from *In Jo.* 1.4 (Pusey, i. 76^{3-6, 14-18}).

participator appropriates life and light by partaking of the one who is Life and Light essentially.

Participation and the Holy Spirit

While Cyril asserts that there is universal participation in the divine Word that sustains all people and allows people to reason, he suggests that there is another level of participation in the Word that transcends the foundational. Whereas the foundational level of participation can be described as a static participation in the Word, Cyril posits that there is a dynamic participation in the Word that is transforming and saving, and that occurs through the Holy Spirit. That is, the foundational level of participation is directed toward our existence and rationality, the dynamic level of participation is soteriological. In his exegesis of John 10.10, Cyril writes that Christ distinguished between the life that all people have in the Word and the “abundant” (περιττόν) life that signifies attaining the soteriological fullness of that which Christ gained for us.⁹⁰ Christ used the adjective “abundant” in John 10.10, according to Cyril, to denote a kind of life that is characterized by the eternal reception of all good things, and involves transformation (ἀλλαγῆσονται) to the glory that comes from God.⁹¹ And it is the Holy Spirit who makes all the difference when it comes to attaining this abundant life promised by Jesus. For it is only by “the most perfect *participation* (μέθεξις) in the Spirit” that humanity can attain to the fullness of that which Christ gained for us.⁹²

⁹⁰ *In Jo.* 10.10 (Pusey, ii. 220¹⁰⁻¹¹).

⁹¹ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 220²⁶-221²).

⁹² Emphasis mine. Cyril refers to “participation in the Spirit” twice in this passage of exegesis, underlining the centrality of this notion in his soteriology. See *ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 220³⁻⁴; 220⁹⁻¹⁰).

Cyril emphasizes the centrality of the Spirit in our dynamic participation in the divine elsewhere in his writings. Indeed, as I noted in the first chapter, Cyril continually posits that it is by the Spirit that we participate in the divine nature, but he does not, to my knowledge, anywhere argue for this premise. He appears, rather, to understand this idea to be self-evident to his readers as is clear from texts in which he argues for the Spirit's divinity on the basis of our participation in the divine nature through him. In *De Trinitate* VII, for example, after stating that the Spirit is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with the Father and the Son, the archbishop appeals to the Spirit's role in our participation in the divine to solidify his argument: "For it is not otherwise possible for the holy to be enriched (καταπλουτεῖν) through participation (μέθεξις) of God than by receiving the Spirit. For we are made 'partakers (κοινωνοί) of the divine nature' [2 Pet 1.4], according to the scriptures."⁹³ Cyril proceeds at this point to argue that such participation is only possible if the Spirit is divine. Similarly, when arguing for the Spirit's divinity in his exegesis of John 14.16-17, he appeals to the idea of participation, citing 2 Peter 1.4:

For if anyone says that the Spirit is not from God's essence, how would the creature be a partaker (μέτοχος) of God by receiving the Spirit? And in what way would we be called and indeed be temples of God if we receive a created or foreign spirit and not rather the Spirit that is from God? How are those who are partakers (μέτοχοι) of the Spirit also 'partakers (κοινωνοί) of the divine nature' [2 Peter 1.4], according to the words of the saint, if he is created and does not rather proceed (πρόεισιν) for us from the divine nature itself?⁹⁴

⁹³ *DT* VII.637B (SC 246, 158).

⁹⁴ *In Jo.* 14.16-17 (Pusey, ii. 469⁶⁻¹³).

And in his exposition of John 14.23, Cyril writes, “For no one is made a partaker (μέτοχος) of God’s nature except through the Spirit. Therefore the Spirit is God and from God, and is not counted among created things.”⁹⁵

When referring to participation in the divine through the Spirit, Cyril occasionally, as illustrated in the quotations provided above, refers simply to partaking of, of participating in, God.⁹⁶ He also intermittently refers generally to being made partakers of the divine nature through the Holy Spirit.⁹⁷ Most frequently, however, Cyril discusses the idea of participation from within a Trinitarian framework, proposing in particular that we participate in the Son through the Spirit. It is this participation in the Son that is pivotal in our adoption as children of God.

We are, Cyril writes in exposition of John 7.24, made “partakers (κοινωνούς) of the divine nature [2 Pet 1.4] by participation (μετοχῆς) in our saviour Christ,”⁹⁸ a participation characterized by Cyril in the passage as occurring through the work of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁹ In a sermon on Luke 22.7-16 he propounds that Christ reposes (καταλύσει) in the waters of baptism, and that it is therefore through baptism we become “partakers (κοινωνούς) of his divine nature by participation (μετοχῆς) in the Holy

⁹⁵ *In Jo.* 14.23 (Pusey, ii. 498¹⁹⁻²²).

⁹⁶ In addition to the citations already provided, see *In Jo.* 6.35 (Pusey, i. 476); 14.24 (Pusey, ii. 503).

⁹⁷ See, for example, *In Jo.* 14.4 (Pusey, ii. 406); 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 488); 15.25 (Pusey, ii. 605); 16.12-13 (Pusey, ii. 625-626); 16.15 (Pusey, ii. 639); 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 722); 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 737); *DT* VI.598C-D (SC 246, 44); VII.693C-D (SC 246, 164-166); VII.639E-640A (SC 246, 166); VII.640C (SC 246, 170).

⁹⁸ *In Jo.* 7.24 (Pusey, i. 639¹⁹⁻²¹).

⁹⁹ Cf. *ibid.* (Pusey, i. 631²²-632³; 632¹¹⁻²⁸; 638¹⁰⁻¹²).

Spirit.”¹⁰⁰ And in his comments on John 14.20 Cyril argues that Christ is life by nature and posits that we become like him in his life by partaking of the divine nature through his Spirit.¹⁰¹ “For Christ is in us through the Spirit,” he writes, “transforming (μετατρέπων) towards incorruption that which is naturally corruptible.”¹⁰²

Such comments as these illustrate that partaking of the Son and having him dwell within us appear to be synonymous in Cyril’s thought. The correlation between the two is certainly established in the archbishop’s exegesis of John 15.1,¹⁰³ wherein union with Christ and the indwelling of Christ are associated with being “partakers (κοινωνούς) in his nature through participation (μεταλαχεῖν) in the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰⁴ Our becoming “partakers (κοινωνούς) and sharers (μετόχους) of the Word’s divine nature”¹⁰⁵ is similarly linked elsewhere with partaking of the Spirit and with Christ dwelling in us through the Spirit.¹⁰⁶ According to Cyril, the soteriological work of the Holy Spirit, work that is associated with the idea of participation, is inextricably interwoven with the Son who dwells in us and of whom we partake.

This point is underlined in Cyril’s exegesis of John 14.20. In the previous chapter I briefly examined Cyril’s portrayal of humanity’s creation and fall as presented in his exposition of John 14.20. As is customarily the case with the archbishop, the human dilemma is primarily characterized as being marked by the cessation of the Spirit’s

¹⁰⁰ *In Luc.* 22.7-16 (Reuss, 207).

¹⁰¹ *In Jo.* 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 487¹⁴⁻¹⁸).

¹⁰² *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 487¹⁸⁻²¹).

¹⁰³ See in particular *In Jo.* 15.1 (Pusey, ii. 535⁶-536²²).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 535¹¹⁻¹²).

¹⁰⁵ *In Jo.* 16.7 (Pusey, ii. 620⁶⁻⁷).

¹⁰⁶ See *ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 620⁶⁻²⁵).

indwelling presence. Central to Christ's mission, therefore, was the reintroduction of "that ancient grace" to humanity.¹⁰⁷ Cyril here expands on this notion, suggesting that the renewal of the Spirit's indwelling presence in humanity, made possible through Christ, enabled humanity to be adopted as children of God. This Cyril associates with the indwelling of Christ through the Spirit. He writes:

'The Word became flesh,' according to John [Jn 1.14]. He wears (πεφόρηκε) our nature, restoring (ἀναπλάττων) it to his own life. And he himself is also in us, for through the Spirit we have all been made partakers (μέτοχοι) of him and have him in ourselves. *Through this we have become partakers (κοινωνοί) of the divine nature and bear the title of children of God*, and so have in ourselves the Father through the Son. And Paul will testify to this saying, 'And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"' [Gal 4.6].¹⁰⁸

The first two sentences of this quotation are, I would suggest, very significant for comprehending Cyril's conception of divine filiation. To return to its original condition, humanity needed once again to partake of God, and specifically to participate in the Son through the Spirit just as Adam did; this idea is articulated throughout the archbishop's exposition of John 14.20.¹⁰⁹ Like ourselves, Adam would have experienced the indwelling of the Father that necessarily accompanies the indwelling of the Son on the basis of Trinitarian unity; this, therefore, does not account for divine filiation in the Christian economy. Through his brief reference to the Word wearing our nature and his citation of John 1.14 immediately before discussing our adoption as children of God through the Spirit, however, Cyril signals that our adoption as children of God is tied to the incarnation. For our participation in the Son differs from that of Adam in that,

¹⁰⁷ *In Jo.* 14.20 (Pusey, ii. 486²).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 486²¹⁻³⁰). Emphasis mine.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. ibid. (Pusey, ii. 484¹⁸⁻²⁶; 485³⁰-486⁴).

through our reception of the Holy Spirit, we now partake of the Word who became flesh and remains in the flesh (note the perfect form of φορέω above with reference to the Word's enfleshment). And, Cyril emphasizes, our partaking of and the indwelling of the incarnate Son through the Holy Spirit translate into our adoption as children of God. Precisely how this occurs, however, is not spelled out.

Conformed to the Son: The Spirit and Divine Filiation

We need to go elsewhere to delve more deeply into how the Spirit brings about our adoption as children of God. In his exegesis of John 17.11 we find the following reference to divine filiation that provides some illumination regarding the relationship between the Spirit and our adoption as children of God. Referring to the Word, he writes:

He therefore humbled himself willingly for our sake, for we would never have been called children by grace and gods if the only-begotten had not undergone humiliation for us and on our account. [It is] to him that we are conformed (μορφούμενοι) by participation (μετουσίας) in the Spirit, and so become children of God and gods.¹¹⁰

This language of being conformed is similar to that used with reference to Adam and his reception of the Spirit. But Cyril very clearly here predicates divine filiation on the Word's kenosis, and suggests that our adoption as children of God is tied to our being conformed to the one who emptied himself, that is, to our being formed and shaped so as to bear likeness to Jesus Christ through participation in the Spirit.

In what follows I shall examine four texts in which Cyril, in more detail than he does elsewhere, develops the relationship between the incarnation of the divine Son, our adoption as children of God, and the transforming operation of the Holy Spirit; these texts include Cyril's tenth *Festal Letter*, as well as his exegeses of John 1.12-13, 15, and

¹¹⁰ *In Jo.* 17.11 (Pusey, ii. 695⁵⁻¹⁰).

16.7. We shall see that the Spirit's role in our attainment of divine filiation is integrally tied to his identity as the Spirit of the Son, an identity that did not cease when the Son became human. Cyril describes our adoption as children of God as a total transformation by which we are made to become by grace what the incarnate Son is by nature – sons of God. Through this transformation into Christ-likeness, we enter into a filial relationship with God whereby he becomes our Father in actuality.

One text in which the archbishop discusses the Spirit's role in divine filiation is Cyril's tenth *Festal Letter* (written in 422). These *Festal Letters* were yearly letters he wrote to clergy and laypersons throughout Egypt to announce the date of Easter. Cyril frequently took these letters as an opportunity to expound on various theological, ecclesiastical, or spiritual matters, and always exhorted his readers to prepare for Easter penitently and with the goal of overcoming those passions and temptations that continually threaten. In his tenth letter Cyril recounts humanity's enslavement to sin, and discusses the efficacy of the incarnation in terms of our attainment of holiness. The archbishop associates this holiness with Christ-likeness and argues that it is by participation in the Holy Spirit that Christ-likeness is attained. It is in relation to the attainment of Christ-likeness through the Spirit that Cyril refers to divine filiation.

Cyril commences his letter with a brief account of the devil's tyranny prior to the incarnation as a means of highlighting the joy that the Easter feast now holds for those who have been released from this tyranny through Jesus Christ. Echoing Philippians 2, the archbishop exults that the Word did not disdain becoming a slave for our sake. With his discussion of human sin still in his readers' minds, Cyril asserts that the Word became

man in order that we might be “transformed (ἀναμορφούμενοι) into his manner of conduct (πολιτεῖαν) and life” and “flash forth (ἀπαστράπτωμεν) the image (εἰκόνα) of him who made us.”¹¹¹ Central to this transformation into Christ-likeness, he emphasizes, is faith and our participation (μεθέξει) in the Spirit through the waters of baptism.¹¹²

Cyril discusses the Spirit’s activity at greater length later in the letter as he discusses the ramifications of the Son’s incarnation for human nature. The Son became human, he writes, in order that the lowliness of human nature might be raised to a higher state.¹¹³ The only-begotten, who is unchangeable and sinless, mixed (ἀνέμιξε) himself with human nature for our benefit. Christ “gave the stability (ἀσφάλειαν) of his own nature to the weakness [of our nature], in order that our minds might then be seen as fixed on good works, the passions of the flesh chastised, put to death by the power of the one dwelling in it, God the Word.”¹¹⁴ According to Cyril, sin was therefore put to death in Christ first that it might be condemned in us too. This potentiality is actualized through the Holy Spirit, for Christ comes to dwell in us “through faith and participation (μετουσίᾳ) in the Spirit, who makes us conformed (συμμόρφους) to Christ through his quality (ποιότητος) of making [us] holy.”¹¹⁵

It is at this point that Cyril explains the connection of the Spirit’s likeness to the Christ to our transformation into Christ-likeness and to our adoption as children of God.

¹¹¹ HP X.1.612A (SC 392, 194¹²⁸⁻¹²⁹). My own translations of this letter are based upon an, as yet, unpublished translation of the *Festal Letters* by John O’Keefe of Creighton University. I am grateful to Dr. O’Keefe for giving me access to his translation.

¹¹² Ibid. X.1.612A (SC 392, 194¹²⁵⁻¹²⁷).

¹¹³ Ibid. X.2.617B-X.4.624D (SC 392, 208-222).

¹¹⁴ Ibid. X.2.617C (SC 392, 208⁹⁰⁻⁹⁵).

¹¹⁵ Ibid. X.2.619D (SC, 392, 210¹⁰¹⁻¹⁰⁶).

He writes that the Spirit conforms us to Christ by virtue of his identity vis-à-vis Christ. The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, “is, so to speak, the form (μορφή) of Christ our saviour.”¹¹⁶ The Spirit is not “other than him when it comes to identity of substance and to divine activity (ὅσον εἰς ταυτότητα τῆς οὐσίας καὶ εἰς ἐνέργειαν τὴν θεοπρεπῆ).”¹¹⁷ This, Cyril emphasizes, is made clear in scripture. In John 14.6 Christ says, “I am the truth.” Yet (and here the archbishop slightly misquotes John 15.26) later in the same gospel Jesus says, “The Spirit is the truth.”¹¹⁸ And in 2 Corinthians 3.17 Paul writes, “The Lord is the Spirit,” thereby underlining the absolute unity between Jesus Christ and his Spirit.

Similar arguments for the Spirit’s unity and likeness with the Son were explored in the first chapter. Here we find Cyril developing the soteriological ramifications of the Spirit’s identity as the Spirit of Christ and his likeness. As the Spirit of Christ, he moulds and conforms (διαπλάττον καὶ ἀναμορφοῦν) to Christ all those in whom he comes to be by participation (μεθεκτῶς).¹¹⁹ Through the Spirit “the image (εἰκὼν) of the holy first-born, Christ, appears radiant” in us.¹²⁰ It is this that is meant by Paul in Romans 8.29-30, which Cyril quotes as, “For those whom he knew, he also predestined to be

¹¹⁶ Ibid. X.2.619D (SC 392, 210¹⁰⁷⁻¹⁰⁸).

¹¹⁷ Ibid. X.2.619D-620A (SC 392, 210¹¹⁰⁻¹¹²).

¹¹⁸ John 15.26 refers to the Spirit as τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, whereas Cyril quotes the verse τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀλήθεια. *HP* X.2.620A (SC 392, 210¹¹³⁻¹¹⁴). Cyril’s argument is simply that there is an absolute unity between Christ and the Spirit, and the point could have also been made had he quoted John 15.26 correctly. Indeed, I have discussed above other passages in his work where he points to this reference to “the Spirit of truth” to illustrate the unity of the Son with his Spirit.

¹¹⁹ *HP* X.2.620A-B (SC 392, 212¹²²⁻¹²³).

¹²⁰ Ibid. X.2.620C (SC 392, 214¹⁴³⁻¹⁴⁵). Cyril is here reading Exodus 13.11-12 typologically.

conformed to the image of his Son; those whom he called he also sanctified (ἡγίασεν); and those he sanctified he also glorified.”¹²¹ The archbishop’s use of ἀγιάζω instead of δοξάζω, which is the verb Paul uses, underlines his conviction that the process of being conformed to Jesus Christ, of having the image of Christ shine from within us, is intertwined with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who is the form of Christ. To be conformed to Christ is to become holy. It is, as Cyril further writes, to become partakers of the divine nature through the Holy Spirit so that the imprint (χαρακτήρ) of Christ might appear in our souls and we are changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 3.18).¹²² And this transformation through the Spirit Cyril links directly with divine filiation. For when we are conformed to Jesus Christ through Christ’s own Spirit, “God the Father sees conspicuous in us the features (χαρακτῆρας) of his own offspring and from then on loves us as his children and adorns us with supernatural rewards.”¹²³

In this letter, Cyril portrays the Spirit’s work of conforming us to the Son as being inseparable from the incarnation of the Son. Our transformation through participation in the Spirit is not, however, directed simply at the attainment of sanctity in imitation of Christ. Rather, Cyril describes our transformation through the Spirit in relational terms, positing that divine sonship is the culmination of our participation in the Spirit. The emphasis is on being conformed to *Christ*, to the Word made flesh. The Spirit is not simply the Spirit of the Son. He is the Spirit of the one who became a human

¹²¹ Ibid. X.2.620C-D (SC 392, 214¹⁵⁰⁻¹⁵²).

¹²² Ibid. X.3.621A (SC 392, 214⁴⁻⁹).

¹²³ Ibid. X.2.620B (SC 392, 212¹²⁴⁻¹²⁶).

being for our sake, Jesus Christ, both God and man. This is not an insignificant point. We participate in the Spirit, by which Cyril means that we come to share in that which the Spirit is. And the Spirit is Christ's own and is Christ's form, meaning that, by virtue of participating in the Spirit we share in that which Jesus Christ is. We thus actually become like Christ in our progression in virtue and holiness to such a degree that we manifest the characteristics of God's Son in the flesh, and therefore become children of God. Christ is, as it were, the paradigm and concrete manifestation of what it is for a human fully to be a child of God. By receiving and participating in his Spirit of Christ, we thus become children of God by being conformed to Christ, who is the Son of God by nature.

The scope and depth of this pneumatic transformation is articulated by the archbishop in various places throughout *In Joannem*, as is the relationship of this transformation to the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son. In his exegeses of John 1.12 and 13 Cyril describes adoption as children of God as the remoulding of the believer at the deepest level of his being, and emphasizes that this process revolves around being conformed to Christ through the Spirit. To attain divine sonship is not to attain a state external to us, as if we are simply declared to be children of God by grace. To be divinely adopted, rather, is literally to become that which transcends earthly existence and to become by grace what the Son is by nature.

Commenting on John 1.12, Cyril argues that all people, Gentiles included, are given the privilege of being counted as children of God if, as John 1.12 states, they receive Jesus Christ, a reception that Cyril understands to occasion significant

ramifications for the believer. For to receive Christ is to become like him, particularly in his sonship. It is through reception of him that “the Son gives what belongs properly to him alone” to the believer.¹²⁴ And according to Cyril this occurs through the Holy Spirit by whom we partake of the Son. He writes:

There was no other way for us who have borne the image of the man of dust to escape corruption, unless the beauty of the image of the man of heaven [cf. 1Cor 15.49] is imprinted (ἐνεσημάνθη) upon us through our having been called to sonship (υἱοθεσίαν). For having become partakers (μέτοχοι) of him through the Spirit, we have been sealed into likeness to him (κατεσφραγίσθημεν εἰς ὁμοιότητα τὴν πρὸς αὐτόν), and mount up to the archetypal form of the image (εἰκόνης), in accordance with which divine scripture says we were also made. For scarcely do we thus recover the ancient beauty of our nature, and are conformed (ἀναμορφωθέντες) to that divine nature, than we become superior to the evils that arose from the fall.¹²⁵

Cyril’s terminology is quite intentional. Pointing to one of the key Adam-Christ texts in the New Testament, Cyril emphasizes that divine filiation is central to human salvation through Christ, the second Adam. In the second chapter I noted that Cyril appeals to the Adam-Christ typology in order to provide a soteriological interpretation of Christ’s miraculous conception, arguing that Christ, as the second Adam, was born of the Spirit in order that we too might be so born and thus become children of God. In the above quotation Cyril once again refers to Christ in the language of the Adam-Christ typology, and here we find the archbishop elaborate in more detail on how Christ’s identity as the second Adam provides a means for our adoption as children of God. Cyril’s understanding of Christ as the second Adam is, by now, familiar to us; as the “man of heaven” Christ reversed the consequences of the disobedience of the “man of dust.” The logic of the Adam-Christ typology and its relationship to divine filiation

¹²⁴ *In Jo.* 1.12 (Pusey, i. 133⁹⁻¹⁰). ET: Russell (2000), 100.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 133¹²⁻²²). ET: Russell (2000), 100.

above appears to be based on the reality that Christ, as a human being, was also the Son of God. The incarnation of the Son of God translates into divine sonship being available to all. By virtue of the Son's incarnation, humans now can enter into a filial relationship with the Father. Christ paved the way, as it were, in that he was a human being who was, by nature, the divine Son of God. It is because of this that we are called to sonship, and Cyril submits that we attain adoption as children of God by being conformed to Christ's likeness by partaking of Christ himself through the Holy Spirit, the implication being that the Spirit and Christ are inextricably one. Using the imagery of being stamped or embossed with Christ's image, Cyril submits that, through the Spirit, we are transformed to become like "the man of heaven," become sons of God, and so rise above the sin that came into the world through Adam. "Therefore," Cyril writes in the lines immediately following the above quotation, "we ascend to a dignity that transcends our nature on account of Christ."¹²⁶

Cyril describes this process of transformation in more detail in his exegesis of John 1.13. Those adopted as children of God, he writes, "have put off the inferiority of their own nature."¹²⁷ They are no longer children of the flesh but offspring of God, and as such they become "radiant with the grace of him who is honouring them, as if dressed in brilliant white clothing."¹²⁸ This may be an allusion to the Transfiguration, by which Cyril perhaps suggests that, by grace, divine sonship shines forth from us in our humanity just as Christ's divinity shone forth from him in his humanity on Mount Tabor. We are,

¹²⁶ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 133²²⁻²³). ET: Russell (2000), 101 (slightly modified).

¹²⁷ *In Jo.* 1.13 (Pusey, i. 134¹⁵⁻¹⁶).

¹²⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 134¹⁶⁻¹⁷). ET: Russell (2000), 101.

of course, the archbishop reminds us, children of God by grace rather than by nature. Only the Son of God is a Son essentially, and we are made children of God through the one who alone is the Son of God by nature:¹²⁹ “We shall not be sons of God ourselves in exactly the same way as he is, only in relation to him through grace by imitation. For he is a true Son who has his existence from the Father, while we are sons who have been adopted out of his love for us.”¹³⁰ The magnitude of this grace, however, should not be underestimated. For our adoption as children of God means that “that which is other than God the Father is gathered into a natural relationship (εἰς οἰκειότητα φυσικήν) with him and that which is servile is raised to the noble status of a master.”¹³¹ Cyril does not here deny divine alterity; the fact that he emphasizes immediately before this quotation that there exists an ontological difference between our sonship by grace and the Son’s sonship by nature illustrates this point. But, as indicated by his reference to being gathered into a “natural relationship” with the Father, Cyril suggests that God becomes our Father in more than a metaphorical sense. And this relationship occurs, as Cyril writes near the end of his exposition, because we are reborn as children of God through the Spirit who makes us become by grace what the Son is by nature:

What is servile rises up to the level of sonship (υἱότητα) through participation (μετοχής) in him who is Son in truth (κατ’ ἀλήθειαν), called and, as it were, promoted to the rank which the Son possesses by nature. That is why we are called offspring (γεννητοί) of God and are such, for we have experienced a rebirth by faith through the Spirit.¹³²

¹²⁹ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 135¹⁻²).

¹³⁰ *In Jo.* 1.12 (Pusey, i. 134²²⁻²⁷). ET: Russell (2000), 101.

¹³¹ *In Jo.* 1.13 (Pusey, i. 135⁵⁻⁷). ET: Russell (2000), 101 (slightly modified).

¹³² Ibid. (Pusey, i. 136⁹⁻¹⁴). ET: Russell (2000), 103.

We are, Cyril writes on John 1.12, “recipients by grace of the text ‘I have said, you are gods and all of you sons of the most high’ [Ps 82.6],”¹³³ and we are so because we partake of the Son through the Spirit. But the emphasis for Cyril is clearly not on our becoming gods, but on our attainment of divine sonship. He takes the Son’s eternal filial relationship with the Father with absolute seriousness. The Son is indeed God by nature; but he is also a Son by nature, having been begotten by the Father ineffably.¹³⁴ Cyril posits in his exegeses of John 1.12 and 13 that the one who is Son by nature became flesh for our sake that we might become as he is and so attain a divine sonship that transcends human nature. Our adoption as children of God by the Spirit is possible because, through the Spirit of the Son, we partake of the incarnate Son and his image is embossed upon us such that we are transformed to become like him who came to us. This does not mean for Cyril that we are elevated simply in terms of deification; i.e., that the Son became human in order that humans could become gods. Rather, Cyril accentuates the relational ramifications of our transformation through the Spirit, suggesting that this transformation draws us into an experience of the Trinitarian life in that we attain God as our Father in imitation of the Son’s relationship with the Father.

A similar emphasis on divine filiation as a process of total conformation into the Son through participation in the Son through the Spirit is found in Cyril’s exegesis of John 16.7.¹³⁵ His concern in this passage is to account for why Christ understood it to be

¹³³ *In Jo.* 1.12 (Pusey, i. 133). ET: Russell, 101. See also *In Jo.* 1.9 (Pusey, i. 103⁶⁻¹⁸).

¹³⁴ Cf. *DT* I.415A (SC 231, 214); *In Jo.* 1.3 (Pusey, i. 67). Cf. Boulnois (1994), 376-9

¹³⁵ *In Jo.* 16.7 (Pusey, ii. 620³-621¹⁵).

to our advantage that he depart in order for the Paraclete to come to us. Cyril argues that, although Christ accomplished his work on earth completely, it was necessary that his followers be able to become “partakers (κοινωνούς) and sharers (μετόχους) of the Word’s divine nature.”¹³⁶ The reasoning for Cyril here appears to be that the Word’s incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection brought to humanity the promise of human salvation. The actualization of this promise, however, requires partaking of the Word, which itself occurs through the communion (κοινωνίας) and participation (μετουσίας) of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁷ Through this participation the Holy Spirit “changes (μεθίστησιν) the natural state (ἔξιν) of those in whom he exists and in whom he dwells,”¹³⁸ and “remoulds (μεταπλάττει) into another image (εἰκόνα) those in whom he is seen to live.”¹³⁹ Through the Spirit we give up our old life and are transformed (μετασκευάζεσθαι) into another. We are reborn through the Spirit, by whom “the fundamental elements of our being are changed (μεταστοιχειοῦσθαι)¹⁴⁰ into newness of life (πολιτείας).”¹⁴¹ This newness of life Cyril associates with our ability to cry “Abba! Father!” for the transformation that the Spirit works in us is inseparable from the fact that we partake of, and are united to, the Son through the Spirit.¹⁴² As is the case in his tenth festal letter and his exegesis of John 1.12 and 13, the archbishop characterizes our adoption as children of God here as a thoroughgoing transformation by the Spirit, by whom we are changed so as

¹³⁶ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 620⁶⁻⁷).

¹³⁷ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 620¹⁰⁻¹¹).

¹³⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 620²⁶⁻²⁷).

¹³⁹ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 621⁴⁻⁶).

¹⁴⁰ See Lampe, 861.

¹⁴¹ *In Jo.* 16.7 (Pusey, ii. 620⁷⁻⁹).

¹⁴² Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 620¹⁷⁻²⁵).

to enter into a filial relationship with the Father in imitation of the Son to whom we are conformed through the Spirit.

One other passage of exegesis, in which Cyril further describes the transformation toward divine sonship that occurs through the Spirit, is worth analysis in terms of comprehending how the Spirit transforms us to become children of God. In his exposition of the opening verses of John 15, Cyril endeavours to explain Christ's reference to himself as the vine and to his followers as branches. Although these opening verses contain no mention of the Holy Spirit, Cyril places strong emphasis on the role of the Spirit in uniting us to Christ as branches are united to the vine. To be "united (ένωθέντας) and fixed (ένηρμοσμένους) and rooted (έμπεπηγότες)" with and in Christ is to become "partakers (κοινωνούς) of his nature through partaking (μεταλαχεῖν) of the Holy Spirit."¹⁴³ "For it is," Cyril continues, "his Holy Spirit who has united us to the saviour, Christ."¹⁴⁴ It is through this union with Christ through the Spirit that we become Christ's "people, attaining the dignity of sonship from him."¹⁴⁵ Cyril's account of the ramifications of our union with Christ, therefore, is simultaneously an account of what it means to be made children of God through this union and how this divine filiation is made manifest in us.

Interestingly, by portraying divine filiation with the analogy of the vine and the branches, Cyril characterizes Jesus Christ as the progenitor of our new birth. As the vine

¹⁴³ *In Jo.* 15.1 (Pusey, ii. 534⁹⁻¹²).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 534¹²⁻¹³).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 534¹⁷⁻¹⁸).

Christ is the “mother and the one who nourishes” us as the branches.¹⁴⁶ We have been “reborn (ἀνεγεννήθημεν) from him and in him in the Spirit to produce the fruits of life.”¹⁴⁷ United to Christ through the Spirit, we are empowered and enabled to bear fruit in the form of a transformed life characterized by faith, love, and obedience, and so to “preserve the benefit of [our] noble birth (εὐγενείας).”¹⁴⁸ It would appear that it is because we are united to Christ through the Spirit, reborn in him and empowered to bear “fruit,” that the incarnate Word can be understood to be the mother of our new birth.

Precisely how Christ nourishes us as the vine is elaborated upon as the Cyril’s exposition continues. After citing both 1 John 2.5-6 and 3.24, the former referring to obedience as the mark of Christ’s indwelling and the latter to the gift of the Spirit as this mark, the archbishop writes:

For just as the root of the vine ministers and distributes to the branches the enjoyment of its peculiar, essential, and natural qualities (ποιότητος), so the only-begotten Word of God, in giving the Spirit, engrafts (ἐντίθησι) in the saints kinship (συγγένειαν) to his own nature and that of God the Father, because the saints have been united (συνενωθεῖσιν) to him by faith and total sanctity. And he nourishes them toward piety and produces in them knowledge of all virtue and of good works.¹⁴⁹

Cyril’s understanding of the Spirit as the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, an idea we explored in the first chapter, is behind his reference to the Spirit engrafting a kinship to his own nature as well as that of the Father. This reference to the Father is also tied to the paragraphs that follow the above quotation in which Cyril vigorously argues, as he frequently does in the commentary, that the Son is consubstantial with the Father.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 535⁵).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 535⁶⁻⁷).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 535⁷⁻¹²).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 535²⁵-536²).

The primary emphasis, however, is on the Word as the vine who bestows the Spirit on us that we might be united with him. Through the Spirit we are united to the Word, and for Cyril this means that, corresponding to the relationship that exists between a vine and its branches, we share in that which is proper to the Word. The depth of our experience of the Word's "qualities" is underlined by Cyril's use of συγγένεια to describe our relationship to the Word's nature, a term that denotes a familial relationship and so close kinship between things that are similar in essence.¹⁵⁰ His word choice indicates that he is suggesting that our transformative union with the only-begotten Word culminates in our sharing with him a familial connection. As such, Cyril appears to be referring to an idea we have seen him express elsewhere, that we share by participation the status of children of God with the one who is the Son of God by nature. Cyril's reference to kinship with Christ underlines his understanding that union with Christ translates into likeness with him, made manifest in a holy life. Moral transformation, in other words, accompanies our adoption as children of God. Indeed, progression in holiness through union with Christ by the Spirit is a consistent theme throughout Cyril's exegesis of John 15, demonstrating the archbishop's conviction that righteousness, and so likeness with Christ, is a concomitant of divine filiation.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ See Lampe, 1266.

¹⁵¹ Cf. *In Jo.* 15.1 (Pusey, ii. 540²⁷⁻²⁹): "All the power of the fruits of the Spirit is from [Christ], just as the branches that grow from the root have the root's natural qualities"; *In Jo.* 15.3 (Pusey, ii. 556²⁷-557⁴). Referring to the process of transformation, and writing in Christ's voice, Cyril states, "But they, shaking off the impurity of former customs as vain rubbish, and being thus for the future fitted to bear the fruits of the virtue that loves God, will be joined to me in the manner of branches. And, being dependent on their love towards me, they will have their hearts enriched by the influences of the Spirit, and, imbibing the grace of my goodness, will continue steadfast to the end and be

Cyril's references to divine filiation are manifold and, as is often the case with him, he does not provide his readers with a systematic account of his theology of our adoption as children of God. Perhaps Cyril's thoughts on this matter are best encapsulated in his exegesis of John 8.42, in which, using Christ's voice, he writes:

But truly if you, with zeal and longing, have God as Father, it is because you have wholly loved me, *the guide and teacher for this path*, who gives the means for likeness (ὁμοιότητος) with the one true Son, who, through the Holy Spirit, renders those who receive him conformed (συμμόρφους) to himself.¹⁵²

To have God as Father is to become like Jesus Christ, the one who demonstrated for us what it is truly to have God as Father and so to be a child of God; he is "the guide and teacher for this path," the exemplar of divine sonship. Divine filiation, therefore, entails being changed so as to become like Jesus Christ, and Cyril emphasizes that it is by the Spirit that this transformation occurs. The Spirit conforms us to Christ's likeness, and in becoming like Christ we enter into a filial relationship with the Father modelled on the relationship the "one true Son," Jesus Christ, has with the Father.

The logic of Cyril's understanding of how we become children of God through the Holy Spirit appears to be as follows. Because the Son of God became a human being, divine sonship is now possible for humanity. Christ is, as it were, the firstfruits of this sonship, but the actualization of our elevation to divine filiation is through the Holy

nurtured in righteousness" (ET Randell, 384; slightly modified); *In Jo.* 15.4 (Pusey, ii. 559²³⁻²⁵): Referring to Psalm 36.9, Cyril writes, "For by the fountain of divine and spiritual life that runs as a torrent of joy, who else could he [the psalmist] be referring to but the Son, who gorges and waters with the life-giving and joy-giving grace of the Spirit."

¹⁵² *In Jo.* 8.42 (Pusey, ii. 85³⁻⁸). Emphasis mine.

Spirit. The Spirit's role in this transformation is predicated on his identity as the Spirit of the Son. As seen above and in the first chapter, the archbishop consistently maintains that the Spirit is the exact image of the Son. Thus, when one receives the indwelling Spirit through baptism one necessarily, and crucially, receives the indwelling Son and so participates in him.¹⁵³ But whereas Adam participated in the divine Son when the Spirit was breathed upon him, the baptized receive and participate in the Son of God made man through the Holy Spirit who remains the Son's own after the Incarnation, the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Cyril emphasizes that the Spirit conforms us to Jesus Christ, that this transformation occurs because we participate in Christ through the Spirit, and that the trinitarian basis of this movement is the Spirit's unity with Jesus Christ, a unity that translates into the Spirit being Christ's likeness. We are conformed by the Spirit, therefore, not simply to the Son of God, but to the God-man Jesus Christ, who, as the Son made man, is the paradigm of divine sonship in human form.

By partaking of Jesus Christ through his Spirit our very natures are transformed and elevated. Specifically, our participation in the divine nature through the Spirit, because it is a partaking of Jesus Christ, culminates in our adoption as children of God. Because we partake of, and are thereby transformed through, the Spirit of the Son made man, we attain Christ-likeness at the very depths of our being. We are transformed to become new people, our natures changed so as to become that which we previously were not. We are, through the Holy Spirit, conformed to Jesus Christ, moulded to become by

¹⁵³ The Father is not, of course, absent from this divine indwelling given trinitarian unity, but as I point out above, Cyril predominantly focuses on the believer's interaction with the Son through the Spirit.

grace like him, with the result that we become what he was. This transformation thus necessarily has moral ramifications in that we are made holy in the process of becoming like Christ through the Spirit.

These ramifications are due to the inauguration of a new, and hitherto unknown, relationship with God the Father through the Spirit of his Son. We do not merely become ‘gods’ through participation in the Holy Spirit; indeed, this is not a prominent theme in Cyril’s writings. We also become sons of God, capable of calling God our Father. We thus enter into a filial relationship with God. Although Cyril does not elaborate on the particular significance of being able to call God our Father, it would appear that he understands divine sonship to entail intimacy with the Father. Jesus Christ had such intimacy with the Father because he was the Son of God. Through our reception of his Spirit and our resulting transformation into his likeness, we attain to the kind of relationship Christ had with his Father, so that we come to know God truly as our Father and are able to call him such. Therefore, through Christ and his Spirit we are drawn, in a manner not possible for Adam, into the trinitarian mystery, the trinitarian life, becoming by grace what the Son is by nature.

Divine filiation, as this chapter demonstrates, is a pivotal idea in Cyril’s pneumatology and soteriology. It appears to encompass for Cyril much of the Spirit’s soteriological activity, and underlines the centrality of the third person of the Trinity in the archbishop’s understanding of human salvation. Cyril posits that all humanity now participates in the life that is Christ by virtue of the fact that Life itself became flesh, died, and rose again. Christ conclusively defeated death for all humans, and all will

therefore rise from the dead.¹⁵⁴ The fullness of salvation, however, belongs to the baptized for only they have received the Holy Spirit. The abundant life that Christ came to bestow on humankind is, according to Cyril, pneumatologically enacted. When discussing the soteriological efficacy of the Son's kenosis, Cyril thus directs our attention beyond the death and resurrection of Christ to a locked room in Jerusalem where Jesus breathed out his own Spirit upon his followers. Although Christ gave life to all, only the Spirit-filled are able to partake of the divine nature, and particularly of Christ himself, and thereby to become by grace what Jesus Christ is by nature.

Salvation equals transformation in Cyril's soteriological schema, and such transformation, directed toward Christ-likeness, occurs only through the Holy Spirit. The Son became a human and in so doing he created the opportunity for humanity to become like him in his sonship, renewed and recreated to a state not previously possible. In Cyril's soteriology the patristic dictum, 'God became man that man might become gods,' could more appropriately be changed to, 'The Son of God became man that man might become sons of God.' But this salvific potentiality only attains actuality through the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is the Son's image just as the Son is the Father's image. To receive the Spirit, therefore, is to receive him who, as Cyril writes, is "the one who brings the Trinity to its completion."¹⁵⁵ And as the divine Spirit of the Father and the Son, he completes the soteriological process begun when the incarnate Word was conceived in the virgin's womb in that it is he who transforms those in whom he dwells in such a

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *In Jo.* 1.14b (Pusey, i. 139, 141); *In Jo.* 1.32-33 (Pusey, i. 185); *In Jo.* 6.54 (Pusey, i. 532-3); *In Jo.* 10.10 (Pusey, ii. 220); *In Jo.* 13.31-32 (Pusey, ii. 378); *In Jo.* 19.40-41 (Pusey, iii. 106); *In Luc.* 18.31-34 (Reuss, 189).

¹⁵⁵ *Thes.* 34 (PG 75:608D). Cf. Daley (2003), 132-33.

manner that they are united with the Son made man, are conformed to him, and thus attain God as Father.

It is John 20.22-23 that is for Cyril the heart of gospel. For here is found the soteriological summit towards which Jesus strove unceasingly, from his miraculous conception to his baptismal reception of the Spirit, from his three-year ministry to his death and resurrection. It is the gift of the Spirit of Jesus Christ to the disciples, the firstfruits of redeemed humanity, that is for Cyril the crux of the Son's kenosis, the pivotal moment when potentiality reached actuality and human beings became, for the first time, children of God the Father.

Chapter 5 – The Holy Spirit and the Church (Part I):
The Formation and Governance of the Church

Our Lord Jesus Christ appointed the disciples to be guides and teachers of the world, and to be ministers of his divine mysteries, and also called them, for the time had now come, to illuminate and enlighten like lights, not merely the country of Judea...but also all under the sun, people scattered throughout all the lands, wherever they dwelt.¹

- *In Joannem* 20.21

In a passing comment in a book on the theology of Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar writes the following regarding the ecclesiology of the Fathers: In their writings, he suggests, the church “was always presupposed, implicitly present in every thought, never thematically reflected upon at length.”² Whatever may be the veracity of that statement in terms of the patristic period as a whole, his observation certainly rings true in the case of Cyril of Alexandria. Nowhere to my knowledge does the archbishop devote extensive and exclusive attention to the development of an ecclesiology. Rather, the idea of the church, like so many facets of Cyril’s thought, weaves its way throughout his corpus. In order therefore to explore Cyril’s ecclesiology, it is necessary to tease out various patterns of ecclesiological thought and ideas as a means of constructing a more systematic account of the church than is to be found explicitly in the archbishop’s writings.

My purpose in the next two chapters is to do precisely that, but to do so in the context of examining the relationship between pneumatology and ecclesiology in Cyril’s thought. In this chapter, I shall focus on the Spirit’s role in the formation and structure of the church. Particular attention will be paid to the Spirit’s role in the establishment and

¹ *In Jo.* 20.21 (Pusey, iii. 130³⁻¹⁰). ET: Randall, 670 (revised).

² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 105.

maintenance of ecclesial leadership to which the disciples were called when they were appointed by Christ, through the bestowal of the Spirit, to what Cyril refers to as the “glory of the apostleship.” Moreover, I shall examine the archbishop’s understanding of the continuance of this authority and leadership to the apostles’ successors, the bishops of the church. For Cyril, as we shall see, the apostleship has a pneumatological basis and character that is central to the mission and duties of those in ecclesial leadership. By and through the Holy Spirit the disciples were made apostles, and thus were empowered to become leaders and teachers in the burgeoning Christian community, capable of enlightening others as they themselves had been enlightened by the Spirit. And by and through the Holy Spirit the apostles’ successors continue to be enlightened and exercise authority in the church

Nowhere does Cyril defend either the idea of apostolic authority or the hierarchical structure of the church, nor should we expect him to have done so. That the church was structured hierarchically was simply a given for him, as was the postulation that he, and others in ecclesial authority, were the successors of the apostles, and so were entrusted with the same pneumatologically-bestowed authority and duties that had been entrusted to Christ’s disciples. Instead, in his discussion of apostolic authority, Cyril contents himself largely with elaborating upon the theological basis of this authority and upon the function of it in the church and the world at large. It will be seen below that Cyril understands the Holy Spirit to play a crucial and all-encompassing role in the establishment and function of such authority.

My analysis of the pneumatological thrust of Cyril's account of the establishment of ecclesial authority will commence with an examination of the faith of the disciples prior to and after their reception of the Holy Spirit. It shall be seen that Cyril attributes their increase in faith to the Spirit's activity, and that their transformation in terms of faith is emphasized by the archbishop not only to describe faith itself, but to underline the authority of the Spirit-filled disciples. I shall follow this with an account of Cyril's perception of the enlightenment of the disciples given by the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, an enlightenment that allowed them to become the enlighteners of others. The Spirit's enlightening activity is connected to his relationship with the Son, according to Cyril, and I will analyze this connection. Lastly, I shall demonstrate that Cyril understands the bishops of the church, whom he perceives to be the apostles' successors, to experience a similar enlightenment of the Spirit that enables them to guide the church.

The Faith and Boldness of the Spirit-filled Disciples

In his exposition of Luke 17.5, Cyril discusses the transformation that occurred among the disciples when they received the Holy Spirit, particularly in terms of the increase of their faith through the Spirit. Cyril's focus here is not so much on the epistemological transformation of the disciples, although as we shall see below, epistemology and faith are never far separated in the archbishop's thought. In his exegesis of Luke 17.5, the archbishop's emphasis is upon the metamorphosis of the disciples from fearful men to men of unparalleled faith. Cyril's purpose in expounding on this transformation is not limited solely to highlighting the pneumatological root of faith. He is, I would argue, also interested in calling attention to the profundity of the

disciples' pneumatological transformation as a means of demonstrating the authority of the disciples as leaders and pillars of the burgeoning church.

Cyril's analysis of the disciples' reception of the Holy Spirit emerges from his examination of their request that Christ increase their faith.³ According to the archbishop, the disciples were not requesting faith as such, for they already had a modicum of faith in Christ. Rather, the disciples were asking Jesus for the divine assistance without which our own contribution to faith can only come to naught. Cyril explains that faith partly depends upon ourselves and is partly a gift of grace.⁴ The apostle Paul knew that faith required divine assistance and associated such assistance with the Holy Spirit, listing faith as one of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12.8-9.⁵ According to Cyril, Christ granted their request for greater faith after his resurrection when he gave them the Holy Spirit, at which time the disciples' feeble faith was transformed into something far more substantial.

To illustrate the depth of this transformation, Cyril reminds his audience of the feebleness of the disciples' faith prior to the resurrection. Pointing first to Luke 8.22-25,⁶

³ Luke 17.5 reads: "The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!'" Cyril's exegesis of Luke 17.5 is found in Reuss, 176-7, 268-9.

⁴ *In Luc.* 17.5 (Reuss, 268).

⁵ "To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit..."

⁶ "One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake.' So they set out, and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a storm of wind came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in danger. And they went and woke him, saying, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; and they ceased, and there was calm. He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' And they were afraid, and they

Cyril recounts how the disciples, in danger from a storm that threatened to sink their boat, cried out in fear to the sleeping Jesus to save them. Upon awaking, Jesus calmed the waves and then rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith. Such faithlessness is extraordinary, Cyril argues, since “they ought not to have been troubled in any respect whatsoever, when the master of the universe was present with them, at whom all his works tremble and shake.”⁷ The archbishop then recalls Matthew 14.22-31, particularly emphasizing Peter’s display of faithlessness as described in verses 28-31⁸ when he became afraid while walking on the water towards Jesus, sank, and was subsequently rebuked by Jesus for being of little faith. Cyril concludes his brief examination of the disciples’ lack of faith by pointing out that all of the disciples forsook Christ at his passion, with Peter even going so far as to deny knowing him.

However, Cyril points out that such faithlessness contrasts sharply with the faith of the disciples after the resurrection when they received the Holy Spirit. For Cyril writes that when the Spirit came upon them, the disciples “became bold and manly and fervent in the Spirit, so as even to despise death, and to count as nothing the dangers with which they were threatened from unbelievers.”⁹ Whereas the disciples were previously afraid for their lives and fearful of such natural phenomena as storms, the Spirit’s descent upon

marvelled, saying to one another, ‘Who then is this, that he commands even wind and water, and they obey him?’”

⁷ *In Luc.* 17.5 (Reuss, 176). ET: Smith, 535 (slightly modified).

⁸ “And Peter answered him, ‘Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water.’ He said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, ‘O man of little faith, why did you doubt?’

⁹ *In Luc.* 17.5 (Reuss, 177). ET: Smith, 537.

them strengthened their faith, not only making them fearless but also granting them the power themselves to have control over the world, as Christ promised when he said, “If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamine tree, ‘Be rooted up and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you” (Luke 17.6). “There is nothing so immovable,” Cyril writes, “that faith cannot shake it,”¹⁰ and with this thought in mind the archbishop argues that the depth of the disciples’ faith after their reception of the Spirit is clearly illustrated by the fact that the earth literally shook when they prayed (Acts 4.31).

Cyril’s exegesis of Luke 17.5 is not the only text wherein the archbishop reflects on the transformation of the disciples from weakness and faithlessness to strength and boldness. It is discussed also in his exposition of John 18.24-27, a passage that records Peter’s denial of Christ.¹¹ Cyril praises the evangelist for being unafraid to recount the state of the disciples, “the teachers of the world,” prior to their reception of the Holy Spirit, for in so doing John clearly illustrates the degree to which they were changed when the Spirit came upon them.¹² Before Christ’s death and resurrection, the disciples feared death with a fear that was stubborn and invincible. Cyril suggests that such fear was indicative of the fact that they were still plagued by human frailty. Although they possessed enthusiasm for that which is good, they lacked the wherewithal to overcome their fears and the weakness that emerged when confronted with conflict. They only attained the requisite strength once they received the Holy Spirit after the resurrection of Christ. After comparing the ramifications of the Spirit’s bestowal with the strengthening

¹⁰ Ibid. (Reuss, 269). ET: Smith, 537.

¹¹ *In Jo.* 18.24-27 (Pusey, iii. 43-6).

¹² Ibid. (Pusey, iii. 44²⁹-45⁴).

of iron in a forge, Cyril writes: “Even the disciples, therefore, were frail at first; but, when they had received the Spirit of almighty God, they cast aside their native weakness, and, by partaking (τῇ κοινωνίᾳ) of him, attained to great boldness.”¹³

This narrative of frailty becoming strength through participation in the Spirit has a pedagogical function, according to Cyril, in that we learn through the disciples’ transformation that we must rely upon God, and not upon ourselves, to attain the kind of boldness they achieved.¹⁴ But there is more to Cyril’s account than this, and the archbishop is intent also to underline that this renewal of the disciples was a central factor in their becoming leaders of the church. Cyril’s portrayal of the depth of the disciples’ attainment of strength and boldness is powerful and expansive. As he writes in summary of his exegesis of John 18.24-27, God “changed (μετατιθέντος) their weakness into power, and elevated them, like strong towers, who were easily daunted even by slight dangers, and at times broken down by the mere apprehension of suffering.”¹⁵ Through the Holy Spirit the disciples were the first to overcome the weakness and fearfulness which plague all humankind, and they did so profoundly. From being so fearful that they abandoned their Lord at his passion, the disciples attained a boldness and fearlessness that manifested itself in a fervent and audacious willingness, as teachers of the world, to strive toward virtue and to overcome any obstacles and perils they encountered in their teaching mission.¹⁶ They were, in short, transformed so as to become capable of being the ones by whom the message of Christ was to be spread throughout the world. While

¹³ Ibid. (Pusey, iii. 45²¹⁻²⁶). ET: Randall, 592 (revised)

¹⁴ Cf. ibid. (Pusey, iii. 46²⁻⁶).

¹⁵ Ibid. (Pusey, iii. 45²⁸⁻³¹). ET: Randall, 592 (revised).

¹⁶ Cf. ibid. (Pusey, iii. 44³²-45⁸).

Cyril is clear that something of what the disciples experienced is also experienced by believers themselves when they receive the Spirit, there is a sense that the archbishop is painting a picture of ideality when referring to the disciples, that there is a depth and profundity to their transformation that made them ideally suited to lead the church. We shall see as we now explore the disciples' reception of the Spirit further that this emphasis on the disciples as leaders is a common theme.

Enlightened by the Holy Spirit: The Disciples Become Apostles

The central text for examining the archbishop's understanding of the disciples' reception of the Holy Spirit is his exegesis of John 20.19-23, a text that recounts Christ's breathing of the Spirit upon the disciples to which I referred briefly in the last chapter. I just now touched upon the consequences of their reception of the Spirit in terms of their attainment of boldness and faith. In his exposition of John 20.19-23 Cyril delves more deeply into the ramifications of the disciples' pneumatological transformation, particularly in terms of the importance of this experience for their calling as apostles of Christ, commissioned to preach the gospel throughout the world.¹⁷ The archbishop has a great deal to say in this text regarding the establishment and shape of ecclesial leadership, as well as about the significance of the Holy Spirit for the operation of this leadership. My purpose in this section is to focus particularly on Cyril's characterization of the Spirit in this text as the one who enlightens the disciples with an enlightenment that revolves around the identity of Jesus Christ, and to demonstrate that, for the archbishop, the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit in the disciples had, and continues to have,

¹⁷ Cf. Daley (2003), 139.

consequences for the function of leadership in the ecclesial community. I will focus initially on Cyril's expositions of John 20.21 and 20.22-23, but will discuss other texts as the examination progresses.

According to Cyril, the purpose of Christ's post-resurrection appearance to the disciples, recounted in John 20, was to bestow the Holy Spirit upon them. We saw in the previous chapter that the archbishop interprets this bestowal as having significant soteriological implications, the disciples being the firstfruits of reborn humanity. This soteriological interpretation, however, does not contain the whole picture of what happened in the upper room. Cyril emphasizes as well that the gift of the Spirit to the disciples was tied to Christ's commissioning of them to become the foundation whereby the entire world would be transformed. As such, for the archbishop this reception had ramifications both for the spreading of Christianity and for the formation and structure of the church in the world.

When Christ bestowed the Spirit on his disciples he called them into the "most glorious apostleship" (εὐκλεστάτην ἀποστολήν)¹⁸ and so "appointed (κεχειροτόνηκε) [them] to be guides and teachers (καθηγητὰς καὶ διδασκάλους) of the world, and ministers (οἰκονόμους) of the divine mysteries (μυστηρίων)" who would illuminate (ἀναλάμψαι) and enlighten (καταυγάζσαι) the world.¹⁹ Cyril appears to understand the 'apostleship' to be a status to which the disciples were elevated; later in the exposition the archbishop refers to Christ "proclaiming [the disciples] to be in the great rank of the

¹⁸ *In Jo.* 20.21 (Pusey, iii. 130¹³).

¹⁹ *Ibid.* (Pusey, iii. 130³⁻⁴).

apostleship (τῶ μεγάλῳ τῆς ἀποστολῆς ἀξιώματι).²⁰ As apostles of Christ they were to become teachers of the world, and Cyril describes their role in the world in something of a poetic manner. The image he conjures up is of the world as a building on the brink of collapse in need of strong pillars to provide the requisite support. The disciples were called to be apostles by Christ, Cyril writes, in order to provide support as “the pillars and ground of the truth”²¹ for a world which lacked the truth and was thus crumbling and about to fall. Alexander Kerrigan points out that Cyril frequently refers to μυστήρια to denote “truths hidden from the profane by means of shadows and enigmas whose secrets are made known only to those who are capable of understanding them correctly.”²² Although Cyril does not clearly elaborate upon what he intends by “divine mysteries,” Kerrigan’s understanding is certainly plausible for the quotation above, especially given the archbishop’s reference to the newly-appointed apostles illuminating the world. That Cyril refers to the apostles as being “ministers of divine mysteries,” accordingly, indicates that he understands them to have attained a form of knowledge that

²⁰ *In Jo.* 20.22-23 (Pusey, iii. 131²³⁻²⁴).

²¹ *In Jo.* 20.21 (Pusey, iii. 130¹⁹⁻²⁰). This reference to the apostles as the “pillars and ground of the truth” is a quotation from 1 Timothy 3.15, and in this verse these words are utilized to describe “the church of the living God.” That Cyril cites 1 Timothy 3.15 to refer to the newly-ordained apostles quietly exemplifies the archbishop’s conviction regarding the centrality of the “glorious apostleship” for the formation, structure, and practice of the church, a centrality that he expounds upon in his exegesis of John 20.22-23.

²² Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter of the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1952), 149.

the world, including their fellow Jews, did not have.²³ Their mission in the world as apostles, therefore, was to have significant epistemological ramifications.

It was necessary, therefore, for the disciples to be enlightened regarding the “divine mysteries” for their mission as apostles, and Cyril posits that their enlightenment was due both to the particular revelation of the Spirit to them as well as to the sanctification that the Spirit brought about in them. I shall discuss the particular revelation of the Spirit in more detail shortly. In regard to the correlation between sanctification and divine knowledge, it is noteworthy that the archbishop devotes attention to the sanctification of the disciples in his exegeses of John 20.21 and 20.22-23. The emphasis throughout this exposition is on the disciples’ attainment of divine knowledge through the Spirit, but Cyril predicates their progression in knowledge on their sanctification, also through the Spirit.

The connection the archbishop establishes between sanctification and divine knowledge is based on his belief, articulated particularly clearly in his exegesis of John 8.43,²⁴ that the human mind is weak because it focuses its attention principally on earthly pleasure rather than on divine things. This love of pleasure weakens the mind and translates into tendencies toward vice and an inability to overcome the passions. Those who sin cannot understand that which comes from God, for the divine is holy, and thus entirely other than that which leads to sin. It is on this basis, I posit, that Cyril refers to

²³ In referring to the enlightening activity of the apostles, Cyril mentions that their mission was directed to the whole world, and not just to those in Judea, thereby demonstrating his conviction that the Jews required the same illumination as the Gentiles.

²⁴ *In Jo.* 8.43 (Pusey, ii. 88-90).

the sanctification of the disciples in his exegesis of John 20.22-23 in the context of describing their attainment of knowledge, particularly knowledge of who Christ was.

After mentioning that the disciples, through the Spirit, were to understand Christ as “God and Lord,”²⁵ Cyril explains the Spirit’s sanctifying operation with reference to the manner in which the priests of the Old Testament were appointed. The appointment of priests under the law provides, “in obscure types (ἐν ἀφανεστέροις τύποις),”²⁶ an outline for the way Christ appointed the disciples to be apostles.²⁷ Cyril highlights that, before receiving their priestly regalia, Aaron and his sons were made to wash with water (Lev 8.6). Moreover, Moses slew a ram and anointed Aaron with the ram’s blood (Lev 8.23). The water and the blood were thus, according to Cyril, instruments of sanctification (ἁγιασμός) that prefigure the way in which the disciples were sanctified to become apostles. He explains:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, changing into the power of truth the figure (σχῆμα) of the law, consecrates (τελειοῖ) through himself the ministers (ἱερουργούς) of the divine altars. For he is the lamb of consecration (τελειώσεως) and he consecrates (τελειοῖ) through true sanctification (ἁγιασμοῦ), making them partakers (κοινωνούς) of his own nature (ιδίας φύσεως) through participation (μετουσίᾳς) in the Spirit, and fashions [their] human nature anew (μεταχαλκεύων) into a power and glory that is superhuman (ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον).²⁸

The law contained merely “shadows and types of the reality (σκιὰς καὶ τύπους τῶν ἀληθινῶν),”²⁹ and therefore the consecration of Aaron and his sons only approximates the transformation experienced by the disciples when the Spirit was bestowed upon them.

²⁵ *In Jo.* 20.22-23 (Pusey, iii. 132¹¹⁻¹⁵).

²⁶ *Ibid.* (Pusey, iii. 133⁶⁻⁷).

²⁷ *Ibid.* (Pusey, iii. 132²⁴-133¹⁴).

²⁸ *Ibid.* (Pusey, iii. 133⁷⁻¹⁴).

²⁹ *Ibid.* (Pusey, iii. 132²⁵).

Christ himself, Cyril writes, is the lamb of consecration and therefore the means by which the disciples were to be sanctified. The sanctification he bestowed was directly tied to himself, for in giving the Holy Spirit to the disciples he made them partakers of his own nature. Their sanctification, in other words, revolved around an experience of Jesus Christ himself, and as Cyril explains a bit later in the exposition, this participation in Christ meant that Christ was formed in them so that they would become like him.³⁰ Cyril writes that the disciples were the “firstfruits” of this transformation,³¹ but it appears that the archbishop understands there to be something distinctive in the disciples’ experience of sanctification in that they acquired “power and glory” that transcended human nature. Although the archbishop is not clear about what this means, it may be that Cyril here suggests that the sanctification they received transformed them in such a manner that they acquired authority.

Whatever Cyril may mean, it is clear that he understands the disciples’ sanctification, a sanctification through participation in Christ himself, to be an integral facet of their progression in knowledge. But Cyril appears to posit as well that the Spirit’s enlightenment of the disciples is due to the specific revelation of Christ by the third person of the Trinity. The disciples “would never have understood the mystery (μυστήριον) with respect to Christ, nor would they have been true spiritual teachers (μυσταγωγοί³²), if they had not advanced in the light of the Spirit to a revelation of

³⁰ Ibid. (Pusey, iii. 135²¹⁻²⁸).

³¹ Ibid. (Pusey, iii. 135²⁸).

³² Cf. Lampe, 891.

things which surpass reason and understanding (ὑπὲρ νοῦν καὶ λόγον).”³³ Note that Cyril focuses particularly on the disciples’ comprehension of “the mystery with respect to Christ,” suggesting that the enlightenment of the Spirit is connected to apprehension of Christ himself. The archbishop explains that the disciples were called as apostles to proclaim that Jesus was the Lord, that he was God himself. And because no person, as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12.3, is able to say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit, the disciples “received the grace of the Spirit in connection with the dignity (ἀξιώματι) of the apostleship.”³⁴ Cyril suggests that the Spirit revealed to the disciples the identity of Christ as God made man, and therefore that the disciples’ calling to be guides and teachers to the world centred around preaching the truth regarding the person of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, the disciples’ full apprehension of Christ’s identity as both God and man was the impetus, not only for their reception of the Spirit, but also for the manner in which they received the Spirit. According to Cyril, Christ breathed the Holy Spirit upon his disciples as a means of vividly demonstrating to his disciples his status as the divine Son of God responsible both for humanity’s creation and salvation. It was necessary “that the Son should appear as a partner with the Father in bestowing (συνδοτεῖρα) the Spirit,” for it was necessary that he be understood to be the power of the Father, and as the one who created all things.³⁵ Cyril argues, in other words, that the action of Christ physically breathing the Spirit upon his disciples was intended to underline a theological

³³ *In Jo.* 20.22-23 (Pusey, iii. 132¹¹⁻¹⁵).

³⁴ *Ibid.* (Pusey, iii. 132¹⁵⁻²¹).

³⁵ *In Jo.* 20.22-23 (Pusey, iii. 134²³⁻²⁸).

point regarding the divinity of the Son, who with the Father bestowed the Spirit on his disciples.³⁶

Both in the manner in which the Spirit was bestowed and in the revelation provided by the Spirit, the disciples-made-apostles came to a comprehension of Jesus Christ as both God and man, and were thus able to preach this truth in the world. But what is it about the Spirit in particular that makes him the means by which the disciples were to come to the fullness of knowledge regarding Christ? Cyril implicitly associates the Spirit's revelation of Christ to the disciples in his exegesis of John 20.22-23 with his identity as the Spirit of Christ, but he does not fully develop this connection. He does, however, develop the relationship between the enlightening activity and the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son elsewhere.

³⁶ Cyril makes this point regarding the pedagogical impetus behind Christ's bestowal of the Spirit in John 20.22-23 as a means of addressing the, for him, troubling exegetical dilemma of whether the disciples received the Spirit immediately after Christ's resurrection as described in John 20, whether they received him at Pentecost (Acts 2), or whether they received him twice. Cyril informs us that this exegetical problem is made acute by the fact that Jesus, in John 16.7, tells his disciples that they will receive the Holy Spirit once he has ascended: "[F]or if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." If Jesus states clearly that the Spirit will not be given until he is gone, Cyril asks what we are to make of John 20.22-23 where Jesus breathes the Spirit upon his disciples prior to his ascension. This question leads the archbishop to reflect on the nature of humanity's creation and fall as a means of explaining why Christ bestowed the Spirit upon his disciples in the manner that he did. Christ breathed the Spirit on his disciples to recapitulate the bestowal of the Spirit upon Adam in Genesis 2.7, and also to demonstrate clearly to the disciples his identity as the divine Son of God. Cyril argues that Jesus was not lying when he stated that he would send the Spirit upon his departure, for when he ascended he gave the Spirit abundantly, through faith and through baptism to those who were willing to receive him. However, he breathed the Spirit on his disciples in order to do something of tremendous soteriological and Christological significance.

For example, in his exegesis of John 16.12-13³⁷ Cyril discusses the transformation that the Holy Spirit enacted in the disciples, and focuses his attention on their progression in knowledge through the Spirit. Prior to their reception of the Spirit, the disciples lived and thought in an “overly Jewish manner (λουδαϊκώτερόν),”³⁸ by which Cyril means that they remained in the “obsolete letter of the law,”³⁹ their minds incapable of transcending the shadow of truth in the law in order to get to the reality. Christ promises, according to Cyril, that the Spirit would “change the elementary nature (μεταστοιχειώση) of [their] minds” so that they would be able to understand things concerning Christ himself.⁴⁰ They would be “formed anew (ἀναπεπλασμένοις) through the Spirit to newness of life and knowledge (γνώσεως),”⁴¹ and this transformation would enable them to comprehend “new notions (λογισμῶν).”⁴² Cyril describes their enlightenment through the Spirit as follows:

When they were enriched (πλουτήσαντες) with the grace that is from above and from heaven their strength was renewed, according to what was written, and they came into a better knowledge than they had previously, then we hear them say with courage, “But we have the mind of Christ” [1 Cor 2.16]. By the mind of the saviour they mean nothing else but the coming of the Holy Spirit to them, who revealed (διεκκαλύπτων) to them in a fitting manner all things whatsoever it was necessary for them to know and learn.⁴³

³⁷ These verses read as follows: “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things to come.”

³⁸ *In Jo.* 16.12-13 (Pusey, ii. 627³).

³⁹ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 626²⁹⁻³⁰).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 626⁸⁻¹⁵).

⁴¹ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 626²³⁻²⁵).

⁴² *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 626²⁷-627¹).

⁴³ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 627²⁷-628⁵).

Cyril immediately fleshes out this perception of the Spirit as the ‘mind of Christ’ by concentrating on Christ’s reference to the Holy Spirit as being the ‘Spirit of truth’ in John 16.13. Christ called the Paraclete the ‘Spirit of truth’ as a means of underlining the fact that the Spirit is his own, for Christ is the truth.⁴⁴ An account of the Holy Spirit’s relationship to the Son follows, wherein Cyril argues that the Spirit shares an “identity of nature (ταυτότητα φύσεως)” with the Son because the Spirit “proceeds naturally (πρόεισι φυσικῶς)”⁴⁵ from his substance. This relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Son meant, according to Cyril, that Christ’s promise to send the disciples the Paraclete was not a promise to send them something foreign to him. It meant, rather, that Christ promised them his own presence in another form, and therefore that the Spirit’s revelation is intrinsically connected to his relationship with the Son.⁴⁶ For, as Cyril argues, the Spirit has “perfect knowledge of the truth” – that is, of the Son – because he is the Spirit of truth.⁴⁷ Thus, when Christ promises the disciples the Spirit of truth, he promises that the Holy Spirit will reveal nothing to them that is contrary to Christ’s teaching, nor will he expound upon “strange doctrine (ξένον μάθημα)”, nor will he introduce laws peculiar to himself.⁴⁸ Rather, Cyril writes utilizing Christ’s voice, “since his is my Spirit and, as it were, my mind, he will certainly speak of things concerning me.”⁴⁹ As the Spirit of Truth – that is, the Spirit of the Son – he will engraft (ἐνθήσει) in

⁴⁴ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 628⁸⁻¹¹).

⁴⁵ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 628¹⁷; 628¹⁶).

⁴⁶ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 628¹¹⁻¹⁴).

⁴⁷ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 628¹⁹⁻²⁰).

⁴⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 628³⁰-629⁴).

⁴⁹ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 629⁴⁻⁵).

the disciples' hearts the mystery (μυστήριον) of the Truth in its entirety.⁵⁰ For as the Spirit of the Son, he knows the Son completely, and to illustrate this point Cyril cites 1 Corinthians 2.11,⁵¹ implicitly suggesting that Paul's reference to the "Spirit of God" is a reference to the Spirit as the Spirit of the Son.⁵²

Therefore, as the Spirit of the Son, the Holy Spirit is uniquely suited to reveal the Son entirely to those who receive him. This point is elaborated upon in Cyril's exegesis of John 16.14. Here the archbishop writes that those who receive the Spirit have their minds elevated above "arrogance of the Jews"⁵³ who do not comprehend the divinity of Jesus Christ. Consequently, when the Spirit was given to the disciples he glorified the Son by revealing "the mystery (μυστήριον) that is in Christ,"⁵⁴ namely, "that he was truly God and the offspring (καρπός) of God the Father's substance (οὐσίας)."⁵⁵ According to Cyril, this revelation of the Son by the Spirit is predicated upon Christ's statement in John 16.14 that the Spirit "will take what is mine," an idea that the archbishop proceeds to explicate.

Cyril is quick to mention that this affirmation that the Spirit receives from the Son does not mean that the Spirit is less than the Son. Rather, the Spirit is said to receive from the Son because he "is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with the Son, and divinely

⁵⁰ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 628¹⁹⁻²²).

⁵¹ "For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God."

⁵² Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 628²²⁻²⁹).

⁵³ *In Jo.* 16.14 (Pusey, ii. 633¹⁵⁻¹⁶). See also (Pusey, ii. 634¹⁻²).

⁵⁴ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 633¹¹⁻¹²).

⁵⁵ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 634²¹⁻²²).

proceeds (πρόεισι) through him,”⁵⁶ meaning, according to the archbishop, that the Holy Spirit has in himself by nature all that the Son has in himself.⁵⁷ Cyril contends that the Spirit’s revelation of the Son is based on the relationship he has with the Son. On the one hand, to say that the Spirit has all that the Son has in himself is to make a comment on the Spirit’s divinity, and so to posit that the Spirit is divine in the same manner as the Son is divine. But on the other hand, to say that the Spirit has all that the Son has in himself is also to make a comment on the absolute unity of the two persons, and so to posit that the Spirit acts in total conformity and singleness with the Son. It is the latter facet of the Spirit’s relationship to the Son that Cyril lays stress upon as he concludes his exegesis of John 16.14: “He says, therefore, that the Paraclete ‘will take what is mine and declare it to you.’ That is, he will say nothing that is at variance with my purpose (σκοπὸν), but since he is my Spirit, he will certainly say the same thing (ταυτολογήσει) [as me], and he will show you of my will.”⁵⁸

Cyril is clear in the above two passages of exposition that the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of the Son, enlightened the disciples regarding Jesus Christ himself in order that they might comprehend Christ’s identity and his teachings fully. There is, in short, a christological focus to the Spirit’s revelation to the disciples that, as Cyril writes in his exegesis of John 20.21, made them capable to be guides and teachers of the world. In various places in his writings, Cyril fleshes out precisely how this pneumatic, christologically-centred enlightenment manifested itself in the apostles. And for the

⁵⁶ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 635¹¹⁻¹²).

⁵⁷ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 635²⁹-636⁴).

⁵⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 636⁹⁻¹⁴).

archbishop, it manifested itself in the apostles' ability to comprehend the true (i.e., christological) meaning of the Old Testament scriptures, and in their knowledge and articulation of Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God made man.

The Apostles' Knowledge of Scripture and Doctrine

In his exposition of John 17.18-19, Cyril discusses why the disciples received the Spirit and how this reception affected their mission. He characterizes the disciples' reception of the Spirit in terms of their enlightenment, as well as their sanctification and strengthening. His comments are worth quoting at length:

For truly the disciples would not have come to such brilliance (φαιδρότης) as to be illuminators (φωστῆρες) of the whole world, nor would they have withstood against tempters or the terrible assaults of the devil, had their minds not been fortified (διαπεφραγμένοι) by participation (μετουσία) in the Spirit, had they not been continually enabled through him to do an unheard of and superhuman injunction, and had they not been guided by the illumination (διδουχίας) of the Spirit, without effort, to a pure knowledge (γνώσιν ἀκραιφνή) of the divinely inspired scriptures and the sacred doctrines (τῶν ἱερῶν δογμάτων) of the church.⁵⁹

The related themes of enlightenment and moral purity weave their way throughout this passage as they do in Cyril's exegeses of John 20.19-21 and 20.22-23. The disciples were only capable of overcoming temptation because their minds were protected by the Spirit – Cyril's terminology here evokes the imagery of a pneumatological barricade that preserves the disciples in the midst of attack – and it was precisely because their minds were “fortified by participation in the Spirit” that the disciples became φωστῆρες themselves and teachers of the world. The archbishop identifies the illumination of the Spirit with the disciples' attainment of knowledge of both the scriptures and the doctrines of the church.

⁵⁹ *In Jo.* 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 717¹⁸-718⁴).

Cyril does not expand on the disciples' knowledge of the scriptures in this context, but given that the primary focus of *In Joannem* was the defence of Nicene orthodoxy against Arianism, and given that much of his exposition on John 17.18-19 focuses on the divinity and consubstantiality of the Son with the Father,⁶⁰ the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ,⁶¹ and the Trinity,⁶² it is probable that such topics are indicative of the doctrines to which he refers in the above quotation. This, however, is not made explicit in the exposition.

Elsewhere Cyril elaborates on how the disciples' reception of the Spirit brought with it understanding of the Old Testament in a manner that was previously inaccessible to them. In particular, the disciples attained knowledge of the christological import of the Hebrew scriptures through the Spirit. Cyril describes this enlightenment in the concluding paragraphs of a sermon on Luke 18.31-34,⁶³ focusing particularly on verse 34's reference to the disciples not understanding Christ's statement that he would be killed, that he would rise again, and that all of this would take place in fulfilment of the scriptures.⁶⁴ The archbishop argues that the disciples did not comprehend Jesus here chiefly because they did not, at this point, understand the scriptures. Had they understood them they would have comprehended that, according to the Old Testament,

⁶⁰ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 718-20).

⁶¹ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 720-28).

⁶² Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 718-20).

⁶³ Luke 18.31-34 reads: "And taking the twelve, he said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written of the Son of man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon; they will scourge him and kill him, and on the third day he will rise.' But they understood none of these things; this saying was hid from them, and they did not grasp what was said."

⁶⁴ *In Luc.* 18.31-34 (Reuss, 190).

the Son of God was to die and rise again. The disciples' ignorance of the scriptures is, according to Cyril, clearly demonstrated by the actions of Peter when, after hearing from Jesus that he must go to Jerusalem and that he would die and rise again, he rebuked Jesus, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you" (Mt 16.22). Cyril writes that Peter's rebuke stemmed from an ignorance of the "depth of the mystery (τοῦ μυστηρίου τὸ βάθος)" contained in the scriptures regarding Christ's death and resurrection. However, Peter's ignorance, and the ignorance of all the disciples, was erased when they received the Spirit. For when Christ rose from the dead he opened their eyes (Luke 24.31) in that "they were enlightened (κατεφωτίσθησαν) and enriched by the abundant participation of the Spirit (τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος μέθεξιν ἀμφιλαφῇ), so as to say, 'And we have the prophetic word made more sure' [2 Pet 1.19]."⁶⁵ Although initially unable to comprehend the purport of scripture, the disciples, through illumination of the Holy Spirit, were enabled clearly to see the mysteries contained in the Old Testament, mysteries that revolved around the person of Christ.

Cyril makes a similar point in his exegesis of John 12.16 – "His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been done to him" – emphasizing that the disciples came to an understanding of the references to Christ in the scriptures. Here Cyril once again contrasts the ignorance of the disciples prior to the resurrection with their state after receiving the Holy Spirit. John, Cyril writes, "does not blush to mention the ignorance (ἄγνοια) of the disciples, and again their knowledge (γνώσις), since his aim (σκοπός) was not to pay no regard to

⁶⁵ Ibid.

human respect, but to defend (συνηγορῆσαι) the glory of the Spirit.”⁶⁶ According to the archbishop, the disciples were ignorant of the significance of Jesus’ procession into Jerusalem on a donkey. The disciples’ ignorance was reflective of the inability of the Jews in general to understand the true meaning of that which was written in their own scriptures; that is to say, neither the disciples nor their fellow Jews deciphered the christological import of their own sacred writings. However, Cyril emphasizes that the darkness of the disciples’ knowledge was dissipated with their reception of the Holy Spirit: “They were enlightened (ἐφωτίσθησαν) with knowledge from the time of the resurrection, when Christ breathed into their faces, and they became different from others.”⁶⁷ All that had been “hidden (ἀποκρύφων)”⁶⁸ in the scriptures was opened up to the disciples at this moment of epistemological transformation, when “knowledge of the divine words was revealed to them through the Spirit.”⁶⁹

These accounts of the disciples’ ignorance of the Hebrew scriptures illustrate a central facet of Cyril’s perception of how the Old Testament was to be interpreted. Alexander Kerrigan points out in his study of Cyril’s Old Testament exegesis that when the archbishop appeals to the depths that are contained in the Hebrew scriptures, he is most frequently referring to the mysteries concerning Christ that are evident in these pages to those who read the scriptures properly.⁷⁰ In the examples provided above regarding the disciples’ ignorance of the true meaning of the Old Testament, it is

⁶⁶ *In Jo.* 12.16 (Pusey, ii. 307²⁻⁴).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 307¹⁰⁻¹²).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 307⁹).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 306²⁷⁻²⁸).

⁷⁰ Kerrigan (1952), 131; 200-1.

precisely these mysteries concerning Christ that the disciples, according to Cyril, do not comprehend. It is the archbishop's contention that christological threads were subtly woven by God into the Old Testament, and by this means the mystery of Christ was declared to all, albeit in shadows and enigmas. "Christ is the end of the law and the prophets," Cyril writes in his introduction to his commentary on Isaiah, meaning that the "divine mysteries" regarding the Son of God made man are strewn through the pages of the Hebrew scriptures.⁷¹ Kerrigan points to Cyril's comments in his *Glaphyra in Genesim* regarding the mysteries contained in the Old Testament to illustrate the archbishop's understanding of the christological depths of the Hebrew scriptures:

The inspired scripture, 'in many ways and many means' [Heb 1.1], described beforehand the types (τύπους) of the salvation to be accomplished by Christ, thereby bringing considerable utility to its readers. As skilled painters make use of decorations involving the use of many colours, bringing the shadows into clearer vision and toning them down considerably so as to make a pleasing picture, so too did God (the wise Artificer of all things) announce beforehand in subtle fashion the beauty of the mystery (μυστηρίου) by means of so many different glories.⁷²

Kerrigan points out that the prophets, according to Cyril, had knowledge of spiritual things, and that they had such knowledge through the Holy Spirit, who gave the prophets the requisite spiritual vision regarding Christ.⁷³ Through the illumination of the Spirit, for example, Moses was frequently aware of the inner, spiritual meanings found beyond the letter of the law, meanings that pointed to the incarnation of the Son of God.⁷⁴ David also beheld τὰ πνευματικά, and it was through this perception that he knew the particulars regarding the incarnation of the Son of God, as demonstrated in various

⁷¹ *In Is.* Prooemium (PG 70, 9A). ET: Wilken (2007), 7.

⁷² *Glaph in Gen.* 140 (PG 69, 225C). ET: Kerrigan (1952), 200-1.

⁷³ Kerrigan (1952), 233-4.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 228-9. He points to *Glaph in Ex.* 328 (PG 69, 517A).

Psalms.⁷⁵ And as Cyril states in *In Joannem*, the prophets were “Spirit-bearers” (πνευματοφόροι), and it was this that enabled them to utter divine mysteries concerning Christ in their writings.⁷⁶

The Spirit by whom the Old Testament writers were able to write mysteries concerning Christ was the same Spirit who was breathed upon the disciples by Christ, and it was by this Spirit that the disciples were able fully to comprehend those Spirit-inspired mysteries contained in the Old Testament. When the disciples received the Spirit, Cyril writes in exposition of Joel 2.28-29, “they gave utterance to prophecy, understanding (συνιέντες) and repeating mysteries (τὰ μυστήρια) concerning Christ from the holy prophets.”⁷⁷ The christological substance of the Old Testament opened up for the disciples through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, they became capable of expounding upon these scriptures in order “to bring the listeners to obedience and the clear belief that the acceptable time had arrived, and the former prophecies through the law and the prophets regarding Christ had now come to fulfilment.”⁷⁸

Related to the disciples’ Spirit-inspired comprehension of the scriptures was their understanding of doctrine through the Spirit. Cyril focuses particularly on their knowledge christological doctrine and appears to take for granted that understanding Christ as the divine Son of God made man carries with it knowledge of Trinitarian doctrine. I have already shown above that Cyril emphasizes the Spirit’s revelation of

⁷⁵ Kerrigan (1952), 230-1.

⁷⁶ *In Jo.* 7.39 (Pusey, i. 690¹¹⁻²⁰).

⁷⁷ *In. Jl.* 227 (PG 71, 377A). ET: Robert C. Hill (trans), *St Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*, vol. 1 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 294 (modified).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* ET: Hill (2007), 294.

Christ as both God and man to the disciples, connecting this revelation to their task of being illuminators of truth in the world. In the opening pages of *In Joannem*, Cyril provides a narrative of how and why John's gospel was written.⁷⁹ Taking John as an example of apostolic leadership and inspiration, Cyril outlines in this account his conception of how the apostles undertook leadership in the early church.

The archbishop paints a picture of the theological climate of the first century that very much resembles that of the fourth and fifth centuries.⁸⁰ According to Cyril, there were some in the early church who, soon after Christ's ascension, began to deny the divinity and eternality of the Son, and who argued that the Word of God only came into being when he was born of the virgin. Cyril posits that the scandal caused by this heretical view of Christ had no small effect on the first century church, with those of simpler faith being led away by such doctrines. It was at this point the wiser believers in the church, distressed by this state of affairs, approached John to teach them "with the illumination (φωταγωγίαις) that is through the Holy Spirit"⁸¹ and to provide a means of saving those who had already fallen into the snare of heresy. The evangelist realized that he could not sit idly by and allow such a state of affairs to continue, so in response he wrote his gospel with the intention of clearly articulating the divinity and eternality of the Word, an intention that manifests itself in the opening sentence of his gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John,

⁷⁹ This account is to found in *In Jo. Lib. I* (Pusey, i. 13²⁰-15¹⁰).

⁸⁰ Maurice F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 11.

⁸¹ *In Jo. Lib. I* (Pusey, i. 14²⁸).

therefore, through the Holy Spirit, had a full comprehension of Christological issues and wrote his gospel accordingly.

But, according to Cyril, in addition to writing his gospel to respond to theological crises in his own day, John also wrote the gospel to address the theological turmoil that he knew would occur in the centuries to come. For John was “illuminated (φωταγωγούμενος) by the divine Spirit to the knowledge of things to come,”⁸² and so was well aware of the dangers that Arianism would pose. “The Spirit-bearer (ὁ πνευματοφόρος),” Cyril writes with reference to John, “was not ignorant that there would arise some in the last times who would speak against (κατηγοροῦντες) the essence of the only-begotten, ‘denying the master who bought them’ [2 Pet 2.1], by supposing that the Word who appeared from God the Father was not, by nature, God.”⁸³ There would be others who would deny the “holy Trinity” by failing to recognize that the Father and the Son exist as “individual hypostases (ὑποστάσεις ἰδικαῖς)” and by positing instead that the Son and the Father are “one and the same (ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτόν).”⁸⁴ Accordingly, John precisely and carefully enunciated the divinity of both the Word and the Father in the opening verses of his gospel,⁸⁵ showing that “that Word is one and only and true, from God, and in God, and with God.”⁸⁶

⁸² *In Jo.* 1.2 (Pusey, i. 45¹³⁻¹⁴).

⁸³ *In Jo.* 1.1 (Pusey, i. 31⁵⁻⁹). ET: Pusey, 22 (revised).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 24⁴⁻²⁴).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 46⁶⁻⁷).

With the apostle John, therefore, we have a concrete example of a “Spirit-bearer”⁸⁷ who had knowledge of the “divine doctrines” and who demonstrates this knowledge throughout his gospel.⁸⁸ He wrote his gospel in his role as a leader of the early church and, according to Cyril, clearly articulated christological doctrine (and related to this the doctrine of the Trinity) for his own generation and for the generations to follow. John was, like all the evangelists, “taught by God (θεοδιδάκτος),”⁸⁹ and wrote with precision in order to compose that which would be of most profit to those readers yearning to search after the mind of that which is hidden in their gospels, and so to arrive at knowledge of the “divine doctrines (τῶν θεῶν δογματῶν).”⁹⁰ Cyril credits the evangelists as being inspired by the Spirit, and quotes Jesus’ statement in Matthew 10.20 – “for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of the Father speaking through you” – as being indicative of the central role the Spirit played in leading the evangelists in the composition of their gospels.⁹¹

It was precisely John’s enlightenment through the Spirit regarding doctrine that the wiser believers in John’s first-century church sought to exploit when they asked him to come to their aid against the Christological errors of the heretics. He was able to articulate who Christ was as the divine and eternal Son of God because he had attained true knowledge of doctrine through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Cyril does not, in these pages, specifically associate the Spirit’s illumination with his identity as the Spirit

⁸⁷ See for example *ibid.* (Pusey, i. 24⁴).

⁸⁸ Cf. *In Jo. Lib. I* (Pusey, i. 13³⁻¹²).

⁸⁹ *In Jo. Lib I* (Pusey, i. 11⁷).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 11¹²).

⁹¹ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 12⁶⁻⁸).

of the Son. However, given the clear association he makes elsewhere between the two, and given the emphasis Cyril places on the christological thrust of John's enlightenment through the Spirit, it can reasonably be assumed that his understanding of the Spirit's relationship with the Son guides his reflections on John's knowledge of doctrine.

Cyril's emphasis on the Spirit-filled disciples' attainment of knowledge of scripture and doctrine underlines his perception of the authority of the apostles to teach and enlighten the world and so to govern the early church. It should be pointed out that Cyril does not limit the attainment of knowledge of doctrine and the scriptures solely to the apostles. He is clear that growth in knowledge of doctrine and scripture characterizes the spiritual development of all believers who have received the Holy Spirit. But while enlightenment is within the purview of all Spirit-filled believers, the archbishop lays particular emphasis on the enlightenment of the apostles. Cyril writes with reference to Christ's breathing of the Spirit upon the disciples that "it was necessary for the spiritual leaders (μυσταγωγούς) of the church and future teachers (παιδευτάς) of the world to be adorned (κατακαλλυνέσθαι) before all with the gift of the Holy Spirit."⁹² They were called to become apostles by Jesus Christ, illuminators of the truth to the world in order that all might come to believe. The truth they would proclaim, the truth they attained through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, was concentrated on Christ. For through the Spirit they became capable of seeing the christological nuances in the Old Testament and were fully enlightened to understand Christ as the divine Son of God made man.

⁹² *In Jl.* 226 (PG 71, 375D). ET: Hill (2007), 294.

Cyril submits that the raising up of leaders for the church who would teach the world about Christ, explain the christological meaning of scripture, and correct the christological errors of heretics was inextricable from the disciples' reception of the Holy Spirit. The centrality of the Spirit for the enlightenment of the disciples appears to be predicated on the Spirit's unity with the Son. As the Spirit of the Son he made Christ known entirely to the disciples when he was breathed upon them. As the Spirit of the Son he revealed Christ to the writers of the Old Testament that their writings might make Christ manifest in hidden and subtle ways. And as the Spirit of the Son, he opened the eyes of the disciples to see Christ in the pages of the Hebrew scriptures. The Holy Spirit thus made the disciples, whose ignorance prior to the resurrection was noteworthy, enlightened to the fullness of the mystery of Christ and made them enlighteners (φωστῆρες) themselves, capable of leading the church and so of being the foundation for truth in a world lacking in such truth.

The Holy Spirit and the Apostles' Successors

The pneumatologically-derived authority of the apostles was not, according to Cyril, localized only in the first leaders of the church, but continues on in their successors, the ecclesial leaders who govern the church. Cyril particularly emphasizes the teaching authority of the apostles' successors, and suggests that they are enlightened by the Holy Spirit to carry out the task of leading the church in truth. In his exegesis of John 6.12-13 and Isaiah 33.20-21, as well as in his references to the pneumatological inspiration of the bishops of the Nicene council, Cyril submits that the bishops of the

church are the apostles' successors who are, like the apostles, enlightened by the Spirit to guide the church.

John 6.12-13 are two verses from John's account of the feeding of the five thousand that refer to the disciples gathering up the remaining fragments of bread and fish after the crowd had eaten. After explaining how the excess food demonstrates Christ's divinity and manifests the generosity of Christ, which we are to imitate, Cyril proceeds to explicate these verses "spiritually" (πνευματικῶς).⁹³ The archbishop contends that there is in the gathering up of the fragments of food "a hidden (μυστικόν) and spiritual (πνευματικόν) object of contemplation (θεώρημα)" that requires elucidation.⁹⁴ Christ instructed the multitudes to sit, and once he had blessed the food, he distributed the loaves and the fish, doing so, Cyril points out, "through the service (ὑπουργίας) of the disciples."⁹⁵ Once all had eaten their fill, Christ commanded the disciples to gather up the leftover food. Cyril argues that we are to understand from this event that Christ is the president (πανηγυριάρχης⁹⁶) of all believers, nourishing those who approach him with "that which is divine and heavenly."⁹⁷ And that with which Christ nourishes believers is, according to Cyril, knowledge (μαθήμασι) of the law and the prophets, of the gospels, and of that which is from the apostles.⁹⁸ Cyril's reference to the knowledge being of the law and the prophets suggests that he has in mind true knowledge of the scriptures, and his reference to the knowledge being of the gospels and

⁹³ *In Jo.* 16.12-13 (Pusey, i. 420¹⁰).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 420¹⁵⁻¹⁶).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 420¹⁸⁻¹⁹).

⁹⁶ See Lampe, 1002.

⁹⁷ *In Jo.* 6.12-13 (Pusey, i. 420²²⁻²⁶).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* (Pusey, i. 420²⁶⁻²⁷).

of the New Testament epistles probably indicates that he has in mind the apostolic teaching regarding Christ and God (i.e., the church's doctrines).

According to Cyril, John's account of the feeding of the five thousand is intended to underline precisely how knowledge of scripture and doctrine is given to believers, and the archbishop argues that Christ's use of the disciples to give bread and fish to the masses is indicative of the manner in which the disciples, and their successors, disseminated, and continue to disseminate, divine knowledge. Just as the disciples distributed bread and fish from Christ's hand to the five thousand, so they ministered grace from above in that the Holy Spirit spoke in them (Mt 10.20). The knowledge that the disciples, through the Holy Spirit, dispensed was "spiritual food (τὰς πνευματικὰς τροφάς)," and in dispensing this food and "ministering (διακονησάμενοι) the good things (τὰ ἀγαθὰ) of our saviour," they obtained "the fullest grace of a position of honour (φιλοτιμίας⁹⁹) from God."¹⁰⁰

As he does in texts already examined above, Cyril here depicts the disciples as elevated to a status as Spirit-inspired dispensers of divine knowledge. Moreover, at the end of his exegesis of John 6.12-13, after referring to the "position of honour" attained by the disciples, Cyril posits that the feeding of the five thousand refers not simply to the disciples' ministering of divine knowledge to believers, but also to the same work that is accomplished by ecclesial leaders thereafter. There is no doubt, Cyril writes in conclusion of his exposition, that that which is signified by the feeding of the five thousand (i.e., the ability of the Spirit-filled disciples to dispense knowledge) "will be

⁹⁹ Cf. Lampe, 1484.

¹⁰⁰ *In Jo.* 6.12-13 (Pusey, i. 421²⁻⁶).

transferred (διαβήσεται) also to the rulers (ἡγούμενους) of the holy churches.”¹⁰¹ That Cyril has in mind the bishops of the churches is evident from his use of the term ἡγούμενος, which he uses elsewhere with reference to prelates.¹⁰² He submits, therefore, that continuity exists between the Spirit-inspired disciples and the bishops who continue to lead ecclesial communities. The implication is that bishops continue to dispense knowledge of doctrine and scripture through the Holy Spirit, who speaks through these bishops just as he spoke through the disciples.

Cyril writes similarly in a passage from his commentary on Isaiah 33.20-21.¹⁰³ Interpreting Isaiah’s reference to the city of Zion in verse 20 as a symbol for the church on earth, the archbishop briefly expounds on the church and on the importance of her leaders.¹⁰⁴ The church, he writes, is compared by Isaiah to “tents which shall not be shaken,” and its permanence is related to its continual exaltation of Christ “as God, as truly Son of the Father, as Word inhominated for the salvation of all that is.”¹⁰⁵ Isaiah refers as well to the city of Zion having “rivers and wide and spacious channels” in it, and it is with reference to these rivers and channels that Cyril discusses apostolic leadership and the leadership of those after the apostles:

¹⁰¹ Ibid. (Pusey, i. 421⁹⁻¹¹).

¹⁰² Cf. *In Luc.* 5.2 (Reuss, 243); Lampe, 601.

¹⁰³ These verses read as follows (translated from the Septuagint): “Behold the city of Zion, our salvation. Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a rich city, tents which shall not be shaken. Neither will the pegs of her tent be moved for all eternity, nor will her ropes be broken. For the name of the Lord is great for you. There will be a place for you, rivers and wide and spacious channels.” The passage under consideration is discussed in Norman Russell, “The Church in the Commentaries of St Cyril of Alexandria,” in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 7.2 (2007), 76-7. The English translation of Isaiah 33.20-21 is by Russell.

¹⁰⁴ *In Is.* 32.20-21 (PG 70, 733D).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. (PG 70, 736B). ET: Russell (2007), 76.

These [rivers and channels] signify (σημαίνει) the holy evangelists, the apostles, and the rulers (ἡγουμένους) of the churches through the ages (κατὰ καιρούς), who, like the streams of a river, irrigate the minds of believers, flooding them with the words of God, pouring into them an abundance of consolation, that is to say, through the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁶

The fact that Cyril lists the bishops in the same breath as the apostles is an indication that he perceives the bishops to be successors to the apostles. Indeed, Cyril characterizes the bishops as Spirit-inspired teachers who carry out the same teaching work as that undertaken by the apostles themselves. Perhaps implicit in the archbishop's characterization above is an understanding of the bishops as the bearers and preservers of truth regarding Jesus Christ, who guide and teach through the Holy Spirit. It is the bishops, therefore, who, in line with the apostles, give stability to the church through their continued proclamation of Christ.

Cyril's conception of the bishops as Spirit-inspired teachers who enlighten others with the truth is perhaps most clearly articulated whenever he refers, particularly in his anti-Nestorian writings, to the trinitarian and christological formulations that emerged from the Council of Nicaea in 325. The enlightenment of the bishops of Nicaea by the Spirit appears to be, for Cyril, a practical example of how the Spirit inspires bishops to govern the church. In *De Symbolo*, a work composed around 438 to address perceived misinterpretations of the Nicene Creed,¹⁰⁷ Cyril describes the fathers of Nicaea as successors of the disciples (οἱ μετ' αὐτοὺς γεγονότες) who were "enlighteners of the churches (φωστῆρες ἐκκλησιῶν)" and "skilled spiritual teachers (μυσταγωγοί),"¹⁰⁸ and associates their formulation of the creed with "the light of truth infused (ἐνίησι) by the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. ET: Russell (2007), 76.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Wickham (1983), xxvi-xxviii.

¹⁰⁸ *De Symb.* 4 (Wickham (1983), 98). ET: Wickham (1983), 99.

grace that is through the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰⁹ In this text the archbishop uses terminology he used elsewhere to describe the teaching authority of the disciples made apostles, an authority made possible through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. In addition to the reference above to the Spirit in relation to the fathers of Nicaea, Cyril consistently emphasizes that the Nicene fathers were enlightened through the Spirit, and frequently cites Matthew 10.20 – “for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” – to underline that the creed was Spirit-inspired. In the first book of *Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias*, for example, the archbishop argues against Nestorius’ unwillingness to say that God had been born in the flesh, and does so with appeal both to the “divinely inspired scripture” and to the “symbol of the church’s faith,” the Nicene Creed.¹¹⁰ With reference to the latter, Cyril posits that the fathers formulated the Nicene Creed “through the illumination (φωταγωγ(α)ς) of the Spirit,”¹¹¹ and submits that Christ’s promise that the Spirit would speak through the disciples (Mt 10.20) applies also to the fathers of the council.¹¹² In his letter to the monks of Egypt, he writes that the fathers of the Nicene council clearly defined the “blameless faith while inspired (ἐννηχοῦντος) by the truth of the Holy Spirit.”¹¹³ Alluding to Matthew 10.20 once again, Cyril posits that it was not they who spoke but the Spirit speaking through them. And in

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. My own translation.

¹¹⁰ *Adv. Nest.* I.5 (ACO I.1.5, 25³³⁻³⁶).

¹¹¹ Ibid. (ACO I.1.5, 25³⁶⁻³⁷).

¹¹² Ibid. I.7 (ACO I.1.5, 27²⁵⁻³²).

¹¹³ *Ep.* 1.5 (*Ad Monachos*) (ACO I.1.1, 12²⁰⁻³¹). ET: McGuckin (2004), 248.

his third letter to Nestorius, Cyril quotes the Nicene Creed at length and declares that the confessions of the Nicene fathers were made “with the Holy Spirit speaking in them.”¹¹⁴

More references from Cyril’s writings to the activity of the Holy Spirit in and through the Nicene council could be provided, but the above are sufficient to illustrate the archbishop’s conviction that the bishops at Nicaea were inspired and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, specifically to proclaim the truth regarding the divinity of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the language Cyril utilizes to describe the inspiration of the bishops is markedly reminiscent of the manner in which he describes the pneumatological enlightenment of the disciples in terms of their ability to teach, and he cites Matthew 10.20 with reference both to the disciples and to the Nicene fathers. Cyril appears, therefore, to perceive the enlightenment of the bishops at Nicaea to be on par with that experienced by the disciples when they received the Holy Spirit, with the content of that enlightenment being christological.

When he draws a connection between the apostles and the Nicene fathers he wants to argue that the doctrinal formulations of Nicaea are fully in accord with the church’s earliest teachings as promulgated by the disciples who received their knowledge of scripture and doctrine directly through the gift of the Holy Spirit. I would suggest as well that Cyril’s characterization of the Spirit’s activity in and through the fathers of the council of Nicaea provides a concrete example of the pneumatologically-derived teaching role of bishops as described in Cyril’s exegeses of John 6.12-13 and Isaiah 32.20-21, a role they have as successors of the apostles. Bishops appear to be, according to Cyril,

¹¹⁴ *Ep. 17.3 (Ad Nestorium)* (ACO I.1.1, 35¹²⁻¹³). ET: McGuckin (2004), 268.

keepers of the apostolic tradition, having been illuminated by the Spirit to teach divine truth, particularly the truth regarding Jesus Christ.¹¹⁵ They are, as the apostles were, φωστῆρες, teachers of the world entrusted with the task of enlightening others with the truth they have received through the Spirit.

When discussing the pneumatologically-bestowed role of bishops as teachers, Cyril does not elaborate on precisely how this role is enacted. Is it a role that is made manifest predominantly in ecumenical councils or is it a role undertaken in the everyday governance of those under the bishop's care? While Cyril is effusive when referring to the inspiration of the Nicene fathers by the Spirit, his exegesis of John 6.12-13 and Isaiah 32.20-21 indicates that the teaching role of bishops is undertaken also by bishops as they lead and guide their flocks. This understanding of the bishop's role would certainly be congruent with Cyril's experience as the archbishop of Alexandria. The Alexandrian church was highly centralized, with the bishop having an authority over nine civil provinces that was without parallel in the eastern Christian world.¹¹⁶ Moreover, the catechetical school that was the loci of higher learning in Alexandria likely closed with the death of Didymus the Blind in 399, and from the time of Theophilus, Cyril's uncle and immediate predecessor on the throne of St Mark, "the School's role as a source of higher learning thus came to be subsumed into that of the bishop as the guardian of the apostolic tradition."¹¹⁷ Cyril's prodigious writing, particularly his biblical commentaries, as well as the vigour with which he sought to address what he understood to be heretical

¹¹⁵ Kerrigan (1952), 182-7.

¹¹⁶ Russell (2007), 70-1.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 72.

ideas, are probably indicative of the seriousness with which the archbishop took his role as a theological teacher. The archbishop's characterization of the pneumatological enlightenment of the disciples turned apostles, as well as his positioning of the bishops as successors of the apostles enlightened by the same Spirit and entrusted to teach like the apostles, may therefore be expressions of his own daily experiences as leader of the Alexandrian church.

In this chapter I have endeavoured to explore Cyril's understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the church, particularly in the formation and governance of the church. As has been seen, the archbishop perceives the Spirit's role in this regard to be substantial. The disciples, fearful before the resurrection, were transformed to become men of great faith when they received the Spirit. Moreover, and related to this, the Spirit enlightened the disciples in order that they might undertake their task as apostles in the world. This pneumatological enlightenment was centred, according to Cyril, on Christ, a point the archbishop appears to premise on the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son. As the Spirit of the Son and his likeness, he is uniquely suited to reveal Christ to the disciples. Through the Spirit their eyes were opened to see the hidden Christological depths of the Old Testament, to comprehend that the soteriological picture drawn in the Hebrew scriptures points, in subtle ways, to the life, death, and resurrection of the incarnate Son of God. Through the Spirit the disciples were able to understand fully the mystery of the Son of God's incarnation in the flesh, and to apprehend the Son's eternal relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Enlightened in these ways by the Spirit,

the disciples were made apostles and became ‘enlighteners’ (φωστῆρες) themselves. Cyril submits that this task of enlightening others has passed to the apostles’ successors, the bishops of the churches, and that the bishops’ illumination of others is, as it was for the disciples, derived from the Holy Spirit.

This does not mean that those not in ecclesial leadership are incapable of pneumatological enlightenment; Cyril continually exhorts all his readers to the knowledge that is possible to attain only through the Holy Spirit. It does mean, though, that Cyril understands those in ecclesial leadership to play a central role in the pneumatological illumination of the world and of those under their care; that they have received the ability and the authority to dispense this knowledge and to illuminate others. Thus, while all have the capability of being enlightened by the Holy Spirit, Cyril appears to suggest that it is only the disciples and their successors who are *enlighteners* (φωστῆρες) who preserve and dispense knowledge received from the Spirit of the Son.

The Holy Spirit’s role in the formation and governance of the church does not exhaust the relationship between the Spirit and ecclesiology in Cyril’s mind. Central to his perception of the activity of the Spirit in the church are baptism and the eucharist. Both baptism and the eucharist are, in Cyril’s understanding, paramount not only for the salvation of individuals, but also for the establishment of ecclesial unity, and as we shall see, the archbishop perceives the Holy Spirit to play an integral role in the establishment of this unity. This will be the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 6 – The Holy Spirit and the Church (Part II):
The Unity of Believers

For as the power of his holy flesh makes those in whom it exists to be of the same body, so also the indivisible Spirit of God who abides in all, being one, binds all together into spiritual unity.¹

- *In Joannem* 17.20-21

We saw in the last chapter that Cyril understands the Holy Spirit to play an integral role in the formation of the community of believers, and in particular, in establishing apostolic authority with the disciples and their successors. But the archbishop's ecclesiology is not located solely in his perception of how the church is to be governed, however important such governance may be. Central also to Cyril's ecclesiology and his pneumatology is his understanding of how ecclesial unity is attained and retained such that the church instituted when the disciples received the Holy Spirit continues to be one in faith and worship.

Cyril's account of ecclesial unity, and the relationship of the Holy Spirit to this unity will be the focus of this chapter. To accomplish this task I shall closely examine the archbishop's expositions of John 17.11 and 17.20-21, verses in which Christ prays in his high-priestly prayer explicitly for the unity of his disciples and for the unity of all believers. Nowhere else in his corpus, to my knowledge, does Cyril address ecclesial unity as thoroughly as he does in his exegeses of these two passages. That said, his thoughts are not always clearly articulated, and there is some ambiguity regarding the role of the Spirit in the enactment of unity. Nevertheless, as will become immediately clear in my analysis of Cyril's interpretation of Christ's supplication for unity, the

¹ *In Jo.* 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 737¹⁻⁴). ET: Randall, 551 (slightly modified).

archbishop understands the Holy Spirit to be actively involved in the genesis and continuation of unity among Christians, even if this involvement is not clearly spelled out.

My examination will be structured as follows. I will look first at Cyril's exegesis of John 17.11. In this text the archbishop places Christ's prayer for unity among his disciples in a pneumatological framework, positing that the Holy Spirit was the means by which the disciples and those after them were to attain a union founded on the bond of love in imitation of the union the Son has with the Father. Cyril does not, unfortunately, expound on the relationship between the Spirit and love, nor does he make a direct connection between the Spirit and the union of the Father and the Son. He does, however, posit that the Spirit's unifying operation in the disciples was made manifest in their unanimity of will and their shared pursuit of holiness, and suggests that the union experienced by the disciples was both corporeal and spiritual, although he does not explain in detail the relationship of the Spirit to the former.

I will proceed to examine Cyril's exegesis of John 17.20-21 where the archbishop addresses the Spirit's role in ecclesial unity in more detail. Emphasis is once again placed on how the Spirit creates a union between believers founded in love, and once again Cyril describes this union as having a corporeal and a spiritual basis. The archbishop does not clearly articulate the relationship between corporeal unity and the unifying operation of the Spirit, but he is effusive regarding the Spirit's role in the foundation of spiritual unity. Moreover, as is the case whenever Cyril recounts the saving work of the Spirit, the archbishop predicates the shape of the Spirit's unifying

operation on his identity as the Spirit of the Son. For as we shall see, the unity the Spirit enacts among believers is one founded on the transformation of each believer to become children of God.

“One in the Spirit”: Cyril’s Exegeses of John 17.11 and 17.20-21

In his exegesis of John 17.11 – “Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, so that they may be one, even as we are one” – Cyril elucidates how the disciples were to be united with one another, positing that the Holy Spirit plays an integral role in the establishment of this unity. Although the archbishop refers particularly to the disciples’ unity, the sense we get from his exposition of John 17.11 is that Cyril perceives the disciples’ unity to be a prototype of ecclesial unity in general. According to Cyril, the unity envisioned by Christ is one characterized primarily by love. Christ wants the disciples to be “mingled together (ἀνακίρναμένους), as it were, in soul and spirit and in the law of peace and love for one another (τῷ τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ φιλαληλίας θεσμῷ).”² It is a unity established through “an unbreakable bond of love (ἀρρύαγῃ τινα τῆς ἀγάπης δεσμόν),”³ that manifests itself in a “unity of likemindedness and an identity of will (καθ’ ὁμόνοιάν τε καὶ ταυτοβουλίαν ἐνώσει).”⁴ Christ desired this unity to be so infrangible that it could not be dissolved “into a dissimilarity of wills (ἀνομοιότητα θελημάτων) by anything at all that exists in the world or any pursuit of pleasure,” but would be fostered through “the power of love (τῆς ἀγάπης τὴν δύναμιν)

² *In Jo.* 17.11 (Pusey, ii. 697²¹⁻²³). ET: Russell (2000), 128.

³ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 697²³⁻²⁴). ET: Russell (2000), 128.

⁴ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 697²⁰⁻²¹). ET: Russell (2000), 128.

in the unity (ἐν ἐνότητι) of devotion and holiness.”⁵ Although he does not clearly define precisely how love unites, he is unequivocal regarding the strength of the kind of unity which love brings about. Bound together in love, the disciples would be united in their pursuit of God, for, Cyril suggests, it is by love that the disciples could attain a unanimity of will that would protect them from the competing and dangerous forces of the world that threaten to disrupt the disciples from their devotion. It would appear that the archbishop is here suggesting that the disciples were to attain likemindedness because they would share a love for one another and for God that would create the kind of unity that is not possible when pursuit of material pleasure dominates. Moreover, Cyril associates this unity through love with the unity of the Father and the Son, writing that Christ wanted the disciples to become “an image of the natural unity (τῆς φυσικῆς ἐνότητος) that is conceived to exist between the Father and the Son.”⁶ The suggestion is perhaps that, just as ecclesial unity is established through love, so likewise is divine unity. However, such an idea is not fully developed here, nor, to my knowledge is it developed elsewhere in Cyril’s corpus.

More significant for our purposes is Cyril’s emphasis that Christ’s prayer for unity among his disciples was answered through their reception of the Holy Spirit. Citing Acts 4.32, the archbishop expatiates on how the disciples’ union with one another attained actuality:

For as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, “the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul” [Acts 4.32], that is, in the unity of the Spirit (ἐν ἐνώσει τῇ τοῦ Πνεύματος). This is also what Paul himself meant when he said, “one body and one

⁵ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 697^{28-29, 29-31}). ET: Russell (2000), 128.

⁶ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 697²⁴⁻²⁶). ET: Russell (2000), 128.

Spirit” [Eph. 4.4], “we who are many are one body in Christ, for we all partake of the one bread” [1 Cor. 10.17], and we have all been anointed in the one Spirit, the Spirit of Christ [cf. 1 Cor. 12.13]. Therefore since they were to be members of the same body and fellow participants (συμμετέχοντας) in one and the same Spirit, he wishes his disciples to be kept in a unity of spirit (εἰς ἐνότητα πνεύματος) that can never be prised apart and in a oneness of mind (ὁμόνοιαν) that cannot be broken. If anyone should suppose that the disciples were united in the same way as the Father and the Son are one, not only according to essence (κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν) but also according to will (κατὰ τὴν βούλησιν), for there is a single will in the divine nature and an identical purpose in every respect, let him think that. For he will not stray outside the bounds of orthodoxy since identity of will (τὸ ἐν θελήσει ταύτων) may be observed amongst those who are true Christians, even if identity of substance (ὁμοούσιον) in our case is not of the same kind as that which exists in the case of the Father and of God the Word who is from him and in him.⁷

Christ’s prayer for an “inseparable and indestructible”⁸ unity among his disciples came to actualization with the bestowal of the Spirit upon them. Although no reference to the Holy Spirit is to be found in Acts 4.32, it is Cyril’s contention that the union of “heart and soul” amongst the disciples can be attributed to the Holy Spirit. Perhaps his warrant for doing so is the fact that reference is made in Acts 4.31 to a physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling when the place in which the disciples were praying shook as they were all filled with the Spirit.⁹ At any rate, Cyril is clear that the unity described in Acts 4.32 was pneumatologically based.

Moreover, Cyril argues that the union of “heart and soul” described in Acts is to be equated with Paul’s reference in Ephesians 4.4 to “one body and one spirit.” Cyril then explicates these verses with an appeal to 1 Corinthians 10.17 – “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” – and refers to

⁷ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 697³¹-698¹⁸). ET: Russell (2000), 128-9.

⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 697²⁶⁻²⁷). ET: Russell (2000), 128.

⁹ “And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.”

our being anointed by “the one Spirit, the Spirit of Christ,” a possible reference to 1 Corinthians 12.13. Cyril thus appears to propose that the unity for which Jesus prayed was one that was corporeal, made possible by partaking of the eucharist, as well as spiritual, made possible by the bestowal of the Spirit in the anointing of baptism. This corporeal and spiritual unity of the disciples is compared by Cyril to the union of the Father and the Son, a union that is one of both essence and will, and while he admits that complete identity of substance, such as exists in the Trinity, is not possible for human beings, he implies that there is a sense that the disciples were indeed united substantially at the same time as they shared complete unanimity of will through the bestowal of the Spirit in baptism. Most importantly for our purposes is that Cyril appears to posit that both of these forms of union are integral to the “unity of the Spirit” displayed by the disciples in the Acts of the Apostles, the implication being that, although the Holy Spirit is posited as being primarily active in the enactment of unity through baptism, he is active as well in the establishment of unity through the eucharist.

Cyril develops his understanding of the Spirit’s uniting activity and its relationship to baptism and the eucharist in more detail in the context of his exegesis of John 17.20-21: “I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me.”¹⁰ Cyril points out in his exposition that these words come immediately after Christ had prayed in

¹⁰ Cyril’s commentary on John 17.20-21, with particular focus on his ecclesiology, has been the subject of two recent studies. In neither of these studies, however, is the relationship between his pneumatology and ecclesiology examined in detail. Cf. Boulnois (2002), 147-172; Russell (2007), 70-85.

verses 18-19 for “blessing and sanctification through the Spirit” to come upon the disciples.¹¹ Jesus prays in John 17.18-19 that the disciples would be sanctified in the truth, and according to Cyril, this was nothing else than a prayer for the Spirit, who is the truth (1 John 5.7) and the Spirit of truth (John 16.13), to come down upon them.¹² However, lest it be thought that Jesus had prayed only for the disciples to receive the Spirit, Cyril points out that Christ prays the same for all believers after them,¹³ praying that all who believe and obey would receive the “cleansing which is accomplished through partaking (μετοχῆς) of the Spirit.”¹⁴

It is not, for Cyril, accidental that Christ’s prayer for unity comes immediately after his prayer for the Spirit to come upon his followers. For the Spirit’s transforming operation in believers extends to the enactment of unity amongst them. Cyril writes that Christ prayed that believers would be brought into “spiritual unity (ἐνότητα τὴν πνευματικὴν),” and posits that this unity is formed through “a bond (σύνδεσμον) of love (ἀγάπης) and concord and peace.”¹⁵ This love, according to the archbishop, translates into believers being of “one mind (ὁμοψυχίας),” and leads believers to a unity that resembles the “features (χαρακτῆρας)” of the “natural (φυσικῆς) and essential (οὐσιώδους) unity (ἐνότητος) that exists between the Father and the Son.”¹⁶

As was the case in his exegesis of John 17.11, Cyril explicates the unity of believers in his exposition of John 17.20-21 with reference to love and associates this

¹¹ *In Jo.* 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 730¹⁻²).

¹² Cf. *In Jo.* 17.18-19 (Pusey, ii. 717⁷⁻¹¹).

¹³ *In Jo.* 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 730⁵⁻¹⁵).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 731¹⁹⁻²⁰).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 731²⁵⁻²⁷).

¹⁶ *Ibid.* (Pusey, ii. 731²⁷-732¹).

unity with the Holy Spirit. Moreover, taking his cue from Jesus' words – as he did in his exegesis of John 17.11 – Cyril likens this unity among believers to the unity that exists between the Father and the Son. It is this idea that the archbishop expands upon in detail. According to Cyril, Christ brought forward the “essential unity (οὐσιώδη ἐνότητα)” of himself with the Father as being an “image and type (εἰκόνα καὶ τύπον)” of the inseparable unity of believers, and in so doing declared his desire that believers be “mingled together (συνανακίρνᾶσθαι) with one another in the power (ἐν δυνάμει) that is of the holy and consubstantial Trinity, so that the whole body of the church (τὸ σῶμα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας) may be understood to be one.”¹⁷ Cyril cites Ephesians 2.14-16¹⁸ to illustrate the kind of union he has in mind, laying particular emphasis on Paul's reference to one man being created in place of two, and argues that such unity has attained fruition in the church. For those who believe become of “one soul (ὁμοψυχησάντων)” with one another and receive one heart “through complete likeness (ἅπαν ἐμφερείας) according to devotion to God, obedience in believing, and love of virtue.”¹⁹ This “unity of heart and soul (ὁμόνοιαν καὶ ὁμοψυχίαν)” amongst believers, Cyril writes, resembles the “essential identity (οὐσιώδη ταυτότητα) of the holy Trinity” and the “connection (ἀναπλοκήν)” that each person of the Trinity has with the other.²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 733^{8-9, 12-15}).

¹⁸ “For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end.”

¹⁹ *In Jo.* 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 733²³⁻²⁷).

²⁰ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 734³⁻⁷).

Although this discussion of ecclesial unity as a reflection of trinitarian unity occurs immediately after Cyril's reference to attaining spiritual unity through the Holy Spirit, he does not make a direct connection between the Spirit's unifying role and the attainment of an ecclesial unity that approximates the unity of the Trinity. It could be inferred that Cyril has the Spirit in mind when he refers to believers being made to be one soul, or to believers being united in their devotion and obedience, but this is not made explicit. Cyril does, however, define the precise role the Spirit plays in the unifying of believers more concretely as his exposition progresses, and as was the case in his exegesis of John 17.11, the archbishop locates this role in baptism and the eucharist. In so doing, Cyril outlines the Spirit's unifying operation with direct reference to Christ.

After comparing ecclesial unity to trinitarian unity, Cyril inquires further into the nature of the former and posits that the unity believers are to have with one another is both corporeal and spiritual. Cyril commences this inquiry by focusing first on the union of the believer with God, arguing that the union of believers one with another has as its basis their union with God. This union has been made possible through the incarnation, and Cyril proceeds to elaborate upon how it is that union with God through Jesus Christ occurs. The Son, who is wholly divine, became flesh, and in so doing "mixed (ἀναμιγνύς)" himself with our nature "by an inconceivable coming together (ἀφράστου συνόδου) and union (ἐνώσεως) with an earthly body."²¹ The divine Word thus truly

²¹ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 734²²⁻²⁶).

became human, and so united in himself the divine and the human in order that “he might enable humanity to share (κοινωνία) and participate (μέτοχον) in God’s nature.”²²

It is after referring to this possibility of human union with God through partaking of his nature that Cyril makes reference to the Holy Spirit, and particularly to the descent of the Spirit upon Christ at his baptism, arguing that it is by the Spirit that we participate in the divine and so are united with God. It is because Christ received “anointing (χρίόμενος) and sanctification (ἀγιαζόμενος),”²³ sanctifying his body as well as the whole of creation through his own Spirit, that we are able to receive the Spirit; Cyril is here appealing to the idea, by now familiar to the reader, of Christ as the second Adam. In receiving the Spirit himself, Christ became both “a beginning and a way for us to partake (μεταλαχεῖν) of the Holy Spirit and [have] union (ἐνώσεως) with God.”²⁴ Cyril argues, therefore, that it is by the Spirit that we are united with God, a union that was made possible by Jesus Christ, in whom the divine and human were completely united when the Word became flesh.

This emphasis on the Spirit as the means by which we participate in the divine nature and are united with the divine is territory over which we traversed in detail in the fourth chapter. The difference in the archbishop’s exegesis of John 17.20-21 is that Cyril here discusses the implications of the believer’s union with God for ecclesial unity, and in this context Cyril focuses specifically on baptism and the eucharist. Not only did Christ create the means whereby humans are united to God, but he created the means

²² Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 734³²-735¹).

²³ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 735⁴).

²⁴ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 735⁷⁻¹⁰).

whereby humans can be united one with another, and these two ideas are perceived by Cyril to be intimately tied to each other. According to the archbishop the incarnate Word, in his wisdom, contrived baptism and the eucharist that we might be “joined together (συνίωμέν) and fused (συναναμισγώμεθα) into unity with God and with each other.”²⁵ According to Cyril believers become united to one another physically and spiritually: physically through the eucharist and spiritually through baptism. It is the former that Cyril addresses first.

Cyril argues that, through the mystery of the eucharist, Christ “makes us of the same body with himself and with each other.”²⁶ Those who partake of the eucharist attain a “natural union (φυσικῆς ἐνώσεως)” with one another, “bound together (ἀναδεσμουμένους)” through the holy body of Christ, an idea for which Cyril cites 1 Corinthians 10.17 – “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” – in support.²⁷ Through the eucharist believers partake of Christ wholly and are united to him completely by eating, not simply a part of Christ, but Christ in his indivisible completeness. And because Christ cannot be divided (μερίζεσθαι), Christians are accordingly united to one another through their common union with Christ in his wholeness. Alluding to 1 Corinthians 12.27, Cyril insists that believers collectively become Christ’s body through the eucharist, with each believer being an individual member of this body.

²⁵ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 735¹³⁻¹⁴).

²⁶ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 735¹⁹).

²⁷ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 735¹⁹⁻²³).

Cyril is clear here that the kind of union he has in mind is a “bodily unity (τὴν κατὰ σῶμα ἕνωσιν)”²⁸ of believers with Christ and with each other. Through the eucharist Christ comes to be “in us through the flesh” and so becomes “the bond of union (ὁ τῆς ἐνότητος σύνδεσμος)” that joins us both to him and to each other.²⁹ Cyril does not perceive this corporeal unity of believers to each other, however, to be something static, but as something transformational. He makes this clear when he cites Ephesians 4.14-16 to illustrate what this physical union of believers with Christ and each other looks like. In these verses reference is made to being children with regard to the truth, but “speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.” Cyril does not explicate these verses, but allows them simply to speak for themselves. It is important to note for our purposes that the archbishop evidently wants his reader to comprehend that the corporeal unity of believers to Christ and to each other manifests itself in a collective comprehension of truth, and more than that, in the collective expansion of love. Bodily union thus has ramifications in terms of spiritual transformation. And given that this account of corporeal unity through the eucharist occurs within the context of elaborating upon John 17.20-21, which, as already noted, Cyril understands to be a prayer for unity through the Holy Spirit, and given the association that the archbishop appears to make between the unifying power of love and the Holy Spirit in his exegesis of John 17.11 and 17.20-21, one wonders whether Cyril is

²⁸ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 736⁸⁻⁹).

²⁹ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 736^{16-18, 20}).

suggesting here that the Holy Spirit operates in the eucharist to unite believers with Christ and one to another. This, however, is only intimated.

Cyril is clearer about the Holy Spirit's role in the establishment of "spiritual unity (ένότητα τήν πνευματικήν)"³⁰ that believers have with one another, about which he expounds immediately after his discussion of eucharistic unity. Spiritual unity is understood by Cyril to be something different from, yet integrally linked to, the corporeal unity he just described, and he proceeds to articulate precisely how spiritual unity is enacted and of what it consists. Spiritual unity is, according to Cyril, enacted by the Holy Spirit, and while the archbishop does not here explicitly refer to baptism, it appears that, given the archbishop's consistent reference throughout his writings to the Spirit being given in baptism,³¹ and given that he has just discussed the reception of the body of Christ in the eucharist, that Cyril has baptism in mind when referring to the spiritual union of believers.

Cyril's perception of spiritual unity through the Holy Spirit bears similarity to his perception of corporeal unity outlined above. Just as believers are corporeally united to one another through the eucharist in that all partake of the one body of Jesus Christ, so believers are spiritually united by "receiving one and the same Spirit" by whom we "are intimately united (συνανακιννάμεθα) with one another and with God."³² Because "the Spirit is one and indivisible (ἀμέριστον),"³³ those who receive him do so entirely, and

³⁰ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 737³⁻⁴).

³¹ See my comments in the fourth chapter regarding the connection Cyril establishes between the bestowal of the Spirit in baptism.

³² *In Jo.* 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 736²¹⁻²⁵).

³³ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 736²⁷).

being indivisible, he cannot but unite those who partake of him in common. The Holy Spirit thus unites “dissevered (διακεκομμένα) spirits (πνεύματα)” in himself so that all might be made manifest in him and through him as one.³⁴ “For as the power (ἡ δύναμις) of the holy flesh makes those in whom it exists to be one body (συσσώμους),” Cyril writes, “so the indivisible (ἀμέριστον) Spirit of God who is one and dwells in all, unites (συνάγει) all into spiritual unity (πρὸς ἐνότητα τὴν πνευματικὴν).”³⁵

To illustrate what this spiritual unity looks like, Cyril cites Ephesians 4.2-6,³⁶ laying particular emphasis upon the passage’s references to “forbearing one another in love” and maintaining “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” as well as to God as the Father of all. His purpose in highlighting these facets of Ephesians 4.2-6 becomes evident immediately after the quotation. Cyril emphasizes that the spiritual unity of believers that is enacted by the Holy Spirit is the consequence of the fact that all who receive the Spirit partake of God himself, and are transformed ontologically and morally through this participation. In particular, the archbishop posits that spiritual unity in the church is a concomitant of our shared experience of divine sonship through the Spirit. Cyril’s thought merits full quotation:

For if, giving up the carnal way of living (τὸ πολιτεύεσθαι ψυχικῶς³⁷), we have yielded ourselves wholly to the laws of the Spirit, how is it not wholly indisputable that by denying, as it were, our own lives, and taking upon ourselves the transcendent likeness

³⁴ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 736²⁷-737¹).

³⁵ Ibid. (Pusey, ii. 737¹⁻⁴).

³⁶ Cyril commences his quotation of the passage with a clause that is part of a larger sentence: “...forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

³⁷ Cf. Lampe, 1553-4.

(μόρφωσιν) of the Holy Spirit, who is joined (συμπλακέντος) to us, we are all but transformed (μεθιστάμεθα) into another nature (εἰς ἑτέραν φύσιν) through being shown to be partakers (κοινωνούς) of the divine nature (2 Peter 1.4) and made to be, not merely humans, but also sons of God and heavenly men? Therefore, we are all one in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; one, I mean, according to identity of state (καθ' ἕξιν ταυτότητι)..., likeness (μορφώσει) in terms of righteousness, fellowship (κοινωνία) of the holy body of Christ, and in the fellowship (κοινωνία) of the Holy Spirit who is one, as has just been said.³⁸

Cyril understands the reception of the Holy Spirit by believers to be transforming. Concomitant with this reception is the believer's rejection of that which is opposed to the Spirit; Cyril's opposition between "the carnal way of living" and the "laws of the Spirit" is likely intended to be a conscious recalling of the opposition between "flesh" and "Spirit" outlined by Paul in passages such as Galatians 5. According to the archbishop, the believer's rejection of "the carnal way of living" is to be an all-encompassing rejection in favour of total transformation by the Holy Spirit. It is a complete acquiescence in the "laws of the Spirit," so complete that it entails the total surrender of the believer's life, the implication being that the Spirit-filled believer no longer has his sight set on the things of this world. Unity with God and with other believers thus occurs, in part, because each believer has turned his gaze away from the self in denying his own life in favour of being transformed by the Holy Spirit; believers are united in their common denial of their lives and observance of the Spirit's laws.

Moreover, in giving up their lives believers are united in the transformation they receive through the Spirit to whom they are united and by whom they participate in the divine nature. For by the Holy Spirit believers are transformed in common, in that they collectively partake of the divine nature in such a manner that they become one in their

³⁸ *In Jo.* 17.20-21 (Pusey, ii. 737¹⁵⁻²⁸).

attainment of divine sonship. In the fourth chapter I demonstrated the centrality of divine filiation in Cyril's pneumatology and soteriology. In his exegesis of John 17.20-21 we find the archbishop refer to the ecclesiological ramifications of the Spirit's transformation of believers into children of God. Although he does not develop his thought in this regard, it would appear that the Spirit's unifying operation is tied to his identity as the Spirit of the Son, an identity that I noted in the fourth chapter was constitutive of the Holy Spirit's role in divine filiation. Cyril seems to say that believers are spiritually united to one another because they are each made to become like Christ himself through the Spirit. In becoming like the Son of God made man, each believer attains intimacy with God, an intimacy that translates into the ability to call God our Father. The concomitant of entering into a filial relationship with God is that we attain a familial relationship with all who become children of God through the Spirit, and it is perhaps this relationship that Cyril has in mind when emphasizing the shared state of divine sonship when expounding on the attainment of spiritual unity through the Spirit. Whether this is an accurate interpretation of Cyril's reference to divine filiation above, it appears to be the case that Cyril perceives believers transformed by the Spirit to be spiritually united, not only by the fact that they all share the indivisible Spirit, but also because they collectively become, through the third person of the Trinity, like Christ and so like one another in their common attainment of divine sonship. It is likely, therefore, that the emphasis Cyril places in his exegesis of John 17.11 and 17.20-21 on ecclesial unity being made manifest in unanimity of will and the bond of love is related to the common attainment of divine sonship.

We are in a position now to summarize Cyril's perception of the unity of believers as outlined in his exegesis of John 17.11 and 17.20-21, and particularly to summarize his understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the attainment of this union. Throughout Cyril's exegesis of these passages, the Holy Spirit plays a prominent and crucial role. In both expositions he places Christ's prayer for ecclesial unity within a pneumatological framework. That is, in both he posits that Christ's prayer for unity was a prayer for the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples and upon all believers.

Cyril's thought on the Spirit's role in the unity of believers, however, is not presented in a systematic manner. The archbishop posits on the one hand that ecclesial unity is predicated on the transforming operation of the Spirit and manifests itself in likemindedness and love. He submits, on the other hand, that ecclesial unity has two different, but related, facets: believers are united corporeally through common partaking of the body of Christ in the eucharist, and they are united spiritually through common partaking of the Holy Spirit through baptism. Whether the Spirit plays a role in the former is not made clear in the passages explored. Cyril makes oblique references to the spiritual transformation that occurs through the eucharist in his exposition of John 17.20-21, but he does not explicitly connect this transformation to the activity of the Holy Spirit. Does the Holy Spirit play a role in the spiritual transformation made possible by the eucharist in Cyril's thought, such that the Spirit can be understood to play a role also in the corporeal unity of believers? This question is not answered.

Nor is it absolutely clear what the relationship is between the unifying operation of the Holy Spirit and the unity of the Father and Son that Christ suggests is a divine

model for the kind of unity believers are to have one to another. If the unity of the Father and the Son is the model of ecclesial unity, and if the Spirit is the means by which ecclesial unity is attained, is Cyril here suggesting that the Holy Spirit is the means by which the unity of the Father and the Son occurs? While this idea, if it is something Cyril suggests, would make for an intriguing point of comparison with the trinitarian theology of Augustine, Cyril is simply not explicit on this point, which makes it very difficult to draw concrete conclusions.

However, by virtue of positing that spiritual unity has its basis in the shared attainment of divine sonship through the Spirit, Cyril does appear to draw a line between the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son and his unifying operation. We saw in the fourth chapter that the archbishop associates divine filiation with the attainment of Christ-likeness through the Spirit of the Son, an attainment that involves progression in holiness. In his exegesis of John 17.20-21 Cyril describes the attainment of spiritual unity in similar terms, writing that believers become one as they obey the laws of the Spirit and are transformed to become children of God through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

It would appear, therefore, that Cyril perceives the Spirit's unifying activity in the church to be characterized by the christological shape that consistently characterizes the Spirit's operation in the created order, a shape determined by the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of the Son. Through baptism believers are united spiritually one to another, not only because the Spirit received through baptism is indivisible, but because the Spirit transforms each one to become children of God like the one who is the Son of God by

nature. The church is therefore, through baptism, one in terms of the Christ-likeness attained by its members through their transformation by the Spirit.

Conclusion

As I discussed in the fifth chapter, Cyril of Alexandria perceived bishops to be Spirit-inspired teachers and guardians of the truth. That Cyril took seriously his role as a bishop of the Alexandrian church, and thus understood himself to be charged with teaching theological truth in imitation of the apostles, is clearly illustrated by his theological acumen and depth, both of which are on full display when he discusses the Holy Spirit. Cyril was not an unscrupulous politician hungry for power, nor was his contribution to the history of Christian theology limited to the realm of christology. He was, rather, a bishop-theologian whose theology, although not always systematically expressed, is comprehensive and nuanced.

I have endeavoured in this study to demonstrate the centrality of the Holy Spirit in Cyril's thought, and to elaborate on the shape and scope of his pneumatology. In the first chapter I showed that the archbishop insists on the Spirit's identity as the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. Cyril does not describe how the three persons of the Trinity interact with one another eternally, but insists on the unity of the Spirit with the Son for christological and soteriological purposes. He points to the Son's common possession of the Spirit alongside the Father as a means of establishing the Son's consubstantiality with the Father. But while the Father and the Son both possess the Spirit as their own, Cyril particularly accentuates the Spirit's relationship with the Son when discussing the identity and work of the Holy Spirit. Directing our attention to texts like John 14-16 and Romans 8, the archbishop submits that the Spirit is the exact likeness of the Son and

emphasizes that the Spirit's operations in the created order are inseparable from his identity vis-à-vis the Son.

Cyril therefore posits that it was the Son who breathed the Spirit into Adam at creation, and that Adam's reception of the Spirit was to culminate in his being transformed to become like the Son in his incorruptibility and holiness. The incarnate Son of God recapitulated this original breathing of the Spirit upon Adam when he breathed his Spirit upon the disciples in a room in Jerusalem, and the Spirit's work in those in whom he dwells is understood by Cyril to be christologically shaped. As I argue in the fourth chapter, Cyril identifies the soteriological work of the Spirit with divine filiation, positing that our reception of the Holy Spirit transforms us into Christ's likeness so that we become sons of God ourselves, capable of truly having God as our Father. This the Spirit is able to accomplish because he is himself the likeness of the Son. And as I showed in the fifth and sixth chapters, the Spirit's likeness to the Son shapes the work of the Spirit in the formation, structure, and unity of the church. The authority of the apostles and their successors to guide the church derives from enlightenment through the Holy Spirit, an enlightenment that brings knowledge of the mystery of Christ himself. And the spiritual unity of believers one to another in their church is predicated by Cyril on their shared reception of, and transformation by, the Holy Spirit, and their common adoption as children of God through the one who is the Spirit of the incarnate Son.

Cyril's continual emphasis on the Spirit as the Spirit of the Son does not imply that he subordinates the Spirit to the Son. In the second chapter we saw that Nestorius made the accusation against Cyril that he turned the Spirit into little more than a servant

of the Son. I have endeavoured in this study to demonstrate that Cyril portrays the Holy Spirit as absolutely integral, in his own right, in the creation and redemption of human beings. In his accounts of Christ's miraculous conception and his baptismal reception of the Holy Spirit, explored in the second and third chapters, Cyril constructs a narrative of human salvation built around humanity's loss and reacquisition of the third person of the Trinity. He insists that humanity was created for transforming intimacy with God, an intimacy made possible through participation in his divine nature, and that this participation in the divine nature was made possible for humanity at creation when the Spirit was breathed upon Adam. When humanity lost the Spirit through sin, God contrived a means whereby the Spirit would once again be established in humankind. Cyril posits that humanity's recovery of the Holy Spirit was a central motive behind the incarnation of the Son of God. Although Jesus Christ did not require the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit being his own, he was born of the Spirit and received the Spirit as the second Adam in order that humankind might once again participate in the divine nature and become children of God. The centrality of the Spirit in Cyril's soteriology manifests itself clearly in his interpretations Christ's miraculous conception and baptismal reception of the Spirit. Indeed, Cyril understands the reintroduction of the Holy Spirit to humanity to be as soteriologically essential as Christ's death and resurrection.

Cyril does not engage in the kind of trinitarian speculation regarding eternal relations as is found in Augustine's *De Trinitate*. He focuses rather on the interaction of God with the created order and what this interaction tells us about God as triune. Cyril's

emphasis on the Spirit as the Spirit of the Son is borne out of his perception that the mystery of God has been revealed to us concretely in the person of Christ, and therefore that our understanding of the Holy Spirit is inextricable from the revelation of the incarnate Word and the soteriological possibilities Christ extended to all humanity. Cyril constructs a pneumatology wherein the far-reaching soteriological and ecclesiological role of the Holy Spirit in relation to Jesus Christ is delineated, and in the process provides a conception of the Holy Spirit that is nuanced and vigorous.

Before concluding this study, I want to point briefly to certain facets of Cyril's pneumatology that could profitably be brought to the table of contemporary theological debate. I referred briefly in the first chapter to the issue of the *filioque* clause. I there demonstrated that Cyril uses the language of procession simply to denote the unity of the Spirit to the Father and the Son. The archbishop is, as I have shown throughout this study, continually focused, not on the origination of the Spirit, but on the Spirit's saving transformation of believers. It seems to me that opponents on each side of the *filioque* debate would do well to read carefully a theologian like Cyril who posits a pneumatology in which the Holy Spirit's identity and work are shaped by his unity with the Son, but whose significance for the salvation of humankind is profound. Cyril does not solve the problem of the *filioque*, but he is an example of a theologian who takes seriously both the soteriological centrality of the Spirit and his identity as the Spirit of the Son.

Cyril's comments on ecclesial unity also deserve greater attention. In the last century, particularly in Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the relationship between the eucharist and ecclesiology;

Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas have been particularly important in the articulation of a eucharistic ecclesiology.¹ These scholars, and others, have recognized the contributions of Cyril regarding the relationship between the eucharist and ecclesial unity. Little attention has been paid, however, to Cyril's baptismal ecclesiology. We saw in the sixth chapter that, in addition to positing that believers are united corporeally through the eucharist, he submits that believers are united spiritually through the gift of the Spirit in baptism. The eucharist is central to his ecclesiology; but so too is baptism. In an age of ecclesial division, when churches remain out of communion with one another, a eucharistic ecclesiology is necessarily exclusive. It may be, however, that Cyril's emphasis on spiritual unity through the Holy Spirit could provide a means of articulating an ecclesiology that includes the vast panoply of Christian traditions. While corporeal unity through the eucharist may be outside the realm of possibility, the recognition of spiritual unity through the shared experience of the Holy Spirit could foster greater ecumenism. Although Cyril did not envision the kind of disunity that characterizes modern Christianity, his understanding of the Spirit's role in fostering ecclesial unity through the strengthening of bond of love between Christians might be helpful in the formulation and enactment of an ecclesiology that expresses the unity that all Christians have through baptism.

¹ Cf. Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, Gemma Simmonds (trans.) (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985).

List of Abbreviations

ACO	Edward Schwartz (ed.), <i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i> , tomus primus, volumen primus, pars primapars septima <i>Concilium Universale Ephesinum</i> (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927-9)
Adv. Nest.	<i>Adversus Nestorii Blasphemias</i>
De Dogm.	<i>De Dogmatum Solutionem</i>
De Symb.	<i>De Symbolo</i>
DT	<i>De Trinitate Dialogi</i>
Ep.	Epistle
ET	English translation
HP	<i>Homiliae Paschales</i>
In Is.	<i>In Isaiam</i>
In Jo.	<i>In Joannem</i>
In Jl.	<i>In Joelem</i>
In Luc.	<i>In Lucam</i>
In Matt.	<i>In Mattheaum</i>
Lampe	G.W.H. Lampe (ed.), <i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961)
PG	<i>Patrologia, series graeca et latina</i> . J.P. Migne, ed. (Paris, 1841-64)
Pusey	P.E. Pusey (ed.), <i>Sancti Patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Joannis Evangelium</i> , 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1872)
QU	<i>Quod Unus sit Christus</i>
Randall	Thomas Randell (trans.), <i>Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John by S. Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria</i> , Vol. 2 (London: Walter Smith, 1885)
Reuss	Joseph Reuss (ed.), <i>Lukas-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche</i> (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984) or <i>Matthäus-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche</i> (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957)
R.F. ad Aug	<i>De Recta Fide ad Theodosium</i>
SC	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i>
Scholia	<i>Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti</i>
Thes.	<i>Thesaurus de Trinitate</i>

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