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CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA'S TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF SCRIPTURE

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2012

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA'S TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF SCRIPTURE

by Matthew R. Crawford

Abstract

Cyril of Alexandria left to posterity a sizable body of exegetical literature. This thesis attempts to reconstruct his theology of Scripture in order to suggest that his exegetical practice is inseparable from, and must be interpreted in light of, his overarching theological vision. I argue that the most important intellectual factor shaping his exegesis is his Christologically focused, pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, an inheritance that he received from fourth-century authors. Cyril's appropriation of pro-Nicene thought is evident in his theology of revelation and his theology of exegesis. Revelation, in his understanding, proceeds from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit, following the order of Trinitarian relations. Moreover, this pattern applies to the inspiration of Scripture as well, insofar as inspiration occurs when the Son indwells human authors by the Spirit and speaks the words of the Father. Corresponding to this movement of God towards humanity in revelation is humanity's growth in understanding that occurs according to a reverse pattern—in the Spirit, through the Son, unto the Father. This scheme applies broadly to Cyril's soteriology, but also to his understanding of exegesis, since he regarded biblical interpretation as a means of participating in the divine life. More specifically, this Trinitarian pattern implies that the Spirit is required to read Scripture properly, and that in the act of interpretation the Spirit directs the reader to a Christological reading of Scripture, through which the believer gains a limited but genuine apprehension of the Trinitarian mystery. This process continues until the final eschatological vision when the types and riddles of Scripture will be done away with in light of the overwhelming clarity of the vision of the Father.

Declaration

This thesis is the product of my own work and does not include work that has been presented in any form for a degree at this or any other university. All quotation from, and references to, the work of persons other than myself have been properly acknowledged throughout.

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published in any format, including electronic and the Internet, without the author's prior written consent. All information derived from this thesis must be acknowledged appropriately.

Acknowledgements

Cyril of Alexandria made no secret of the fact that he stood in an intellectual tradition, one that he gladly inhabited and upon whose insights he creatively drew. In a loosely analogous sense, I stand acutely aware of my own indebtedness to many other persons without whom this project could not have been brought to completion. I must first thank my doctoral supervisor, Professor Lewis Ayres, who not only patiently read over countless revisions of these chapters, but who also introduced me to the Augustinianism of Johnny Cash. Though in the pages that follow I cite his work only a handful of times, my debt to Lewis extends beyond such explicit citations. Both the mode of historical scholarship in which this thesis is carried out, as well as the historically conscious theological project towards which, I hope, it contributes, are intentionally modeled upon his own approach to the discipline of patristics.

Other members of the Department of Theology and Religion also influenced my work. A module on the Theological Anthropology of the Fathers taught by Father Andrew Louth remains one of the highlights of my time at Durham. Professor Walter Moberly's module on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture introduced me to many of the current conversations in biblical studies regarding the proper relation between exegesis and theology. I hope that the material in this thesis provides some fodder for those ongoing discussions within the world of biblical scholarship. Also, Professor Robert Hayward taught me the Syriac I needed to work through some of the required primary texts, and graciously helped me figure out several difficult passages. Dr. Krastu Banev also helped me through a couple of passages in Greek that proved challenging. The participants in the department's weekly patristics seminar endured sitting through earlier versions of two of these chapters, and I am grateful for their helpfulness in responding to work that was very much in progress at the time. Outlines of the project and chapters in various stages were read by Thomas Humphries, Ben Blackwell, Roberto Alejandro, Stephen Bagby, Gerald Boersma, Wesley Hill, Keith E. Johnson, Jonathan T. Pennington, and Jacob Shatzer. Each one added valuable comments or raised questions that lingered in my mind and contributed towards the final form of this thesis. Moreover, in the final stages Emma McCabe read over much of the thesis, saving me from many typographical mistakes. A special thanks must go to Jon Morgan who collaborated with me on several German sources, and Hannah Milner who looked up several references for me that I could not access in Durham. I also extend my gratitude to Daniel Keating, Dimitrios Zaganas, John J. O'Keefe, Cordula Bandt, and

Gregory K. Hillis who shared prepublication versions of their work with me. Moreover, the tedium of doctoral work has been happily interrupted many times by my officemates in No. 37 North Bailey who provided both needed distractions and stimulating conversations. This thesis would not have been the same without them.

The lion's share of my gratitude goes towards my family who have been unendingly patient over the past three years of my working on this project. Brandy has sacrificed more than anyone will ever know to see this through to the end, and Violet, Camille, and Elliot have had to endure my absent mindedness many times over as I was lost in thought over some question related to the thesis. Apart from their love and support I doubt if the project could have been completed. My parents, Bill and Joyce Crawford, have supported me through each stage of my education in every way imaginable. I hope that this thesis proves to be a suitable way of honoring their constant encouragement.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Declaration.....	ii
Statement of Copyright	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	v
Abbreviations	vii
Chapter 1	
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter 2	
THE SON AS WORD AND WILL OF THE FATHER:	
A TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF REVELATION	7
The Son as the Revealer of the Father	9
The Messenger of Great Counsel	10
The Pen of the Stenographer	16
The Inseparable Operation of the Undivided Trinity	22
Everything Belongs to All Three	24
Inseparable Operation, not Cooperation	27
From the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit	35
The Son as the Power of the Father	38
The Spirit as the Finger of the Son	41
A Trinitarian Theology of Revelation	47
Inseparable Operations and Revelation	48
A Pro-Nicene Theology of Revelation	54
Chapter 3	
‘ONE BOOK SPOKEN THROUGH ONE HOLY SPIRIT’:	
THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE BY THE SPIRIT	60
Inspiration by the Spirit in the Prior Tradition	61
Spirit-Bearing Authors of a Spiritually-Breathed Book	64
The Prophetic Spirit	70
Patristic Theories of Agency in Divine Inspiration	70
Analogies for Inspiration in Cyril’s Corpus	78
Inspiration as a Prophetic Vision	82
The Mystagogy of the Spirit	88
The Apostles as Mystagogues	88
The Apostles Still Preach Today	94
Continuities and Discontinuities with respect to Inspiration	98
The Redemptive-Historical Contours of the Spirit’s Operation	98
The Inspiration of the Church Fathers	102
Scripture as One Book Sealed by the Spirit	106
Conclusion	108

Chapter 4	
‘HE HAS SPOKEN TO US BY HIS SON’:	
THE CHRISTOLOGICAL MEDIATION OF SCRIPTURE	110
The Son Speaks in the Prophets and Apostles	111
Christological Mediation among Earlier Pro-Nicenes	116
The Son Speaks through Himself	120
Prophetic Indwelling in the Christological Controversies	127
The Soteriological Immediacy of the Divine Word	133
Chapter 5	
‘THE EVERGREEN ORACLES OF GOD’:	
THE ROLE OF SCRIPTURE IN THE DIVINE ECONOMY	138
‘The Lord Shepherds Me’ (Psalm 22)	140
Psalm 22 in the Prior Exegetical Tradition	140
The Evergreen Oracles of God	144
The Evangelical Table and Its Enemies	149
The Shepherd’s Two Rods (Zechariah 11)	154
Christ the Shepherd Feeding the 5,000	160
The Feeding of the 5,000 in the Prior Tradition	160
Bread from Heaven (John 6)	163
A Table Prepared in the Wilderness (Luke 9:12-17)	169
Participating in the Divine Word through the Written Word	171
Chapter 6	
SEEING THE FATHER THROUGH THE SON IN THE SPIRIT:	
THE THEOLOGICAL NATURE OF EXEGESIS	177
Divine Illumination through the Son	179
Illumination according to Creation (John 1)	180
Illumination according to Redemption (John 9)	188
Relating the Two Types of Illumination	195
Earlier Authors on Illumination	203
Trinitarian Exegesis	209
Spiritual Exegesis	210
Christological Exegesis	216
The Eschatological Vision of the Father	223
Chapter 7	
CONCLUSION: ‘THE WHIRLWIND IS IN THE THORN TREE’	226
Bibliography	234
Primary Sources	234
Secondary Sources	255

Abbreviations

ACO	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum
AugST	Augustinian Studies
AW	Athanasius Werke
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
CCR	Coptic Church Review
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
ChH	Church History
CPHST	Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology
CrSt	Cristianesimo nella storia
CSCD	Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
EThL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
FOC	Fathers of the Church
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera
Gr	Gregorianum
IJST	International Journal of Systematic Theology
IJSCC	International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JHI	Journal of the History of Ideas
JHS	The Journal of Hellenic Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LFC	A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church
LSJ	Liddell, Scott, Jones, A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford, 1843; 9th ed. 1940)
LXX	Septuagint
MSR	Mélanges de science religieuse

Mus	<i>Le Muséon</i>
NTT	<i>Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift</i>
NRT	<i>Nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovVet	<i>Nova et Vetera</i>
OECS	<i>Oxford Early Christian Studies</i>
OECT	<i>Oxford Early Christian Texts</i>
OSHT	<i>Oxford Studies in Historical Theology</i>
OTM	<i>Oxford Theological Monographs</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca</i>
PGL	G. W. H. Lampe, <i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> (Oxford, 1961)
PL	<i>Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Latina</i>
PO	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
ProEccl	<i>Pro Ecclesia</i>
PTA	<i>Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen</i>
PTS	<i>Patristische Texte und Studien</i>
RB	<i>Revue bénédictine</i>
REByz	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>
RechAug	<i>Recherches augustiniennes</i>
RevSR	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
RHE	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
RIPh	<i>Revue internationale de philosophie</i>
RITh	<i>Revue internationale de théologie</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
SCe	<i>Second Century</i>
SJTh	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
ST	<i>Studi e testi</i>
STAC	<i>Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum</i>
STPatr	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
SVTQ	<i>St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>
TLG	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TU	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>

VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VCSup	Supplements to <i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VetC	<i>Vetera Christianorum</i>
ZKG	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

1

Introduction

For, as I said, all things are from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, and the holy and consubstantial Trinity is glorified in all things that are accomplished. For consider how all things begin from the Spirit, as the one who is in us and who brings about the distribution of divine gifts. And turning the discourse back towards the Son, who is the Son according to nature, it then approaches unto the Father, to whom is assigned the operation through the Spirit by the Son's mediation.¹

Recent decades have witnessed an upsurge of interest in classical and late antique interpretive theory and practice. Significant studies of Stoic exegesis, Neoplatonist exegesis, and Jewish exegesis have all appeared², but perhaps the area receiving the most attention at present is the interpretation of the Bible by those whom the Christian church has typically regarded as church fathers.³ The recognition that early Christians adapted standard late antique interpretive practices raises the question of what, if anything, about patristic exegesis made it uniquely Christian.⁴ This thesis aims to contribute towards answering this question.

¹ Cyril, 1 Cor. 12:7ff (Pusey, 287-8).

² See, e.g., Robert Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Maren R. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

³ The best historical survey of patristic exegesis is Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). A shorter introduction can be found in John J. O'Keefe and Russell R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005). Also helpful is the reference work by Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis, The Bible in Ancient Christianity 1* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

⁴ On the influence of grammatical training upon patristic exegesis, see the bibliography below at page 177, n.2.

1. Introduction

The subject of the present study, Cyril of Alexandria, stood in the heart of the golden age of patristic exegesis⁵, and recommends himself for a study for at least three reasons. First, he was among the most prolific of early exegetes, and, unlike many others, most of his work has survived to the present day. In fact, there is more extant literature from the hand of Cyril than from any other eastern patristic author, with the exception of John Chrysostom. Cyril's numerous and lengthy exegetical works illustrate his remarkable commitment to the elucidation of the biblical text, and this devotion makes him a prime candidate for furthering our understanding of patristic exegesis. Second, Cyril has not been well served in modern scholarship. In fact, it has become something of a *topos* in studies about him published in the last two decades to lament the degree to which he is ignored in much secondary literature.⁶ Despite the calls for more focus on this fifth-century Alexandrian, studies of Cyril still remain few and far between. Third, Cyril stood as the self-conscious heir of the robust, pro-Nicene theologies that developed in the latter half of the fourth century.⁷ As a result, studying his thought allows one to see the further maturing of pro-Nicene theology, as the implications of this intellectual rev-

⁵ Several short summaries of Cyril's life are available, so I will not rehearse that well covered material. The only full length biography is well over a century old: Joseph Kopallik, *Cyrrillus von Alexandrien, eine Biographie nach den Quellen* (Mainz: F. Kirchheim, 1881). More recent surveys can be found in Lionel R. Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria, Select Letters*, OECT (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), xi-xxviii; Pierre Éviéux et al., eds., *Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Lettres Festales I-VI*, SC 372 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991), 11-72; Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 3-63; John Anthony McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 1-125; Sebastian Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes beim frühen Cyrill von Alexandria: Dargestellt an seiner Schrift 'De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate'*, STAC 29 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 7-28; Lois M. Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, a New Testament Exegete: His Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007), 11-69. Other studies relating to his biography include Henri Munier, 'Le lieu de naissance de Saint Cyrille', in *Kyrolliana* (Cairo: Les Éditions du Scribe Egyptien, 1947), 199-201; F. M. Abel, 'Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie dans ses rapports avec la Palestine', in *Kyrolliana*, 202-30; E. R. Hardy, 'The Further Education of Cyril of Alexandria (412-444): Questions and Problems', *STPatr* 17/1 (1982): 116-122; A. Davids, 'Cyril of Alexandria's First Episcopal Years', in *The Impact of Scripture in Early Christianity*, ed. M. L. van Poll-van de Lisdonk and J. den Boeft (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic*, OECT (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 15-73. A useful timeline of events can be found at Hubert Du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualite chez Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1944), 441-7. Historical introductions to this period can be found in Roger S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Fergus Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief Under Theodosius II (408-450)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁶ Marie-Odile Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Herméneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique*, Collection des études augustinienes. Série antiquité 143 (Paris: Institut d'études augustinienes, 1994), 15-6; Robert L. Wilken, 'Cyril of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Old Testament', in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 1-2; Daniel A. Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*, OTM (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 12-3; Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 1.

⁷ On the meaning of the term 'pro-Nicene', see page 7ff below.

olution were worked out in greater detail by a later generation of thinkers. In fact, I shall argue in what follows that it is precisely Cyril's Christologically focused, pro-Nicene Trinitarianism that provides the intellectual context within which he understands the nature of Scripture and the task of exegesis.⁸ Though there has been some discussion in the secondary literature regarding Cyril's Trinitarianism, as well as some discussion of his exegesis of the Bible, these two conversations have yet to be brought together. With respect to his exegesis of Scripture, this amounts to a failure to take into account the most significant theological context for understanding his biblical interpretation. Hence, as I shall argue, giving attention to his pro-Nicene thought proves to be illuminating of his exegetical practice and reveals his distinctly Christian understanding of interpretation.

Rather than restrict my focus to a single work, I have decided to consider relevant passages from several of Cyril's works, most significantly, his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, *Commentary on Isaiah*, and *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*.⁹ The nature of the evidence demands such an approach, since in no single work did he give an extended, systematic discussion of Scripture, but instead dealt with these issues in a variety of contexts. Some degree of synthesis across works is therefore necessary to gain a complete picture. Moreover, I believe that approaching the topic in this manner has distinct advantages. Most notably, it allows common themes to rise to the surface that otherwise would remain hidden, providing a deeper and richer reading of Cyril's thought. To take just one example, the shepherd motif that I examine in chapter five occurs in his *Commentary on the Psalms*, *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, and *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*. The recurrence of this metaphor suggests that it should be granted greater prominence as expressing something fundamental for his theology of Scripture. Similarly, taking this approach allows us to observe the biblical passages to which he frequently turns when discussing exegesis. For example, he uses Hebrews 1:1-2 in his *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, and *Commentary on Isaiah* to express the uniqueness of the revelation that came through Christ. Even though he never fundamentally

⁸ In positioning this thesis as a study of intellectual history, I do not intend to deny that other, less purely intellectual factors influenced patristic exegesis, and might also prove useful for explaining the multi-faceted and complicated reality that is late antique interpretation of Scripture. To give just one example, political power struggle undoubtedly played an important role as well.

⁹ All translations of Cyril and other authors in this thesis are my own, though readers should assume that I have consulted existing translations where they are available, and have relied upon them for guidance in varying degrees. Nevertheless, I take responsibility for the translations of primary sources in the pages that follow. A list of critical editions and translations of Cyril's works can be found in the bibliography.

changes his interpretation of this passage, following his exegesis of it over the course of his career reveals the trajectory of development in his thought.

There are, admittedly, dangers in this sort of synthetic approach. It might lead to a cancelling out of the differences between these individual Cyrilline texts, and a masking of possible developments in Cyril's thought. Aware of such a danger, I have sought to be sensitive to possible developments and have noted them where appropriate. The possibility of development is linked to the issue of dating his works. I have no interest here in revising what is currently the accepted chronology of his writings, except to note that, apart from the annual paschal letters and the texts related to the Nestorian controversy, it is difficult to give a precise date for most of his remaining works.¹⁰ Almost the only thing we can state with certainty is which works come before 428 and which after, since the Nestorian controversy marks a shift in his focus, and, to some degree, in his terminology.¹¹ Nevertheless, what emerges from the present study is that, apart from a few notable instances, Cyril's thought on the issues at hand remained largely consistent across the works I consider.

The thesis progresses in two stages, corresponding to the topics of a theology of revelation, and a theology of exegesis. These two foci may be understood as, first a consideration of Scripture from the perspective of its relationship to the divine in the event of divine unveiling, and, second, from the perspective of humanity's encounter with the written word in the act of exegesis. I argue that in each case, Cyril's theology is Trinitarian in structure and Christological in focus. The argument begins in chapter two with a detailed look at the Trinitarian shape of his theology of revelation. In this chapter I suggest that Cyril demonstrates a strikingly conservative and traditional emphasis on the Son as the agent of divine revelation. However, he situates this frequent patristic *topos* within the context of a pro-Nicene understanding of Trinitarian

¹⁰ The basic lines of the chronology were laid down by G. Jouassard, 'L'activité littéraire de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie jusqu'à 428', in *Mélanges E. Podechard* (Lyon, 1945), 159-74, and have been little changed since. N. Charlier, 'Le "Thesaurus de Trinitate" de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie, questions de critique littéraire', *RHE* 45 (1950): 25-81, offered an alternate proposal, but Jouassard responded in 'La date des écrits antiariens de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *RB* 87 (1977): 172-178, and most studies since have followed his lead. For a more recent overview of these debates, see John J. O'Keefe, *Interpreting the Angel: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodoret of Cyrus, Commentators on the Book of Malachi* (diss., Catholic University of America, 1993), 149-56.

¹¹ However, even this division cannot be rigidly applied, since the Christological dualism that became such an issue in the Nestorian controversy already appears as a concern in Cyril's *Festal Letter* 8 from the year 420 and in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* written in the mid-420s. For an illustration of the shift in Cyril's vocabulary as a result of the controversy, see the two tables at Donald Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church*, *O ECS* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 228-9.

agency. As a result, the Son is the primary revealer, but the object of his revelation is the Father, and the means by which he reveals is the Spirit. In other words, revelation comes from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. Chapters three and four carry forward the argument to consider the inspiration of Scripture as a specific instantiation of Cyril's theology of revelation. Thus, in chapter three I examine his understanding of divine inspiration by the Spirit. His commentaries on the Hebrew prophets prove useful here, as these biblical passages provided ample opportunity to expound on this idea. From his descriptions of the authors of Scripture to his description of Scripture itself, Cyril repeatedly emphasizes that the Church's holy books were inspired by the one divine Spirit, and, as such, are one divine and spiritual book. However, as I argue in chapter four, this idea is only part of the picture, for Cyril also speaks about the inspiration of Scripture with reference to the Son. Thus, in this chapter I argue that Cyril regards the Son as the primary agent responsible for the inspiration of Scripture, since the inspiration of scriptural authors occurs as the Son comes to indwell these human agents by the Spirit, and then speak through them. In this respect, Cyril's understanding of inspiration corresponds to his theology of revelation, since in both cases Trinitarian agency proceeds through the Son and in the Spirit. Moreover, in chapter four I highlight what is perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Cyril's theology of Scripture. On the basis of this Christological understanding of prophetic inspiration and the fundamental distinction between the incarnation and such prophetic indwelling, he is able to argue that the gospels are the most central part of the canon, as being especially inspired, since in them the Son speaks in unmediated fashion.

In chapter five the focus of the thesis turns from a theology of revelation to a theology of exegesis. I begin this part of the argument by considering the role of Scripture in the divine economy, assuming that Cyril's practice of exegesis is a function of his understanding of the place Scripture occupies in the plan of salvation. I focus in this chapter on his presentation of Christ as the Shepherd who feeds the Church with the written word. The consistency of this theme in his works suggests that he sees the inspired word as playing a central role in the life of the Church, one analogous to that of the Eucharist, which also has salvific effects on believers. In fact, on at least two occasions, Cyril speaks of believers' 'participation' in Christ through encounter with the written word, using the sort of language he typically reserves only for the Spirit and the Eucharist. Finally, in chapter six I come to exegesis itself. Given that Scripture is presented by Christ to the Church for its benefit, what sort of theological explanation does

1. Introduction

Cyril give for the way in which Scripture becomes this nourishing word through the act of interpretation? The archbishop's Trinitarian vision once again becomes more pronounced in this chapter, as it was in the second. He states that the Spirit is required for proper interpretation, since only the Spirit, given in baptism, can illumine the mind so that it can see the spiritual truth contained in the inspired word. The content of this spiritual enlightenment is none other than a knowledge of Christ, and included in a knowledge of Christ is a knowledge of the Father, since the Son perfectly images his Father. Thus, we end where we began. In the coming of God to humanity in revelation, in the preservation of revelation in the canon, and finally in humanity's return to the divine through encounter with the inspired word, the believer's gaze is drawn to the incarnate Son of God, even while this Christological vision is situated within a broader Trinitarian context. Such is the theological account that Cyril gives of the interpretation of Scripture.

2

The Son as Word and Will of the Father: A Trinitarian Theology of Revelation

The Word, who is in the Father and from the Father, transmits the truly extraordinary, lofty, and great will of the one who begot him. He does so, on the one hand, through the utterance of words, as a man, when he became like us, and, on the other hand, through spiritual knowledge and illumination after his ascension into heaven. For he reveals to those who are worthy the mysteries about himself.¹

Cyril regards Scriptural exegesis as an event that begins with a movement from the divine towards humanity, a movement that he speaks of in terms of revelation. In keeping with my overall aim to situate his understanding of Scripture and exegesis within the context of his broader theological thought, I argue in this chapter that he presents a specifically pro-Nicene theology of revelation, one that is Trinitarian in structure and Christological in focus.² In recent scholarship on the fourth century, the label ‘pro-Nicene’ has been largely accepted as the term

¹ Cyril, *Jo.* 17:6-8 (Pusey, 2.685). Cyril divided his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* into books and chapters, but these of course bear no relation to modern chapter and verse divisions. Some of the secondary literature on Cyril cites his commentary according to his own book and chapter divisions. However, I find it to be more helpful to cite the modern chapter and verse that correspond to the Johannine text under consideration in any given passage of his commentary, since this is a more precise reference, as some of his own chapters are dozens of pages long while his exegesis of any individual passage is usually not more than a few pages. Moreover, I always follow the reference to chapter and verse with a reference to the volume and page numbers of Pusey’s nineteenth-century critical edition rather than the pages of Aubert’s seventeenth-century edition, although Pusey’s edition has Aubert’s numbers listed in the margin of every page.

² In order to forestall a potential objection, I should note that by speaking in this manner, I do not intend to imply that Cyril operated with a fundamental separation between theological reflection on the divine Trinity and theological reflection on the incarnate Christ, as if he followed the divisions of later scholastic theology. In fact, quite the opposite is the case, as will become clear in chapter six, since he holds that faith in the divine and incarnate Son leads necessarily to a faith in the entire Trinity. Nevertheless, I find that the phrase ‘Trinitarian in structure and Christological in focus’ captures well the basic outlines of Cyril’s thought, so long as these two foci are seen as two aspects of a single reality, rather than domains of inquiry completely separate from one another.

of choice for designating for the common understanding of the Nicene creed that coalesced in the 360s and 370s.³ It was this understanding that received imperial sanction at the Council of Constantinople in 381, and which was subsequently passed on to later theologians, including Cyril. Indeed, Cyril himself was very much aware of standing within a tradition, as evidenced by his frequent reference to the ‘fathers’ and his usage of florilegia in the Nestorian controversy.⁴ Furthermore, by calling Cyril’s theology of revelation ‘Trinitarian’, I mean not simply that he thinks that God has revealed himself as a Trinity, that is, as an inseparable unity of three irreducibly distinct hypostases.⁵ That is certainly true. Rather, I argue in this chapter that Cyril has

³ So Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6: ‘By “pro-Nicene” I mean those theologies, appearing from the 360s to the 380s, consisting of a set of arguments about the nature of the Trinity and about the enterprise of Trinitarian theology, and forming the basis of Nicene Christian belief in the 380s. Intrinsic to these theologies were compatible (but not identical) accounts of how the Nicene creed should be understood. These accounts constituted a set of arguments for Nicaea—hence pro-Nicene’. See also pages 236-40 where he outlines three central principles that were common to pro-Nicene theologies in the period from the 360s to the 380s. One of those three principles, inseparable operations, will be taken up in detail later in this chapter. The term ‘pro-Nicene’ was also used in the magisterial study of R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), though without the precision of definition offered by subsequent scholarship. For a usage of pro-Nicene that differs from Ayres, see Christopher A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God: In Your Light We Shall See Light*, OSHT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 10, n.27. I am unpersuaded by Beeley’s criticism that Ayres’ usage is ‘overly technical’. On pro-Nicene theology in general, see also Michel R. Barnes and D. H. Williams, *Arianism After Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993); Michel René Barnes, ‘De Régnon Reconsidered’, *AugST* 26 (1995): 51-79; *ibid.*, ‘The Fourth Century as Trinitarian Canon’, in *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (London: Routledge, 1998); *ibid.*, *The Power of God: Dunamis in Gregory of Nyssa’s Trinitarian Theology* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000); John Behr, *The Nicene Faith, The Formation of Christian Theology 2* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004); Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁴ On Cyril’s understanding of the ‘fathers’, see H. Du Manoir, ‘Le symbole de Nicée au concile d’Ephèse’, *Gr* 12 (1931): 104-37; *ibid.*, *Dogme et spiritualité*, 454-90; Robert L. Wilken, ‘Tradition, Exegesis, and the Christological Controversies’, *ChH* 34 (1965): 123-145; Ewald Nacke, *Das Zeugnis der Väter in der theologischen Beweisführung Cyrills von Alexandrien* (Münster, 1964); Thomas Graumann, *Die Kirche der Väter: Vätertheologie und Väterbeweis in den Kirchen des Ostens bis zum Konzil von Ephesus (431)*, *Beiträge zur historischen Theologie* 118 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 255-419.

⁵ Relatively little attention has been given to Cyril’s Trinitarian thought. See the discussions in E. Weigl, *Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyrill von Alexandrien* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1905), 10-24; Du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité*, 42-3; E. P. Meijering, ‘Cyril of Alexandria on the Platonists and the Trinity’, *NTT* 28 (1974): 16-29; Claudio Moreschini, ‘Una definizione della Trinità nel *Contra Iulianum* di Cirillo di Alessandria’, in *Lingua e teologia nel cristianesimo greco*, *Religione e cultura* 11, ed. Claudio Moreschini and Giovanni Menestrina (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1999), 251-70; Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 71-147; Andrew Louth, ‘Late Patristic Developments on the Trinity in the East’, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 139-40. The sole monograph on this topic is Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*. In this chapter I rely heavily at points on Boulnois’ study, though I intend to extend some of her observations to consider what Cyril’s Trinitarian theology implies for his understanding of divine revelation. Although Trinitarian themes pervade his entire corpus, Cyril composed three main Trinitarian works, all coming from the period prior to the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy. These works are, in order of composition, the *Thesaurus*, *Dialogues on the Trinity*, and *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Also important is his discussion of Trinitarian theology in his *Festal Letter 12*, from the year 424. An

consciously shaped his theology of revelation in the light of his Trinitarian theology. In fact, it is Trinitarian theology that provides the skeletal structure for his understanding of how revelation has come to humanity. Moreover, by describing his theology of revelation as ‘Christologically focused’ I mean that, when talking about divine revelation, he consistently draws the reader’s attention to the Only-begotten and incarnate Son as the focal point of all divine unveiling.

The argument of this chapter centers on a conundrum. Cyril espouses a very traditional theology of the Son making the Father known, and he thereby emphasizes the agency of the Son as revealer. However, such an emphasis appears to be incompatible with his robust account of the inseparability of all Trinitarian operations. Hence, his theology of revelation appears initially to stand at odds with his pro-Nicene thought. My argument is that it is, in fact, his nuanced understanding of Trinitarian operations that enables him to offer a pro-Nicene account of the Son as revealer in Trinitarian perspective. More specifically, Cyril holds that the Son reveals the Father in the Spirit, or, otherwise put, divine revelation comes from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. Thus we see this traditional emphasis on the Son as revealer, stretching back to the earliest strata of patristic literature, transformed by the pro-Nicene principles developed in the course of the fourth-century controversies.

THE SON AS THE REVEALER OF THE FATHER

The idea that the Son is the one who reveals the Father finds explicit warrant in the New Testament documents themselves (cf. Matt. 11:27; John 1:18), and became a prominent theme in second-century writings. Ignatius of Antioch, writing in the first quarter of the second century, speaks of Jesus as the ‘door of the Father who has been entrusted with the hidden things of God’, ‘the unerring mouth by which the Father has truly spoken’, and the ‘mind’ (γνώμη) of God.⁶ Justin Martyr echoes this idea, when he argues that one of the special functions of the Logos was to reveal truth to humankind.⁷ In fact, although this idea is most often

overview of the three Trinitarian works can be found in Jacques Liébaert, *La doctrine christologique de Saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne* (Lille: Facultés catholiques, 1951), 19-76; de Durand, SC 231.22-43. Although I draw significantly on these three explicitly Trinitarian works, in this chapter and subsequent ones I attempt to pull together relevant passages and themes from across his corpus.

⁶ Ignatius, *Philad.* 9.1; *Rom.* 8.2; *Eph.* 3.2 (SC 10.150, 136, 70).

⁷ Justin, *1 apol.* 5; 63; *2 apol.* 10. See also Irenaeus, *haer.* 4.6.6; cf. Michel René Barnes, ‘Irenaeus’s Trinitar-

associated with Logos theology of the second century, it is just as prominent in writers in the post-Nicene period, and Cyril is a clear example. In commenting upon Isaiah 43:5-7, a passage that he understood as describing the gathering of the church from all the earth, Cyril states that the Only-begotten Word of God became man ‘in order to drive both pagans and Jews to the true and undefiled knowledge of God (θεογνωσίαν)’.⁸ Just a few lines later, he broadens this principle further, as he writes in comment upon Isaiah 43:9,

Knowing everything from beginning to end would only be fitting to one who is God by nature. All understanding (σύνεσις) comes from him and he is the fount of all knowledge, and ‘in him are hidden all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge’ (Col. 2:3), as it is written. But if someone is found to have knowledge even of future things, it appears that he has received the gift by revelation (ἀποκαλύψεως) from him.⁹

Though the Son is not explicitly mentioned in this passage, he is certainly whom Cyril has in mind with the phrase ‘the one who is God by nature’, since he takes this section of Isaiah as an announcement made by the Son to those called from the nations, and he here alludes to Colossians 2:3, a Scripture passage describing Christ. In this passage, then, he presents, in the broadest possible terms, the divine Son as the agent responsible for the revelation of all human knowledge, and especially of future events.

The Messenger of Great Counsel

In order to explain how Cyril develops this theme, I intend to look at three analogies he uses—the Son as the Father’s messenger, as the Father’s Word, and as the Father’s pen. In this subsection I want to look at the first two analogies, and argue that Cyril consistently interprets Isaiah 9:6 (LXX) as a declaration that the Son is the Father’s messenger who reveals him to humanity, because the Son is the Father’s Only-begotten Word.¹⁰ The first of these two

ian Theology’, *NovVet* 7 (2009): 67-106.

⁸ Cyril, Is. 43:5-7 (PG 70.888). On the purpose of the incarnation as an impartation of revelation, see also Jo. 5:46 (Pusey, 1.392-3).

⁹ Cyril, Is. 43:9 (PG 70.893). Cf. Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, Interpreter of the Old Testament* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1952), 221-2, who notes the significance of this passage, but does not indicate that Cyril has in mind the Son specifically, rather than merely the deity in some generic sense.

¹⁰ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 569, briefly notes Cyril’s frequent usage of Isaiah 9:6, though she only considers its usage in his explicitly Trinitarian works, and so does not look at its occurrence in his *Commentary on Isaiah*.

points, the identification of the Son as the Father's messenger, becomes apparent through looking at his handling of Isaiah 9:6 in his *Commentary on Isaiah*. When the prophet foretells that the Messiah would be called 'messenger of the great counsel' (μεγάλης βουλήs ἄγγελος), Cyril argues that the remnant of Israel was called to 'knowledge of the Immanuel' by the apostles. The light that the apostles gave forth was the light of Christ who 'intellectually illuminates' (διὰ Χριστοῦ καταφωτίζοντος νοητῶs), not just Israel as was formerly the case under the law, but everyone in all the earth. Christ's illuminating work was necessary, Cyril says, because the devil had enslaved those who worship the creation, and the law had proven to be too burdensome for the Jews.¹¹ We should note at this point that in highlighting the agency of the Son as the bringer of divine revelation, Cyril defines the Son's revelatory mission specifically with reference to the Father, a striking move given that the prophetic text does not speak explicitly of the Father. When the prophet says that the Son is the 'messenger of great counsel', Cyril asserts that it means he is the messenger 'of God the Father'. To support this reading of Isaiah, he then cites John 3:33-34 and 15:14-15, which describe Jesus as speaking the 'words of God' and teaching those things that he has heard from God the Father. In these Johannine texts, Cyril argues, the incarnate Son attributes the 'operation and power' (ἐνέργειάν τε καὶ δύναμιν) for his work to the Father, since 'everything that is his is the Father's'.¹² The basic features of his exegesis here in his *Commentary on Isaiah*—the identification of the Son as 'messenger', the connection with the revelation of the Father, and the identity between the Son's word and the Father's—are consistently found throughout Cyril's corpus in his treatment of this passage, as we shall see below.

As noted above, in his exposition of Isaiah 9:6 Cyril cites two Johannine texts to support his reading and to expound more fully on his notion of Christ as the messenger of the Father, thus signaling that the fourth gospel was an important source for his theology of revelation. In the preface to his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Cyril asserts that he intends to write a 'more dogmatic exegesis' (δογματικωτέραν . . . ἐξήγησιν), and, in keeping with this stated in-

¹¹ Cyril, Is. 9:6-7 (PG 70.252-3). On the pedagogical aspect of Christ's work, see Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 116-25, although his concern is mainly with Christ as a moral teacher and example, whereas I am more concerned with Christ's revelation of the Father, though these two aspects of Christ's revelatory mission are obviously related. On Cyril's theology of revelation, see also Steven A. McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ: A Reconstruction of Cyril of Alexandria's Christology*, VCSup 55 (Boston: Brill, 2000), 23-32.

¹² Cyril, Is. 9:6-7 (PG 70.256). On the Christology of Cyril's *Commentary on Isaiah*, see further Abel H. A. Fernández Loís, *La cristología en los Comentarios a Isaías de Cirilo de Alejandría y Teodoro de Ciro* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1998).

tention, we find in the commentary the same basic interpretation of Isaiah 9:6, although with a greater depth of theological reflection.¹³ This more densely theological exegesis of Isaiah 9:6 is evident in his interpretation of John 12:49-50 ('I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak'). Cyril initially explains this verse by pointing to its immediate context: the Jews are rejecting Jesus' message, a truly inexcusable fault, since they had the law which spoke of Christ. After explaining the verse along these lines, he turns next to consider a possible heretical challenge. As one of a series of texts in the Gospel of John that speak of the Son receiving from the Father, this passage could pose problems for those holding to a pro-Nicene insistence on the Son's essential equality with the Father, since it implies that the Father possesses something the Son does not. Cyril's response operates on two levels. He first argues that it is as the incarnate Son that Jesus says he receives a word from the Father, in fulfillment of the prophecy that God would send another prophet like Moses (cf. Deut. 18:18-19).¹⁴ Cyril acknowledges that it is an 'incredible' (ἀπίθανον) thing that the 'God who speaks in the prophets should be called a prophet', but this manner of speaking is exactly what the incarnation entails, as the divine Word has humiliated himself by taking on the name of slavery.¹⁵

Although interpreting the passage with reference to the Son's incarnation (τῆς μετὰ σαρκὸς οἰκονομίας¹⁶) sufficiently answers the charge of the heretics, Cyril presses on to a sec-

¹³ Cyril, *Jo. praef.* (Pusey, 1.7).

¹⁴ Underlying Cyril's exegesis here is his understanding of the 'two times' of the Word, a principle that undergirds his practice of partitive exegesis and that is a key component of his anti-Arian polemic. He states this principle explicitly at Cyril, *dial. Trin.* V (547b-c) (SC 237.266-8), and elsewhere cites Athanasius as the source of the idea (*ep.* 1.4 (=ad monachos) (ACO 1.1.1, 12); citing Athanasius, *Ar.* 3.29.1). On this point see Liébaert, *La doctrine christologique*, 158-69; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 91-8, 501-11; Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 156-9. The reader should note that here and throughout this thesis, when I reference Cyril's letters, I do so, where possible, following the section numbering that is found in the ACO edition, which, for a reason unclear to me, differs from the section numbering in the English translation (FOC 76, 77).

¹⁵ Cyril, *Jo.* 12:49-50 (Pusey, 2.339). The mention here of τὸ τῆς δουλείας ὄνομα is undoubtedly an allusion to Philippians 2:5-11. By the end Cyril's interpretation of John 12:49 the allusion becomes explicit, as he cites the passage. The Christ hymn of Philippians 2 was perhaps the most central passage for his understanding of the incarnation. Cf. Liébaert, *La doctrine christologique*, 186-96; Richard A. Norris, 'Christological Models in Cyril of Alexandria', *STPatr* 13 (1975): 255-68; J. W. Smith, 'Suffering Impassibly: Christ's Passion in Cyril of Alexandria's Soteriology', *ProEcll* 11 (2002): 463-83; Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought*, OPCS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 139, 150; McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 189; Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 114-78.

¹⁶ The phrase ἡ μετὰ σαρκὸς οἰκονομία is one of Cyril's favorite expressions, occurring hundreds of times in his corpus, and, moreover, was one that he apparently coined. It occurs twice in the fragments of Athanasius' *Expositio in Psalmos* (PG 27.373, 377), but these Athanasian fragments are of uncertain authenticity and may contain some Cyrilline fragments. Previous authors had, however, used similar expressions. See, e.g., ps-

ond point, using the text to demonstrate that, with respect to the ‘Only-begotten himself’ (ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ . . . τοῦ Μονογενοῦς), he is ‘rightly and deservedly’ said to receive from the Father. The Son, Cyril now argues, says he receives a word from the Father, not simply because he was fulfilling the role of a human prophet. Rather,

since he is the living and hypostatic (ἐνυπόστατος) Word of God the Father, it is necessary that he interpret the things in him (ἀναγκαίως διερμηνεύει τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ). And as if bringing into the light what is in the will (ἐν θελήσει) of his own progenitor, he says he has received a commandment. And anyone could see that the matter is also true with respect to us ourselves and is not otherwise. For the word that is spoken (λόγος . . . ὁ προφορικὸς) consists in the composition of words and expressions, and is made audible (διακτυπούμενος) to the outside world by the spoken voice (διὰ . . . φωνῆς τῆς ἐνάρθρου). This word discloses (ἐκκαλύπτει) what lies in thought, when our thoughts (διανοίας), as it were, give a commandment to it [i.e., the voice], although the process does not take much time. For at the same time the mind (νοῦς) has understood something, it also entrusts it to the voice. And the voice, as it goes forth to the outside world, interprets (διερμηνεύει) those things lying in the depths, that is, those things in the mind, altering nothing of what was commanded to it. Therefore, one might well say to them [i.e., the heretics], ‘Why is it strange, O men, if the Son, being the Word of God the Father (though not just like our word, since the things concerning God are greater than every illustration), should interpret the counsel (βουλήν) of the one who begot him? For does not the prophet also say that he is called by a name that is most fitting (πρεπωδέστατον) to him, “Messenger of great counsel” (Is. 9:6)?’¹⁷

In keeping with his intention to explain the passage with reference to the Only-begotten himself, Cyril here interprets it on the basis of the Son’s relation to his Father, rather than with respect to his incarnation. He explains this intra-Trinitarian relation using the analogy of the human mind which expresses its thoughts through the spoken word. As the spoken word makes known to other persons the things lying hidden in the mind, so the Word discloses the will of the Father. Furthermore, Cyril’s argument here seems to assume that the Son’s eternal generation by the Father serves as the pattern for his bringing forth to humanity the Father’s counsel, since it is as the human word ‘goes forth to the outside world’ that it reveals what lies hidden in the mind, in a manner analogous to the going forth of the divine Word from the

Didymus, *Trin.* III (PG 39.817): διὰ τὴν ἐν σαρκὶ οἰκονομίαν. For Cyril the phrase is basically a gloss for the incarnation. For his understanding of the term οἰκονομία, see Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 501-4, who concludes, rightly in my view, ‘Le mot οἰκονομία désigne aussi parfois la condescendance divine, son adaptation aux faiblesses humaines ou encore sa pédagogie’.

¹⁷ Cyril, *Jo.* 12:49-50 (Pusey, 2.340-1). The word διακτυπέω which occurs in this passage was apparently coined by Cyril. See *ador.* XIV (PG 68.936); *Jo.* 16:17-18 (Pusey, 2.641).

Father. The 'going forth' in view here is probably not the sending of the Son in incarnate form, since in this passage Cyril is interpreting the Johannine text not with reference to the incarnation, but with respect to the 'Only-begotten himself'.¹⁸

As Boulnois has pointed out, Cyril often used the analogy of the mind and its word to illustrate the relationship of the Father to the Son.¹⁹ She outlined three functions that this metaphor performs: as a description of the Son's eternal generation, as an argument for the co-existence of Father and Son, and as a metaphor for the revelatory function of the Word. It is the last which is in the foreground in this passage, but, as I just noted, eternal generation seems to be implicit in his argument as well, so these uses of the analogy should not be distinguished too sharply. Moreover, in this passage Cyril highlights two implications of this mind-word analogy that are worthy of note. The first is that the process of a thought being conceived and then expressed occurs almost without any lapse of time. It is not entirely clear why he highlights this point in this context. Perhaps the lack of temporal succession serves to further ground the Son's agency as revealer more solidly in the necessity of the divine relations. On the other hand, it might simply reinforce the second implication I want to draw attention to. Cyril also points out that the voice, as it is expressed, does not alter that which the mind commanded it to say. Thus, the expressed word faithfully reveals that which was previously concealed in thought.

Both of these ideas are a more theological way of making the same point that Cyril made previously in his exegesis of Isaiah 9:6 in his *Commentary on Isaiah*, when he argued that the words of the Son are the same as the words of the Father. In fact, the citation of the Isaianic prophecy in the conclusion to this Johannine exposition underscores the connection between the two passages. As he did previously, so also here in his exegesis of John 12:49-50, Cyril describes the content of the Son's revelation with reference to the Father, specifically calling it his

¹⁸ Cyril's manner of relating the intra-Trinitarian relations to divine actions in the economy certainly merits further comment, but I will postpone doing so until we have had a chance to look at several other passages later in this chapter.

¹⁹ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 129-46, especially 136-7 where she looks at Cyril's exegesis of John 12:49-50. On this analogy in pro-Nicenes more generally, see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 289-91. As Boulnois (p.140, n.52), following the work of C. Chiesa, 'Le problème du langage intérieur chez les Stoïciens', *RIPh* 45 (1991): 301-321, points out, the mind-word analogy has its roots in the philosophical schools of antiquity where it was used by the Stoics, and in some form goes back to Plato himself. Cf. *soph.* 263e3-5; *theae.* 189e4-190a6; 206d1-3; 208c5. On its usage in patristic theology, see M. Mühl, 'Der Λόγος Ἐνδιόθετος und Προφορικὸς von der älteren Stoa bis zur Synode von Sirmium 351', *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 7 (1962): 7-56. Cyril could easily have picked up the analogy from earlier Christian authors rather than directly from philosophical sources.

θέλησις ('will'), which seems to be basically synonymous with the Father's βουλή ('counsel') about which he spoke in his exegesis of Isaiah 9:6. Furthermore, Cyril uses the verbs διερμηνεύω ('interpret') and ἐκκαλύπτω ('uncover') to describe the Son's mission, whereas previously in his exposition of Isaiah he spoke of it as a 'revealing' or 'illuminating'. Despite these slight differences, the exegesis remains basically the same.

In addition, in this passage he goes further than in his exegesis of Isaiah 9:6 by speaking of the Son's agency as 'necessary', and describing the Son's title as the Father's 'messenger' a 'most fitting' name. Similarly, in the *Thesaurus*, Cyril states that the Son's designation as the Father's 'Word' is a 'most appropriate name' (κυριωτάτην), one that 'especially denotes his substance (τῆς οὐσίας)'.²⁰ 'Fittingness' was a category used in grammatical interpretation and rhetorical composition in late antiquity, as students were taught how to offer an interpretation that was 'fitting' with the overall story as a whole.²¹ Like 'fittingness', the usage of κύριος to designate a 'proper' sense of a word is to be traced back to the grammatical and rhetorical training of late antiquity.²² Cyril, who undoubtedly had at least a grammatical education and likely some rhetorical education as well, appears to be here pressing these ancient exegetical techniques into the service of his theological aims.²³ The application of the titles 'messenger' and 'Word' to the Son is in keeping with the overall story that Scripture tells of the Son who became man to reveal the Father. Moreover, the principles of 'fittingness' or 'propriety' displayed in these passages also reinforce the idea noted previously that Cyril sees the Son's revelatory mission as grounded in his eternal relation to the Father as the Only-begotten Word.

²⁰ Cyril, *thes.* XIX (PG 75.313).

²¹ Kathy Eden, *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition: Chapters in the Ancient Legacy and Its Humanist Reception*, Yale Studies in Hermeneutics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 31-40. As an example of this principle in the grammatical tradition, she points to Plutarch's treatise *De audiendis poetis* 18A (LCL 197.92), where he speaks of what is 'fitting' (τὸ πρέπων), though she notes that it goes all the way back to Aristotle's *Poetics*.

²² Cf. Ruth M. Siddals, 'Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria', *JTS* 38 (1987): 349-50; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 67-71. See Aristotle, *poet.* 1457B; *rhet.* 1404B; 1410B; Dionysius Halicarnassus, *comp. ver.* 21; Tryphon II, *trop.* 3.

²³ On Cyril's usage of grammatical practices, see J. David Cassel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Science of the Grammarians: A Study in the Setting, Purpose, and Emphasis of Cyril's Commentary on Isaiah* (diss., University of Virginia, 1992), especially 163-210; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 58-75. On his usage of rhetoric, see Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 183-235. On Cyril's education, see Éviéux, *SC* 372.12-3; Hardy, 'The Further Education of Cyril of Alexandria'; Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 4-5.

The Pen of the Stenographer

So far I have only considered two of the three analogies that I said I would cover in this section. I now wish to look at a passage that introduces the third and final one—the Son as the Father’s pen. In the patristic tradition, Psalm 44 (LXX) was a key text for developing the analogy of the Son as the Word of the Father, since verse two of the psalm reads ‘My heart erupted with a good word (λόγον); it is I that address my works to the king; my tongue is a pen of a stenographer’. At least as early as Theophilus of Antioch the psalmist’s mention of a word coming forth from the heart was regarded as a description of the Son’s eternal generation, although Origen rejected such a reading, probably due to his anti-‘Gnostic’ or anti-Monarchian concerns.²⁴ Within the pro-Nicene tradition there existed a diversity of opinion on the passage, with Basil of Caesarea rejecting a Christological reading, and others, such as Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius, and Augustine, carrying forward the line of interpretation begun with Theophilus of Antioch.²⁵ Cyril follows the latter trajectory, perhaps having learned it from reading Athanasius’ *Letters to Serapion* or some other pro-Nicene text. Two surviving fragments from Cyril’s *Commentary on the Psalms* address Psalm 44:2, and in them he takes the phrase ‘my heart erupted a good word’ as referring to the Son who has gone forth from the Father ‘as a word from a mind’, echoing the description of the Son we just saw in his exegesis of John 12:49-50.²⁶ In addition to this fragment from his psalter commentary, Cyril consistently

²⁴ Theophilus of Antioch, *Autol.* 2.10.6. The Christological usage of Psalm 44 goes back to the New Testament itself (cf. Heb. 1:8-9). Justin Martyr referred to the passage at *dial.* 38, but it is not clear that he had eternal generation in mind. On Origen’s usage, see Ronald E. Heine, ‘Origen on the Christological Significance of Psalm 45 (44)’, *Consensus* 23 (1997): 21-37. The examples he gives are Origen, *sel.* in Ps. 44:2 (PG 12.1428); *Jo.* 1.24.151-2. In addition, though without noting Psalm 44 specifically, Irenaeus rejected the analogy of a mind emitting a word as a fitting description of the generation of the Word, presumably because it was by his opponents, and also because it implied a spatial separation between God and his Word (*haer.* 2.13.8; cf. Barnes, ‘Irenaeus’s Trinitarian Theology’, 81-5).

²⁵ Basil of Caesarea, *hom.* in Ps. 44.3 (PG 29.392-3); Alexander of Alexandria, *ep. encycl.*, in Socrates, *h.e.* 1.6.16; Athanasius, *ep. Serap.* 2.6.3; Augustine, *en. Ps.* 44.4 (CCSL 38.496). Diodore and Theodore of Mopsuestia do not explicitly reject the Christological reading, as does Basil, but the reading they give has nothing to do with eternal generation. See Diodore, *Ps.* 44:2a (CCSG 6.269); Theodore, *Ps.* 44:2a (Devreesse, 278-9). I will consider their exegesis of this verse in more detail in the following chapter.

²⁶ Cyril, *Ps.* 44:2 (PG 69.1028). All that remains from Cyril’s apparently lengthy *Commentary on the Psalms* are fragments gathered from the catenae. The largest collection of these fragments is in PG 69.717-1273, which is simply a reprint of Mai’s nineteenth-century collection. As Marie-Josèphe Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier (IIIe-Ve Siècles)*, 2 vols. (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1982), 1.131-134, has pointed out, this collection is certainly flawed (‘un fatras inextricable’), as it contains fragments that belong to other authors. For this reason, most studies of Cyril’s exegesis, such as the classic work by Alexander Kerrigan (cf. *St. Cyril*

presents the same interpretation of the ‘heart erupting a good word’ in his *Thesaurus, Dialogues on the Trinity, and Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*.²⁷

After pointing first to the Son’s eternal generation from the Father, Cyril presses on to make a further point about the Son’s role as the revealer of the Father, relying on the second half of the verse. He interprets the line, ‘my tongue is a pen of a stenographer’, by writing,

God the Father in diverse ways signifies the Word who is issued from his own substance. For he calls him his own tongue (γλῶσσαν ἰδίαν), not as one who speaks something else other than that which is in him. For the tongue in us also does this, by transmitting (διαπορθμεύουσα) those things in the mind and heart to those external to us. And he also says that he is the pen of a stenographer (τοῦ ὀξυγράφου). For the pen of a stenographer quickly impresses (ὀξέως . . . ἐναποσημαίνεται) upon tablets the voices of some certain persons. And the Only-begotten Word of God fulfills this same thing by intellectually inscribing (νοητῶς ἐγχαράττων) on the hearts of those who believe the great and wise and true will (βούλημα) of the Father. And in the gospels he himself explains what the will (θέλημα) of the Father is, when he says, ‘That of all that you have given to me I should lose none of it, but should raise it up on the last day’ (John 6:39). And he does so in another way, for he inscribes (ἐγγράφει) in us the good and acceptable will of the Father (cf. Rom. 12:2). Therefore, the

of Alexandria, vii), ignore these fragments. Robert Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs grecs des Psaumes*, ST 264 (Citta del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1970), 224-33, listed those fragments that he regarded as genuine. In his estimation (p.229) the two fragments I am considering here are authentic, beginning with Ἐνταῦθά μοι νόει and going through τῶν Γραφικῶν μαρτυρίας (PG 69.1025-32), with the exception of the final two lines that explicitly refer to work of Eusebius and obviously come from the catenist. In addition to the collection of fragments in PG, see also the preface to his commentary in Giovanni Mercati, *Osservazioni a proemi del Salterio di Origene, Ippolito, Eusebio, Cirillo Alessandrino e altri: Con frammenti inediti* (Citta del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1948), 140-144, and the new collection of fragments in Chiara Ferrari Toniolo, *Cyrilliana in Psalmos: I frammenti del Commento ai Salmi di Cirillo di Alessandria nel codice Laudiano greco 42* (Catania: Centro di studi sull’antico cristianesimo, Università di Catania, 2000). On this new collection, see also Luciano Bossina, ‘Note su alcuni frammenti di Cirillo di Alessandria sui Salmi recentemente editi’, *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 37 (2001): 487-503. On the history of the catenae on the psalter, see Gilles Dorival, *Les chaînes exégétiques grecques sur les Psaumes: Contribution à l’étude d’une forme littéraire*, 4 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1986-1995); Ekkehard Mühlenberg, *Psalmkommentare aus der Katenenüberlieferung*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975-1978), Band III. A critical edition of the surviving remnants of Cyril’s psalter commentary is needed, but the task will undoubtedly be a very difficult and complex undertaking.

According to Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier*, 1.134, in Cyril’s exegesis of the psalter, ‘l’érudition, philologique ou historique, ne retient guère, non plus que les développements moraux ou les spéculations sur la vie spirituelle. Tout l’accent est mis sur la théologie’. This assessment seems like an accurate description of what we see Cyril doing here with Psalm 44, and will later see with respect to Psalm 22 (see below, pp.140-154). For studies of Cyril’s psalter exegesis, see M. A. Rossi, ‘Osservazioni sul Commento ai Salmi di Cirillo edito da Angelo Mai’, *Orpheus* 4 (1983): 116-124; *ibid.*, ‘Ancora sul ‘Commento ai Salmi’ di Cirillo. A proposito di un recente lavoro sui commentari patristici al Salterio’, *Annali di storie dell’esegesi* 1 (1984): 45-51; E. Hirschauer, ‘L’exégèse cyrillienne du Psaume 94’, *VetC* 41 (2004): 83-106, 313-339.

²⁷ For Cyril’s exegesis of Psalm 44:2 elsewhere, see *thes.* VII; XV; XXXV (PG 75.84, 277, 621); *dial. Trin.* II (450c) (SC 231.320); *Mal.* 3:1 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.597). The verse is also probably in view when he uses the analogy of ‘belching’ (ἐρεύγομαι) to describe the Son’s relation to the Father at *Jo.* 1:2 (Pusey, 1.54).

pen of the Father is exceedingly fast (ὄξυς). For, on the one hand, the law which was through Moses hints at what is beneficial in an obscure and difficult manner, in long, round-about ways of speaking, and with much difficulty, I mean that which was according to the letter. But on the other hand, the Savior and Lord of all, without any circumlocution, reveals (ἀπεκάλυψεν) the will (θέλημα) of the Father concisely, as I said. For he is ‘the messenger of great counsel’ (Is. 9:6).²⁸

Cyril regards the speaker of the psalm as the Father, and so the description in this verse is a statement made by the Father about his Son. He takes verse two as expressing two metaphors to describe the Son, first that of ‘tongue’ and second that of a ‘stenographer’.²⁹ The notion of the Son as the Father’s ‘own’ tongue receives only a brief explanation and functions in basically the same way as the mind-word analogy: as the Father’s ‘tongue’, the Son expresses what is in him.

The second metaphor in the verse, the Son as the pen of the Father, captures Cyril’s interest much more than the first, and, although it supports the same basic point about the Son who reveals the Father, it also adds three features to the picture I have sketched thus far. First, he uses the analogy to contrast the Son’s revelation in his incarnate state with that given through Moses, and distinguishes the two on the basis of the clarity of the revelation. It is notable that in both cases Cyril regards the Son as the agent bringing divine revelation, and he implies that the content of the message is the same in both instances. We will revisit these themes in chapter four. Second, he defines the locus of the Son’s revelatory work, whereas previously this was unstated. Cyril writes that it is performed in the ‘hearts of those who believe’, and adds the adverb νοητῶς to further specify that it is an act of revelation occurring in the inner person. Finally, the will of the Father is here given greater specificity. As in the previous

²⁸ Cyril, Ps. 44:2 (PG 69.1029). Cyril’s interpretation of the scribal imagery in the verse bears some similarities to Augustine’s exegesis of the same passage. He too suggests that the Father is the speaker of the statement, describing his Son as a pen of a writer. However, Augustine did not draw out a theology of revelation from the verse as does Cyril. See Augustine, *en. Ps. 44.6* (CCSL 38.498). Also somewhat similar to Cyril’s interpretation is that of Jerome. In commenting on the verse, he mentions that the Father and Son work together in acts such as creation (*ep. 65.5* (CSEL 54.622-3)). Thus, both Jerome and Cyril took the verse as an opportunity to discuss Trinitarian operations.

²⁹ Psalm 44:2 speaks of not just a typical scribe, but an ὀξυγράφος, meaning some sort of shorthand scribe or stenographer. As archbishop of Alexandria, Cyril would presumably have had such scribes in his employ. According to Severus ibn al-Muqaffa’, *hist. 1.12* (PO 1.431), the ‘principal inhabitants of Alexandria appointed copyists to transcribe for them’ Cyril’s discourses and homilies. On shorthand writers in late antiquity, see H. C. Teitler, *Notarii and Exceptores: An Inquiry Into Role and Significance of Shorthand Writers in the Imperial and Ecclesiastical Bureaucracy of the Roman Empire (From the Early Principate to c. 450 A.D.)*, Dutch monographs on ancient history and archaeology 1 (Amsterdam: J.C. Geiben, Publisher, 1985). On the term ὀξυγράφος, see especially pages 22-3, 226.

2. The Son as Word and Will of the Father: A Trinitarian Theology of Revelation

passages, we see here again the influence of Isaiah 9:6. The description of the Son's revelation as the 'great will' (βούλημα) of the Father undoubtedly harkens back to the Isaianic text, and, indeed, by the end of his exposition Cyril has explicitly cited the passage. As before, the Son's status as revealer is explained with reference to the Father, since it is the Father's will that the Son expresses. However, whereas in his exegesis of Isaiah 9:6 and John 12:49-50, Cyril did not go beyond simply stating that the Son makes known the Father's will, here he states precisely what that will is. He relies on John 6:39 to identify the Father's will because in this passage Jesus explicitly defines the θέλημα of the one who sent him. The will of the Father is his intention to save humanity through the work of the Son. The same basic definition of the Father's will is given in Cyril's *Scholia on the Incarnation* in which he quotes Isaiah 9:6 and then defines the *Patris bonam voluntatem* as his love for the world, as presented in John 3:16.³⁰ On occasion, he even calls the Son himself the 'living and substantial will' (ἡ ζῶσα καὶ ἐνούσιος ἡ βούλησις) of the Father.³¹ Thus, the Son not only reveals the will of the Father, but carries it out in the economy, and is, in some sense, himself the content and fulfillment of the paternal willing.

With the exception of these few passages, Cyril is typically reticent to state with much specificity the content of the Father's will that the Son reveals. Moreover, in the one instance in which he does clearly define the will of the Father, he does so simply by quoting John 6:39, another biblical text that also speaks directly of the will of the Father. This pattern suggests that he is hesitant to speculate on this matter, and prefers instead to stick fairly closely to the words of Scripture itself when describing the content of the Son's revelation. The title 'messenger of great counsel' from Isaiah 9:6 appears to have been a favorite for this purpose, as it occurs in each of the passages I have examined in this section. In addition to these aforementioned occurrences, he also cites the verse when talking about the Son's mission in his *Dialogues on the Trinity*, in his *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*, in his *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, and in his *Commentary on Hebrews*.³² However, we should also note that, even though his preference for terms related to 'will' or 'counsel' is clearly the result of this Isaianic prophecy, Cyril cannot help but read the

³⁰ Cyril, *schol. inc.* XXVII (ACO 1.5, 205-6).

³¹ Cyril, *thes.* VIII; XV; XXI (PG 75.105, 257, 260, 261, 360). Cf. Cyril, *Jo.* 8:29 (Pusey, 2.47).

³² Cyril, *dial. Trin.* I (399c-d) (SC 231.170); *Ag.* 1:13; *Mal.* 1:10-11; 3:1 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.258, 565, 597); *Jo.* 14:24 (Pusey, 2.504); *fr. in Ps.* 2.7 (Mercati, 144); *fr. Lc.* 190 (12:49-50) (Reuss, 148); *Heb.* 1:1 (Pusey, 364). In chapter four I will return to consider in more detail the last passage from his *Commentary on Hebrews*.

verse in light of other Scriptural passages. This tendency is most evident in his almost invariable habit of describing the ‘will’ revealed by the Son as the will ‘of the Father’.³³ Isaiah 9:6 does not mention the Father explicitly, so he must be importing this nuance from elsewhere, most likely from the Johannine passages that speak of the Son revealing the Father.

Moreover, Cyril’s tendency to connect the Son’s revelation to the Father’s will is likely also due to his theology of eternal generation. It is noteworthy that he develops both the analogies of a word springing from a mind and of a scribe’s pen in contexts in which he also discusses the Son’s eternal generation. Boulnois argued that Cyril’s thought reveals a deep correspondence between the intra-Trinitarian relations and the missions of the Son and Spirit.³⁴ In fact, just such a movement from the temporal to the eternal is suggested in his exegesis of John 12:49-50, when Cyril begins by giving an explanation that accords with the ‘economy with the flesh’, and then offers a subsequent, complementary explanation that pertains to ‘the Only-begotten himself’.³⁵ It is perhaps because of this assumed continuity between the Son’s generation and his revelatory task that the analogy of a scribe or pen remains not nearly as prominent or frequent a theme in Cyril’s corpus as the metaphor of the Son as the Father’s Word.³⁶ The image of a scribe only serves to illustrate the Son’s mission, while the image of a mind and its word highlights both his generation and mission. By the end of this chapter, once we have

³³ Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 117, also notes that Cyril highlights the Son’s revelation of the Father as a result of the incarnation.

³⁴ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 511.

³⁵ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 506, noted that because of Cyril’s assumed continuity between the economy and theology, ‘un même verset scripturaire puisse être successivement interprété comme se rapportant aux propriétés naturelles du Fils, c’est-à-dire à la théologie, puis à l’économie’, the very tendency we see in his exegesis of John 12:49-50. However, earlier in the book, she seems to make a sharper distinction between theology and economy when she discusses the revelatory usage of the mind-word analogy, writing, ‘Dans ce cas, l’analogie sert non plus à montrer que le verbe s’origine dans l’intellect - versant théologique, mais à expliquer qu’il est destiné à sortir de l’intellect pour exprimer à l’extérieur la volonté de cet intellect - versant économique’ (p.135). Based upon Cyril’s exegesis of John 12:49-50 and Psalm 44:2, it seems rather that the revelatory usage of the mind-word analogy is grounded in his usage of the analogy to express the Son’s generation. These two functions can be distinguished but not separated.

³⁶ I can find only two other usages of this analogy in his corpus aside from this fragment on Psalm 44:2. At Is. 8:1-2 (PG 70.220) he provides a slightly different reading of the verse than what we have seen above. Here Cyril quotes Psalm 44:2 and again says the Son is the pen of the Father, since he is the one who reveals the Father to whomever he chooses (cf. Matt. 11:27). However, in this instance he defines the content of the Son’s revelation as an understanding of the Trinity, which human language is incapable of expressing, in contrast to the incarnation of the Son, which can be expressed in human language. The second usage is at Cyril, *ador. I* (PG 68.144), and I will discuss it in the final section of this chapter.

considered several more passages, I will return to consider once more Cyril's understanding of the relationship between the intra-Trinitarian relations and the economy of salvation.

Earlier authors in the patristic tradition had offered interpretations of Isaiah 9:6 that resemble that of Cyril. Boulnois noted that Justin Martyr and Irenaeus were precedents, and we can add to these two a handful of other authors who specifically connected the title 'messenger of great counsel' with the revelation of the Father's will, including Hippolytus, Origen, and Eusebius of Caesarea in the pre-Nicene period, and in the post-Nicene period Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory Nazianzus.³⁷ Didymus the Blind, Cyril's Alexandrian predecessor, also identified the Son as the messenger several times in his *Commentary on Zechariah*, though he did not place this mission in the broader context of redemptive history, as does Cyril, nor did he refer it specifically to the revelation of the Father.³⁸ Jerome, who, as we shall soon see, often provides parallels for Cyril's exegesis of the prophets, did not make much of the passage in his *Commentary on Isaiah*, simply noting that the reading of the Hebrew differed in this instance from that of the Septuagint, and defining the title with reference to the destruction of Israel and the salvation of the nations.³⁹ Even though some of these prior authors had offered interpretations of Isaiah 9:6 that were similar to Cyril's, his usage of it to develop the theme of Christ the revealer demonstrates a consistency of exposition and a frequency of use that is unique to his own theology. Still, in presenting the Son thus, his theology is highly traditional. He shows

³⁷ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 136, n.37. Boulnois refers to Justin, *dial.* 56.10, which presents the same idea of the Son as the messenger or angel of the Father, though without citing Isaiah 9:6. For passages that cite the verse and explain it as referring to the counsel of the Father, see Justin, *dial.* 76.3; Irenaeus, *haer.* 3.16.3; Hippolytus, *Dan.* 2.32; 3.9; Origen, *Cels.* 5.53; *Jo.* 1.38.278; Eusebius, *h.e.* 1.2.3; *Is.* 1.54; Athanasius, *Ar.* 3.25.12; 3.30.63; Basil of Caesarea, *Eun.* II.18; Gregory of Nazianzus, *or.* 38.2. Pace John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea, The Formation of Christian Theology 1* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 102, who says that the term ἄγγελος as a title for the Son drops out of use shortly after the time of Justin.

³⁸ Didymus, *Zach.* 1.32 (1:9); 1.54 (1:13); 1.116 (2:7-8); 1.274 (4:1-3); 4.233 (12:8) (SC 83.208, 220, 252, 334; SC 85.922).

³⁹ Jerome, *Is.* 9:6 (CCSL 73.125-7). The fact that both Cyril and Jerome give John 14:27 as a cross-reference in their exposition of Isaiah 9:6 could be evidence that the Alexandrian archbishop relied to some degree upon the Latin exegete in this instance. The 'parallels' between the exegesis of the prophets by Cyril and Jerome were first pointed out in F. M. Abel, 'Parallélisme exégétique entre S. Jérôme et S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Vivre et Penser* 1e série (1941): 94-119, 212-230. He highlighted the relationship between Theophilus and Jerome as being the possible source of Jerome's works being in Alexandria and available to Cyril. Moreover, Jerome's friends and agents came to Alexandria in order to embark for Europe, so his works certainly were not unknown in the city (p.96-7). In his study of Cyril's Old Testament exegesis, Alexander Kerrigan also concluded that 'Cyril consulted Jerome frequently'. See his discussion at Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 435-439. See further M. C. Pennacchio, 'Quasi ursa raptis catulis': Os 13, 8 nell'esegesi di Gerolamo e Cirillo di Alessandria', *VetC* 32 (1995): 143-161.

signs of a pro-Nicene emphasis on the Son's eternal generation, but we cannot understand this theme in his theology until we look more closely at its place in his pro-Nicene thought, specifically within the context of his understanding of inseparable operations.

THE INSEPARABLE OPERATION OF THE UNDIVIDED TRINITY

In the first section of this chapter I have argued that, for Cyril of Alexandria, the Son of God acts as the agent of divine revelation. I now want to argue that we understand this idea more deeply when we look at it against the background of Cyril's own pro-Nicene theology. The specific feature of Cyril's pro-Nicene thought that concerns us here is his adherence to the principle of inseparable operations. He holds that, as a consequence of the one, undivided divine nature and the mutual indwelling of the three hypostases, Father, Son, and Spirit are necessarily implicated in every divine act. I intend to demonstrate Cyril's adherence to this principle through a consideration of two important passages from his corpus. In the first, drawn from his *Dialogues on the Trinity*, he argues that divine operations are common to each of the divine three, and in the second, drawn from his *Five Tomes against Nestorius*, he argues that the unity of divine operations cannot be described as the mere cooperation of Father, Son, and Spirit to achieve some overall goal. Rather, every act of the Father necessarily involves the Son and Spirit, and the same principle holds true for acts attributed either to the Son or Spirit.

Scholarship on the fourth century has demonstrated that the principle of inseparable operations had wide-spread support and was a well established feature of the pro-Nicene consensus.⁴⁰ Although in surveys of the history of dogma this idea is most often associated with Augustine, in fact a variety of pro-Nicene authors, both eastern and western, argue for or assume inseparable operations. Pro-Nicene logic on this point was that if, as a consequence of divine simplicity, the persons are distinct but inseparable, they must operate in a distinct but inseparable manner.⁴¹ Inseparable operations does not merely state that Father, Son, and Spirit all are capable of the same divine actions since they are all divine, but asserts the stronger claim

⁴⁰ Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 236, cites inseparable operations as one of 'three central principles' that identify a theology as 'fully pro-Nicene'. Another of his three principles is 'clear expression that the eternal generation of the Son occurs within the unitary and incomprehensible divine being'. Thus, Cyril's emphasis on the Son's generation that surfaces throughout this chapter is another indication of his inhabiting pro-Nicene theological culture.

⁴¹ On the relation of divine simplicity and inseparable operations, see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 280-2. On divine simplicity in the fourth century, see Radde-Gallwitz, *Divine Simplicity*.

that Father, Son, and Spirit are always at work in any given action. Augustine's *Sermon 52* is a representative text, in which he argues that, 'The Father indeed suffered not, but the Son, yet the suffering of the Son was the work of the Father and the Son'.⁴² Gregory of Nyssa's *Ad Ablabium* is another classic text that develops this idea. A key piece of Gregory's argument that pro-Nicene Trinitarianism does not entail tritheism is that the three work inseparably, and not as three separate human persons who are merely cooperating.⁴³ Gregory argues that all divine operations, such as providence or care, are 'one and not three, carried out by the holy Trinity, not cut into three according to the number of the persons (προσώπων) that are contemplated in the faith, such that each of the operations contemplated in itself belongs either to the Father alone, or independently (ἰδιαζόντως) to the Only-begotten, or separately (κεχωρισμένως) to the Holy Spirit'.⁴⁴ For Gregory, as for other pro-Nicenes, all three divine persons must be involved in every divine operation if the divine unity is to be maintained.

Cyril was well versed in pro-Nicene texts and the theological culture that they in turn formed, and so it is not surprising to find his clear affirmation of inseparable operations.⁴⁵

⁴² Augustine, *serm. 52.8* (CCSL 41Aa.64).

⁴³ For an analysis of these two texts, see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 344-63, 372-4.

⁴⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *tres dii* (GNO 3.1, 51). A similar argument that the operation of the Father, Son, and Spirit is one is put forward by Gregory in his *Ad Eustathium*. See also the suggestive remarks about divine agency in Basil of Caesarea, *Eun.* II.21; II.34; III.4. Similarly, in *or. 29.2* (SC 250.278) Gregory Nazianzus writes that the divine monarchy is 'held together' by, among other things, its 'identity of movement' (ταυτότης κινήσεως).

⁴⁵ For an overview of Cyril's theology of inseparable operations, see Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 280-6. Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 22-3, briefly notes the inseparability of Trinitarian operations: 'Sieht man auf die Art und Weise der Wirksamkeit Gottes nach außen, so gilt der Satz, daß dieselbe allen drei Personen gemeinsam sei'. So also Joseph Mahé, 'La sanctification d'après Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *RHE* 10 (1909): 476-7. Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 86-96, comments upon Trinitarian agency, but her discussion is unclear. On the one hand, she summarizes Cyril as saying that 'we divide the activity of creation among the three persons', and she suggests, 'Cyril did consider that each person of the Trinity could have a separate activity when dealing with humanity' (p.90). Moreover, she even suggests that Father, Son, and Spirit may be distinguished from one another on the basis of their acts: '[Cyril] explained the different activity of each person of the Trinity to signify the separate property' (p.78-9, n.238). However, on the other hand, she says, 'all work is accomplished by the whole of the divine nature', and 'any activity attributed to God or to any person of the Trinity is in reality the joint activity of all three persons' (p.91-2). Moreover, two pages later she suggests that there is no division of activity in Cyril's thought, although there is a varied 'intellectual recognition' of 'divergent activities' (p.94). In light of these seemingly contradictory statements, it is not clear whether or not she interprets Cyril as holding to a notion of inseparable operations. At the very least, as will become clear in the following two sections of this chapter, I suggest that saying the hypostases have 'separate activities', or speaking of 'dividing the activity' fails to capture Cyril's understanding of Trinitarian agency, and probably implies exactly the opposite of what he has in mind. Perhaps this apparent confusion has resulted from a mistranslation in the Victorian English edition of Cyril's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. The passage to which Farag refers is the archbishop's exegesis of John 15:1, where T. Randell translated, 'And if we must apportion the gifts which are bestowed upon us, or those activities which They display about creation, to each person of the Trinity separately . . .', a line which implies that Cyril himself actually was in favor of dividing divine activities (*Commentary on the Gospel according to S. John*, LFC 48 (London: Walter Smith, 1885), 365; emphasis

However, he does, perhaps, give evidence of some development regarding his understanding of this notion. In her overview of Cyril's theology of unified operations, Boulnois made use of three passages from his early work, the *Thesaurus*, but these passages seem to me to be arguing that the Father, Son, and Spirit must be divine because all three carry out divine operations, an argument for common operations, but not necessarily for inseparable operations.⁴⁶ The clearer and more robust statements about inseparable operations seem to come from his later works such as the *Dialogues on the Trinity* and the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Of course, comparative silence about a certain point does not necessarily imply a change in an author's understanding, but we can at least say that inseparable operations becomes more prominent in his later writings. Hence the two passages I will consider below come from his *Dialogues on the Trinity*, composed probably sometime in the early 420s, and his *Five Tomes against Nestorius*, written in 430.

Everything Belongs to All Three

The first passage that concerns us here is found in the seventh of Cyril's *Dialogues on the Trinity*, the only one of the seven to be devoted specifically to the Spirit. As stated in the title of the dialogue, Cyril's argument in this book is that the Spirit 'is God and from God according to nature' (Θεὸς καὶ ἐκ Θεοῦ κατὰ φύσιν).⁴⁷ A key piece of his argument is that the Spirit's role as sanctifier proves his divinity, and it is a portion of this argument that is relevant for our purposes.⁴⁸ According to the Alexandrian, Scripture 'clearly and precisely unites to God his Spirit and openly teaches that there will be no participation in God in us in any other way except

mine). However, the Greek here reads κἂν γοῦν ἐκάστῳ προσώπῳ διανέμεσθαί τι δοκῆ τῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς γεγονότων, ἥτοι προσώπῳ διανέμεσθαί τι δοκῆ τῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς γεγονότων, ἥτοι τῶν ἐνεργουμένων περὶ τὴν κτίσιν (Jo. 15:1 (Pusey, 2.536)), which is better translated, 'Even if one of those things done towards us, or one of those things performed in the case of the creation, should seem to be distributed to each person . . .' In other words, Cyril is here speaking, not of the necessity of apportioning the operations, but of the way these operations might appear to the human observer, and he quickly goes on to conclude that, despite appearances, all things are from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. In no passage, as far as I can tell, does he speak positively of 'dividing the activities', as Farag suggests.

⁴⁶ Cyril, *thes.* XXXII; XXXIV (PG 75.517, 557, 605), noted in Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 285, n.118. Although see *thes.* XII (PG 75.192), a passage that she does not include, where Cyril writes, 'when gifts are sent to the saints from the one Godhead, it is not as if the Father by himself (ἰδίᾳ) gives and the Son by himself (ἰδίᾳ) gives, but instead the Father gives through the Son in the Holy Spirit'. This statement seems much closer to a doctrine of inseparable operations than the passages that Boulnois cites.

⁴⁷ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* VII (631b) (SC 246.140).

⁴⁸ For what follows, see Cyril, *dial. Trin.* VII (640e-642d) (SC 246.170-4).

through the Holy Spirit'. To establish the central role of the Spirit in human participation in the divine he turns to two biblical texts. On the eve of his passion Jesus told his disciples 'I and the Father will come and we will make our abode with him' (John 14:23). Although the Spirit is not mentioned in this text, Cyril establishes the link with the Spirit in the next text he cites. The author of 1 John writes, 'In this way we know that he is in us, from the Spirit whom he has given to us' (1 John 4:13).⁴⁹ Joining these two passages allows him to conclude that the Father and Son dwell in humanity through the indwelling Spirit. The implication of this connection is that the Son could not 'abound' (καταπλουτοίη) in the presence and indwelling of the Spirit if he received the Spirit 'as something alien and substantially (οὐσιωδῶς) separated from him'. On the contrary, the Spirit dwelling in human persons could only bring with him the indwelling Son if the Son has the Spirit 'both from him and in him and as his own (ἴδιον)', and if the Spirit 'bears a lordship equal to [the Son], and is thus named and put in the same rank as the Son due to their identity of nature (διὰ ταυτότητα φυσικήν)'. Thus far Cyril has argued that the act of divine indwelling involves Father, Son, and Spirit, and it is the Spirit's role in this process that serves as an argument for his divine equality with the Father and Son.

Cyril next gives a series of further biblical examples to buttress his case, noting the fluidity with which Scripture speaks about divine agency. The Spirit is said to have been with Samson and to have fought with him when he had long hair, but when his hair was cut, Scripture says it was 'the Lord' who 'departed from him' (Jud. 16:19-20). Moreover, when he was about to ascend to heaven, Jesus told his followers that he would come to them, and would even be with them to the end of the age (John 14:18; Matt. 28:20), a promise fulfilled in the coming of the Paraclete, 'through whom and in whom he is with us and dwells (αὐλίκεται) within us'. Cyril's interlocutor in the dialogue next adds his own example, citing Acts 16:7 which speaks of the 'Spirit of Jesus' who guided the apostles, and Cyril follows with several more passages to demonstrate that even 'the words (λόγους) of God are the same as the words of the Spirit'. He begins by recounting Isaiah 6:1-9 in which 'the Lord Sabaoth' speaks to the prophet calling him to go to the people of Israel yet foretelling that the people would not respond to the message. Cyril next refers to John 12:41, since in this text the evangelist quotes

⁴⁹ Cyril leaves out a portion of the verse (ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν και) and cites only the part that directly relates to his argument. See his similar exegesis in Jo. 14:23 (Pusey, 2.496-500).

Isaiah 6 and asserts that Isaiah said these things ‘when he saw his [i.e., the Son’s] glory and spoke about him’. He rounds off this part of his argument by quoting Stephen’s denunciation of the Jewish leaders in Acts 7:51, since this passage argues that the Jews ‘always resist the Holy Spirit’. Thus, although Isaiah 6 presents simply ‘the Lord’ as the subject speaking these words, John 12:41 says they were spoken with reference to the Son, and Acts 7:51 brings the Spirit into the picture by presenting him as the object of the people’s resistance foretold in the passage.

In forming his argument thus, Cyril is taking his cues from the intertextuality of Scripture itself, paying close attention to the way later passages treat earlier texts, and he exploits Scripture’s intertextuality to make a specifically pro-Nicene point. He concludes his argument by asking rhetorically,

Is it not now clear that by the difference (ἑτερότητι) according to individual hypostasis (καθ’ ὑπόστασιν ἰδικήν) we can distinguish very well what is the Father, and also what is the Son, and also what is the Spirit? By their coming together in a unity of nature (πρὸς ἐνότητα φυσικὴν), everything belongs to all three, whether presence, words, participation, operation, glory, and whatever gives to the divine nature its beauty.⁵⁰

Cyril here states in summary fashion the pro-Nicene position. Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct according to their hypostases, but their unity of nature (φύσις) means that the three cannot simply be distinguished on the basis of a difference in glory or external action. On the contrary, whatever attributes make the divine nature to be divine are true of all three equally, and whatever divine actions are performed on behalf of humanity, such as divine indwelling, involve all three. The fact that in the argument leading up to this summary statement Cyril cites examples of acts performed by one or another of the divine three indicates that here he has in mind the inseparability of Trinitarian operations, rather than merely the equality of divine glory. Even the divine words that are spoken to humanity in Scripture may be attributed variously to each of the divine three by virtue of their natural unity.

⁵⁰ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* VII (642d) (SC 246.174): Ἄρ’ οὐκ ἐναργὲς ἤδη πως ὡς ἑτερότητι μὲν τῆ καθ’ ὑπόστασιν ἰδικήν τί μὲν ἐστὶ Πατήρ, τί δὲ καὶ Υἱός, τί δὲ δὴ καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα, πρὸς ἡμῶν εὖ μάλα διαγιγνώσκεται; Συμβάσει γε μὴν τῆ πρὸς ἐνότητα φυσικὴν, πάντα δὴ πάντων, παρουσία τε, καὶ λόγοι, καὶ μέθεξις, ἐνέργειά τε καὶ δόξα, καὶ ὅσα τὴν θεῖαν κατακαλλύνει φύσιν. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 281, briefly notes this passage. Cf. de Durand, SC 231.73.

Inseparable Operation, not Cooperation

The second passage that will help us to understand Cyril's theology of inseparable operations is found in his *Five Tomes against Nestorius*, composed during the heat of the Nestorian crisis in the spring of 430.⁵¹ Boulnois references this passage, though for other reasons besides discussing inseparable operations, and she does not give an extended discussion of it.⁵² I include it here because it clearly demonstrates that Father, Son, and Spirit cannot, for Cyril, be regarded as three independent subjects cooperating together in a given task. One aspect of the debate between Cyril and his counterpart in the imperial capital was how to properly construe the role of the Spirit in the ministry of Jesus, and it is this issue that is under consideration in this passage.⁵³ Cyril begins by charging Nestorius with holding the position that the Son in his incarnate state was glorified by the Spirit not 'as if using his own power (ἰδίαι δυνάμει χρώμενον)', but as if gaining the ability 'from outside himself and accidentally (ἔξωθεν καὶ

⁵¹ The *Contra Nestorium* consists of a series of quotations from Nestorius followed by refutations from Cyril. The extracts from the first two books of the work are identical to the *Contra Nestorium* by Theodotus of Ancyra, a work that remains unpublished, existing in a Syriac manuscript in the British Library. See A. van Roey, 'Le florilège nestorien de l'*Adversus Nestorium* de Cyrille d'Alexandrie et du traité contre Nestorius de Théodote d'Ancyre', in *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, ed. Franz Paschke, TU 125 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981).

⁵² Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 423-4, 486, 487-8, 510-1.

⁵³ This aspect of the conflict has not received much attention, although see the recent discussion in Gregory K. Hillis, "The Natural Likeness of the Son": *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology* (diss., McMaster University, 2008), 51-80, 91-9. He surveys some of the material in *Contra Nestorium* IV that I am looking at here, and I am broadly in agreement with his presentation, although I would take issue with some of his summary statements. For example, he says Cyril held that 'the Spirit's operation in the life and work of Christ must be primarily ascribed to the Word' (p.63). Such a statement implies that the Spirit has no real agency at all, and is merely a passive instrument used by the Son. As I will argue here, Cyril affirms the agency of the Spirit, but he cannot conceive of the Spirit's agency as though it were in some way disconnected from the operation of Father and Son. To say, as Hillis does, that for Cyril the 'the Word is the primary agent of the Spirit's intervention' in human affairs (p.66) does indeed suggest that the Spirit has no real agency, and Hillis is somewhat critical of Cyril on this very point, noting that he leaves himself open to this charge as a result of his 'pneumatological ambiguity' (p.69, 78, 126). On the contrary, I suggest that in this passage Cyril is not ambiguous regarding the Spirit's role, and instead is building upon standard pro-Nicene thought. What Hillis does not comment upon, and so does not take into account, is that in the *Contra Nestorium* Cyril takes the debate from the christological to the Trinitarian realm by focusing upon the doctrine of inseparable operations. Essentially Cyril is attempting to argue that pro-Nicene Trinitarianism necessarily entails a certain understanding of the Spirit's operation in the life of Christ, and Nestorius' view falls afoul of this common heritage from the fourth century. On this aspect of the Nestorian controversy, see also Du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité*, 224-7; McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ*, 146-7; Hans van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, VCSup 96 (Boston: Brill, 2009), 360-2.

εἰσκεκριμένως⁵⁴ κερδαίνοντα), an error that is not simply Christological in nature, but also Trinitarian.⁵⁵

As evidence for this accusation, Cyril provides a passage from Nestorius in which he claims Nestorius thinks he is proving that Trinity is equal in operation in all things (ἰσουργὸν εἰς ἅπαντα). Nestorius writes,

‘God the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us’ (John 1:14). The Father seated the assumed humanity with himself. For he says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand’ (Ps. 109:1). The Spirit who descended established the glory of the one who was assumed, for he says, ‘When the Spirit of truth comes, he will glorify me’ (John 16:13-15). Do you also want another operation (ἐνέργειαν) of the Trinity in these same things? The Son dwelt in the body, the Father commended him who was baptized, the Spirit formed him in the virgin.⁵⁶

Cyril follows this passage immediately with another, similar one from Nestorius about the apostles, which reads,

The Son chose them (for he says, ‘I have chosen you’ (John 15:16, 19)), the Father sanctified them (for he says, ‘Father, sanctify them in your truth’ (John 17:17)), and the Spirit established them as orators.

In his refutation of these two passages, Cyril first states what he takes to be the proper way to speak about Trinitarian operations. The three are not to be confused with one another because ‘the Father exists in his proper existence (ἰδικῶς), and indeed also the Son, and similarly the Spirit’. Nevertheless, the operation of the three cannot be construed separately, because ‘the operation and willing for everything proceeds through the whole, holy, and consubstantial Trinity’.⁵⁷ This principle implies that the incarnate Son does not receive the Spirit ‘from with-

⁵⁴ Cyril is the first to use the adverb εἰσκεκριμένως.

⁵⁵ Cyril, Nest. IV.1-2 (ACO 1.1.6, 76). There was some precedent for Cyril’s interpretation of Nestorius’ position. A fragment preserved from Theodore of Mopsuestia states that when Jesus says he casts out devils ‘in the Spirit of God’, the subject operating is not ‘God the Word’, ‘because this is [a property] of human beings, [that] they do not have power sufficient to effect miracles’ (fr. BT6 (Behr, 198-9)). Theodore’s fragment suggests that the man Jesus needed the Spirit to perform his miracles. This is precisely the way that Cyril reads Nestorius’ understanding of the Spirit’s agency in the ministry of Jesus.

⁵⁶ In addition to being included in Nest. IV.1-2 (ACO 1.1.6, 76), see this fragment and the following one in Friedrich Loofs, Georg Kampffmeyer and Stanley Arthur Cook, eds., *Nestoriana: Die Fragmente des Nestorius* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1905), 226-7.

⁵⁷ Cyril, Nest. IV.1 (ACO 1.1.6, 77). διὰ πάσης ἔρχεται τῆς ἀγίας καὶ ὁμοουσίου τριάδος ἢ εἰς πᾶν ὀτιοῦν ἐνέργειά τε καὶ βούλησις.

out or by way of addition' (οὐκ ἔξωθεν οὐδὲ εἰσποίητον), as do humans, but rather that he works 'through his own Spirit' (ἰδίῳ . . . κεκρημένος τῷ πνεύματι).⁵⁸

Cyril's argument against Nestorius only has purchase insofar as Nestorius is willing to concede that the subject at work in Jesus Christ is none other than the Son of God himself, the very point that the archbishop of Constantinople is unwilling to accept. Nevertheless, his criticism of Nestorius is at least illustrative of his own Trinitarian theology. To elucidate the principle of Trinitarian operations, he turns to two biblical passages that allow him to describe the hypostases as intrinsic to one another's existence and operation. He first adduces Luke 6:19 which states that the multitudes were seeking to touch Jesus because 'power (δύναμις) was going out of him'. This 'power' Cyril takes as the Spirit by which Jesus, the incarnate Son, performed miracles. He next cites Psalm 32:6 (LXX) which reads, 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and by the Spirit of his mouth all their power'. The 'Word' in the first half of this passage Cyril takes as the Son, and the 'Spirit' as the Spirit of the Son. He concludes that the Father accomplished the work of creation with his Son and with the Spirit who is the Spirit of the Son.⁵⁹ In other words, none of the three work individually, but each person is intrinsic to the operation of each of the other two in the creation of the world and in the miracles performed by Jesus.

In order to further demonstrate Nestorius' Trinitarian error, Cyril quotes another passage from him which reads,

And the proof of the cooperation (συνεργίας) is clear. The Son became man, the Father commended him, and the Spirit honored him with signs.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Cyril, Nest. IV.1 (ACO 1.1.6, 77).

⁵⁹ Cyril, Nest. IV.1 (ACO 1.1.6, 78). Cyril incorrectly attributes the citation of Luke 6:19 to the evangelist Matthew. See also Cyril's exegesis of Psalm 32:6 in *dial. Trin.* IV; VI; VII (527d-e; 618c-619a; 652a) (SC 237.208; SC 246.102-4, 202); *glaph. Ex.* (PG 69.469); Is. 45:11-12; 51:15-16 (PG 70.965, 1132); *thes.* XXV; XXVII; XXXII; XXXV (PG 75.409, 421, 456, 621, 653). Curiously, he does not appear to use Psalm 32:6 as frequently in his later works such as the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. At least as far back as Irenaeus, Psalm 32:6 had been interpreted in this manner (*dem.* 5; *haer.* 3.8.3). Barnes, 'Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology', 99, notes the significance of this verse for Irenaeus' argument that the Holy Spirit is Creator. Cf. Origen, *Jo.* 1.39.288; Athanasius, *ep. Serap.* 1.31.3; 2.8.2; 2.14.1; 3.3.6; Basil of Caesarea, *Eun.* III.4; *Spir.* 16.38; ps-Basil, *Eun.* V (PG 29.713); Gregory Nazianzus, *or.* 41.14; Gregory of Nyssa, *or. catech.* 4; ps-Didymus, *Trin.* II.1.9; II.5.30; II.6.19.5; II.7.3.1; II.7.3.14. Athanasius's usage probably comes closest to Cyril's, since he also used it in his argument that the Son and Spirit work inseparably (*ep. Serap.* 1.31.3).

⁶⁰ Cyril, Nest. IV.2 (ACO 1.1.6, 78). Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 355, included this fragment in his collection of fragments that are not securely classifiable ('Nicht sicher einzuordnende Fragmente'), so in his edition it stands alone without any surrounding context that might shed light on its meaning.

Again, Cyril charges Nestorius with not simply a Christological error, but a fundamentally Trinitarian mistake. He interprets this passage as though Nestorius were ‘dividing the operation (ἐνέργειαν) of the holy Trinity with respect to what is accomplished, and assigning to each of the hypostases individually (ἰδικῶς) whatever the others have not done’.⁶¹ Indeed, in this passage, along with the previous two, Nestorius could be read as parceling out the activities to each hypostasis, as if their unity in operation meant nothing more than that they were ‘cooperating’ in some common goal by a succession of discrete operations performed by each hypostasis. Nestorius does, however, say in one surviving fragment that the operations of the Trinity are ‘common and differ only with respect to the hypostases’⁶², and elsewhere he asserts that he does not intend to ‘divide up the one Godhead’.⁶³ Rather, he sees himself as following the lead of Holy Scripture, which ‘distributes to each hypostasis those things that belong to the single power in order to give a proof of the similarity of the Trinity’. This equality, he holds, ‘begins with the works in time’.⁶⁴ These statements leave no doubt that Nestorius affirmed a doctrine of common operations, used to prove the equality and divinity of the three hypostases, but they stop short of a full affirmation of the intrinsic and necessary involvement of all three hypostases in every divine act, and it is precisely upon this point that Cyril attacks him. Due to the fragmentary remains of Nestorius’ literary corpus we cannot know if he elsewhere did more clearly affirm inseparable operations.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the important point for our purposes is that here again Cyril answers Nestorius by turning to language that makes the Son intrinsic to the

⁶¹ Cyril, Nest. IV.2 (ACO 1.1.6, 80).

⁶² Nestorius, *sem.* 1 (Loofs, 225): Κοινὰ γὰρ αἱ τῆς τριάδος ἐνέργειαι καὶ μόναις ὑποστάσεσι τὴν διάρρῃσιν ἔχουσαι. In the paragraph following this line, Nestorius illustrates this ‘common operation’ by pointing out that Scripture says the Father glorifies the Son (cf. John 8:54), that the Spirit glorifies the Son (cf. John 16:13-14), and that Christ glorifies himself (cf. Mark 16:20), a method of argumentation that we have seen Cyril himself use. This fragment was quoted in the synodical deposition of Nestorius (cf. ACO 1.1.2, 49), albeit without the final quotation from the Gospel of Mark that is included in Loofs’ edition.

⁶³ Nestorius, *sem.* 2 (Loofs, 226).

⁶⁴ Nestorius, *sem.* 2 (Loofs, 226): οὐχ ὡς τῆς μιᾶς μεριζομένης θεότητος, ἀλλὰ τῆς θείας γραφῆς τὰ τῆς μιᾶς ἰσχύος καὶ καθ’ ἑκάστην μεριζομένης ὑπόστασιν εἰς ἀπόδειξιν τοῦ τῆς τριάδος ὁμοίου. καὶ μοι σκοπεῖ τὸ ὅμοιον ἐκ τῶν ἐν ἔργοις καιρῶν ἀρξάμενον. This fragment was also quoted in the synodical deposition of Nestorius (ACO 1.1.2, 49), and is given the title ‘Against the Heretics’. The ‘heretics’ in view are some sort of ‘Arians’ who presume to make the Spirit a ‘slave’. See also Cyril, Nest. IV.3 (ACO 1.1.6, 81), where Cyril quotes another passage of Nestorius in which he opposes those who make the Spirit ‘the slave of Christ’. Cyril introduces the fragment by noting that Nestorius is speaking against some who think like Arius. Pace Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria’s Pneumatology*, 63-4, 69, who thinks that in these passages Nestorius is opposing Cyril.

⁶⁵ Martin Jugie, *Nestorius et la controverse nestorienne* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1912), 273, said ‘l’enseignement trinitaire de Nestorius ne présente rien de bien remarquable’.

Father's operation. The Son is the 'counsel and wisdom and might' of the Father, and as such, the Father cannot but work through the Son to accomplish all things. The proper way of speaking about these divine actions is rather to say that the choosing of the disciples, their sanctification, and their being made orators occurred 'from out of the one divinity, that is, from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit'.⁶⁶

To establish this point, Cyril once more turns to an intertextual interpretation of Scripture. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells the disciples that the 'Spirit of the Father' will speak in them when they face adversaries (Matt. 10:19-20), whereas in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus states that he himself will give them 'a mouth and wisdom' in such circumstances (Luke 21:14-15). The fluidity with which Scripture speaks of these actions being performed indicates, according to Cyril, that the activities cannot be parcelled out to individual *hypostases*. Rather,

The holy Trinity performs an identical operation (ταυτοενεργεῖ) and whatever the Father should do or wish to perform, these things the Son also does in an equal manner, and similarly also the Spirit. But to give the operations (ἐνεργείας) in succession to each of the *hypostases* individually (ιδικῶς) is nothing other than to set forth successively three gods completely distinct from one another.⁶⁷

Cyril further grounds this principle of inseparable operations in the fact that there is a 'natural unity' (τῆς φυσικῆς ἐνότητος) in the Trinity, as a result of which there is 'one motion' (μία . . . κίνησιν) to everything that the Trinity accomplishes. Therefore, whenever one of the *hypostases* is moved to act, the other two inevitably are also.

Cyril might or might not have been correctly reading Nestorius' understanding of Trinitarian operations, but it is clear that the Alexandrian does not think a mere notion of 'co-operation' (συνεργία) can do justice to the unity of the three in the one divine nature.⁶⁸ For Cyril, the divine unity means that all divine actions involve all three divine *hypostases*, not as

⁶⁶ Cyril, Nest. IV.2 (ACO 1.1.6, 80). ὡς ἐκ μιᾶς δηλονότι θεότητος, παρὰ πατρὸς δι' υἱοῦ ἐν πνεύματι.

⁶⁷ Cyril, Nest. IV.2 (ACO 1.1.6, 80): ταυτοενεργεῖ μὲν οὖν ἡ ἁγία τριάς καὶ ἅπερ ἂν δρώη καὶ βούλοιτο κατορθοῦν ὁ πατήρ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς κατὰ τὸν ἴσον τρόπον, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα· τό γε μὴν ἀνὰ μέρος διδόναι τὰς ἐνεργείας ἐκάστη τῶν ὑποστάσεων ἰδικῶς οὐδὲν ἕτερόν ἐστιν ἢ τρεῖς ἀνὰ μέρος καὶ ὀλοτρόπως ἀλλήλων διεστηκότας ἀποφαίνειν θεοῦς. Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 22, cites this passage as well, though he incorrectly notes it as Nest. I.4, rather than IV.1.

⁶⁸ He makes a similar argument at Jo. 14:23 (Pusey, 2.499), where he says that if Father and Son are not consubstantial, then believers have 'two gods' dwelling within them.

though each performed an individual act that contributed to some greater whole, but as if each hypostasis is intrinsically involved in the act of every other hypostasis. Furthermore, Cyril wants so strongly to emphasize this point against Nestorius' 'cooperation', that he even coins a term to refer to the pro-Nicene understanding of Trinitarian agency. The word *ταύτοενεργέω* ('performs an identical operation') occurs nowhere else in ancient literature, not even in the rest of Cyril's corpus. In other passages Cyril also used the cognate noun *ταύτοεργία* ('identical operation'), another word original to him, to express the same idea.⁶⁹ In addition, he elsewhere coined the adjective *ταύτοσθενής* ('identical in power') to argue much the same thing, that there is in the Trinity an operation identical in power (*ταύτοσθενῆ τὴν ἐνέργειαν*).⁷⁰

Even though these words are Cyril's own creation, the idea they express was already present in the fourth-century pro-Nicene tradition. Gregory Nazianzus spoke of the 'identity of movement' (*ταυτότης κινήσεως*) that exists within the Trinity.⁷¹ Gregory of Nyssa said that the Father 'from whom are all things' and the Son 'through whom are all things' work 'according to an identical form of operation' (*κατὰ ταὐτὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας εἶδος*).⁷² Didymus later also spoke of the 'identity of operation of Father and Son' (*τὸ . . . ταῦτὸν τῆς ἐνεργείας πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ*).⁷³ An even more suggestive parallel is found in Basil of Caesarea's *On the Holy Spirit*, in which the Cappadocian argued that the action of Father, Son, and Spirit is not separated 'by intervals of time'. On the contrary, their operation is akin to that of Paul and Timothy who simultaneously sailed together to Macedonia and thereby 'did the same thing' (*ταῦτὸν ἐνήργησαν*).⁷⁴ Cyril's understanding of *ταύτοενεργέω* is analogous to what Basil has in mind with *ταῦτὸν ἐνήργησαν*. They both argue that divine operations are not a series of successive, discrete actions performed by each of the hypostases, but rather are carried out in such a way

⁶⁹ Cyril, *Jo.* 6:27; 8:29 (Pusey, 1.447; 2.54); *dial. Trin.* VI (622b) (SC 246.114).

⁷⁰ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* III (469b) (SC 237.32). I have found at least two other, similar words that Cyril also coined: *ταύτοβουλία* ('identical in will') and *ταύτοειδής* ('identical in form'). For *ταύτοβουλία*, see *Jo.* 7:17; 8:28; 8:29; 10:28-30; 17:11; 17:20-21 (Pusey 1.606; 2.46, 54, 254, 697, 732); *dial. Trin.* VI (622b) (SC 246.114). For *ταύτοειδής*, see *Jo.* 12:44-45 (Pusey, 2.330); *dial. Trin.* II; III; IV; V; VI (436b; 468c; 491d; 530c; 552e; 553e; 596b; 603d) (SC 231.280; SC 237.30, 98, 216, 284, 286; SC 246.36, 60); *Rom.* 6:5 (Pusey, 190-1).

⁷¹ Gregory Nazianzus, *or.* 29.2 (SC 250.178).

⁷² Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* I.396 (GNO 1.142).

⁷³ Didymus, *fr. Jo.* 4 (5:19-21) (Reuss, 178-9). Cf. ps-Didymus, *Trin.* II.7.3.10 (Seiler, 204): *τὸ ταῦτὸν τῆς θεϊκῆς φύσεως καὶ ἐνεργείας*.

⁷⁴ Basil, *Spir.* 25.59 (SC 17.222). Cf. ps.-Athanasius, *dial. Trin.* II (PG 28.1169).

as to involve Father, Son, and Spirit simultaneously. Furthermore, the fact that Cyril here says that the denial of inseparable operations amounts to tritheism could reveal the influence of Gregory of Nyssa who came to the same connection in his *Ad Ablabium*. Thus, Cyril's understanding of inseparable operations is in keeping with its formulation by fourth-century authors such as Didymus and the Cappadocians. Moreover, his emphasis on the Son as the Father's 'own' counsel and wisdom and probably reveals the influence of Athanasius.⁷⁵

In summary, we can state that Cyril approaches arguing for inseparable operations from three, mutually dependent angles. The first approach is that the divine three—Father, Son, and Spirit—have one nature, or one substance.⁷⁶ As he writes, 'We will hold the opinion and believe that the operation is one . . . for the nature is one'. The reverse principle is also true. 'There, where the mode of existence is varied in appearance, it will follow assuredly that the operation is dissimilar'.⁷⁷ In fact, Cyril calls it a 'necessary law' that beings with an identity of substance (οὐσιώδη ταυτότητα) have an operation identical in power (ταύτοσθενή τὴν ἐνέργειαν).⁷⁸ Closely tied to this principle is the notion of divine simplicity, as the Alexandrian

⁷⁵ See Andrew Louth, 'The Use of the Term ἴδιος in Alexandrian Theology From Alexander to Cyril', *STPatr* 19 (1989): 198-202.

⁷⁶ Cf. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 280-1: 'Cyrille présente donc l'identité d'opération comme une conséquence de l'identité de nature'. On this point she is certainly correct. However, I am not inclined to follow her when she suggests that Cyril makes a further distinction in response to the Anomoean charge that the absence of an 'identical form of operation' (τὸ . . . τῆς ἐνεργείας οὐ ταύτοειδές) violates the simplicity of God (*dial. Trin.* II (436b) (SC 231.280)). In her reading of Cyril, he grants that there exists a diversity of divine operations in the world such that there is no 'identical form of operation', and he then proposes that we must not confuse 'l'absence d'unicité dans l'opération' (τὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας οὐ ταύτοειδές) with 'l'absence d'identité d'opération' (ταυτότητος τῆς ἐνεργείας). She thus suggests that Cyril does not think τὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας ταύτοειδές ('identical form of operation') is a fitting description of divine agency, and instead proposes that there is a ταυτότητος τῆς ἐνεργείας ('identity of operation') among the three hypostases. She presumably draws the distinction from *dial. Trin.* III (468c) (SC 237.30), since this is the passages that she references. However, I do not see where in this passage Cyril distinguishes between an 'identical form of operation' and an 'identity of operation', and, in fact, it seems that he implies the Trinity does have an 'identical form of operation', although he states it in negative terms by asserting that natures which are different from one another do not possess τὸ ταύτοειδές κατ' ἐνέργειαν. Therefore, by inference, Father, Son, and Spirit would have τὸ ταύτοειδές κατ' ἐνέργειαν since they have the same nature. Elsewhere he explicitly states that there is an 'identical form of substance' between Father and Son (*Jo.* 12:44-45 (Pusey, 2.330)).

⁷⁷ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* III (468c) (SC 237.30). See the similar argument at *thes.* XIV; XXXII (PG 75.241, 453) that beings that are consubstantial have the same operation.

⁷⁸ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* III (469b) (SC 237.32). Against Mahé, 'La sanctification', 478, who, as was common for much of the twentieth century, sharply contrasted Eastern and Western Trinitarian theologies: 'Pour comprendre ceci, il importe de se rappeler la façon dont les Pères Grecs aimaient à se représenter la Trinité. Ce n'est pas sur la nature que tombait en premier lieu leur regard, mais sur chacune des personnes. Par exemple, les œuvres ad extra ne leur apparaissent pas comme une production directe de la nature; c'est chaque personne qu'ils voient agir; et, tandis que les Latins concluent de l'unité de nature à l'unité d'opération, les Grecs passent de l'unité d'opération à la consubstantialité'.

points out, writing, ‘the absence of an identity of operation certainly forces a being which is simple (ἀπλοῦν) to be compound’.⁷⁹ The second approach, related to the first, is that each hypostasis is intrinsic to the operation of the other two. Thus, the Son is the Word by which the Father speaks, and the Spirit is the power by which the Son operates. Moreover, implicit in some of the passages I have considered above is the principle of mutual indwelling.⁸⁰ The Son has the Spirit both ‘from him’ and ‘in him’, and so the Spirit always works when the Son works. The mutual indwelling of the three, guarantees that when one divine hypostasis is acting, all three are at work as well.⁸¹

The final approach is more explicitly exegetical in nature. We have seen that Cyril pays close attention to the way that Scripture itself is ambiguous at times, and even apparently inconsistent, when attributing to an individual divine hypostasis the agency for some given operation. He exploits this ambiguity to argue that Scripture’s own fluid language testifies to the fact that all three are involved in every divine act.⁸² Because the words spoken to Isaiah involved all three, Isaiah can attribute them to the Father, the evangelist John can attribute them to the Son, and Stephen can attribute them to the Spirit. In light of this apparent ambiguity, Cyril holds that when Scripture speaks of the Father doing something, the Son and Spirit are nevertheless involved, and when Scripture says that the Son or the Spirit perform some operation, the Father is necessarily at work also.⁸³ As he writes in his *Dialogues on the Trinity*,

because there are three hypostases, at the same time distinct and immediate to one another by virtue of the one nature of the deity, the operation of a single person can be said to belong to the operation of the entire substance and to the operation of each hypostases distinctly. For the entire substance is inclined to move through its entirety and through each hypostasis distinctly.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* II (436b) (SC 231.280).

⁸⁰ On the issue of mutual indwelling, or perichoresis, see Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 536-48.

⁸¹ As Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 282, writes, ‘C’est en vertu de l’unité de substance, qui permet aux personnes divines d’être l’une dans l’autre, que leur opération est identique’.

⁸² Augustine’s argument in *Sermon 52* also employs this strategy. For another pro-Nicene example of this argument, see ps-Didymus, *Trin.* II.7.3.10, where the author notes that, as a result of the inseparability of Trinitarian operations, the incarnation is attributed to the agency of both the Son and the Spirit in various biblical passages.

⁸³ Cf. Cyril, *Nest.* IV.1 (ACO 1.1.6, 77): ‘When the Father has, so to speak, been moved towards operation (ἐνεργεῖν) in something, the Son doubtless operates (ἐνεργεῖ) in the Spirit, and if the Son or the Spirit is said to fulfill something, this is certainly from the Father’.

⁸⁴ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* VI (620e-621a) (SC 246.110). τριῶν ὑποστάσεων ὑπαρχουσῶν, ἰδικῶς τε ἅμα καὶ

This definition of inseparable operations appears, at least initially, to be at odds with Cyril's claim that the Son is the primary agent who reveals the Father. We must now see how these two aspects of his thought fit together in the remainder of this chapter.

FROM THE FATHER, THROUGH THE SON, IN THE SPIRIT

The principle of inseparable operations could be interpreted in such a way that it rules out all order or distinction among Father, Son, and Spirit. However, as I will show in this section, Cyril construes this principle in such a way that the distinction and order among the divine three is retained. The two most significant studies of his Trinitarian theology have both fixed upon the phrase 'from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit' as holding a special place in his overall thought. De Durand, in his 1976 introduction to Cyril's *Dialogues on the Trinity*, describes this phrase as 'la vraie formule-clef' of his Trinitarian theology.⁸⁵ Similarly, Boulnois concludes her lengthy study of Cyril's Trinitarian theology with a discussion of this phrase, agreeing with de Durand that it is necessary to grant 'une place privilégiée à un dernier schéma qui apparaît central dans la pensée cyrillienne et possède une force d'autant plus grande qu'il se trouve résumé dans une formule à la fois simple et complète'.⁸⁶ I agree with these prior assessments, and my goal in this section is only to give several examples of Cyril's usage of the formula so as to set the stage for understanding its significance for his theology of divine revelation. In fact, though I passed over it at the time, we have already encountered some passages in which this phrase plays a central role. In his refutation of Nestorius' supposedly erroneous Trinitarian theology, Cyril begins his response by affirming that 'the operation and willing for everything proceeds through the whole, holy, and consubstantial Trinity', but immediately prior to this line he states that 'everything is accomplished by the Father, and through the Son, in the Spirit'.⁸⁷ Just a few pages later in his argument against Nestorius, still

ἀλλήλαις προσεχῶς, ὡς ἐν μιᾷ θεότητος φύσει, τὸ ἐνὸς ἐνέργημα προσώπου καὶ ὅλης ἂν λέγοιτο τῆς οὐσίας καὶ ἐκάστης ὑποστάσεως ἰδικῶς· ὅλη γὰρ ὡσπερ δι' ὅλης καὶ ἰδικῶς δι' ἐκάστου κινεῖσθαι φιλεῖ.

⁸⁵ De Durand, SC 231.73-9.

⁸⁶ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 577. Cyril's usage of the phrase is also noted in Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 22; Mahé, 'La sanctification', 478; Giuseppe Ferraro, *Lo Spirito Santo nel quarto vangelo: I commenti di Origene, Giovanni Crisostomo, Teodoro di Mopsuestia e Cirillo di Alessandria*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995), 173; Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 82, 86-92; Louth, 'Late Patristic Developments', 140.

⁸⁷ Cyril Nest. IV.1 (ACO 1.1.6, 77). πράττεται γὰρ μὴν τὰ πάντα παρὰ πατρός καὶ δι' υἱοῦ ἐν πνεύματι.

in the midst of a discussion about inseparable operations, Cyril quotes the formula again three times in the space of a single paragraph.⁸⁸ In other words, he frequently uses this axiom as a way of summarizing the principle of inseparable operations.

Furthermore, it is truly fitting to call this phrase a Trinitarian axiom, for, as Boulnois notes, he frequently introduces it with γάρ or ὅτι, treating it as if it were a self-evident principle from which he can deduce theological or exegetical conclusions.⁸⁹ Although the principle can be found in his earliest writings, the phrase takes on an increasing significance for him over time, appearing much more frequently in his later works. On this basis Boulnois proposes ‘une évolution’ in his thought, and she is right insofar as the axiom increases considerably in prominence during his career, although we should note that it is already present in what is perhaps his earliest work, the *Thesaurus*.⁹⁰ It is probably also relevant that the passages that most fully develop the principle of inseparable operations, such as I considered above, come from somewhat later texts such as the *Dialogues on the Trinity* and the *Five Tomes against Nestorius*, suggesting that Cyril’s appropriation of this axiom grew along with his understanding of inseparable operations. This parallel development serves as a further indication that this axiom functioned as an expression of Cyril’s doctrine of inseparable operations. As I shall argue here, he turned to the phrase so frequently because it gives expression both to the indivisible unity of the divine nature and the irreducible distinction of the *hypostases*, all while grounding the divine operations on behalf of humanity in the intra-Trinitarian relations.

Undoubtedly, this axiom was something that Cyril picked up from earlier patristic sources. Boulnois noted that Irenaeus was one of the first to use something like this formula, emphasizing the order of the divine persons and their operation, and tying it to an exegesis of Ephesians 4:6, though his thoughts on the matter are restricted to the divine activities *ad extra* and do not take into account the intra-Trinitarian relations.⁹¹ Similarly, Origen, in his interpre-

⁸⁸ Cyril Nest. IV.2 (ACO 1.1.6, 80).

⁸⁹ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 580. Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 22, also called the phrase ‘das von Cyrill ständig zitierte Axiom’. Cf. Cyril, *thes.* XXXIV (PG 75.580); *dial. Trin.* V; VI (586b; 596d); *Jo.* 1:3; 1:10; 15:1 (Pusey, 1.68, 128; 2.536).

⁹⁰ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 580. She points to the following passages: *thes.* XII; XXXIII; XXXIV (PG 75.192, 572, 580); *dial. Trin.* III; VI; VII (491d; 592b; 618e; 647c; 653d), suggesting that the phrase appears in the *Thesaurus* ‘de manière encore assez furtive et peu souvent complète’. In addition to the passages in her list, see also *thes.* XIII (PG 75.228); *dial. Trin.* VI (596d) (SC 246.38); *glaph. Lev.* (PG 69.549); *Is.* 26:19 (PG 70.588-9).

⁹¹ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 578. Cf. Irenaeus, *haer.* 4.38.3; 5.18.2. At *haer.* 4.20.5 and 5.36.2 Irenaeus presents the formula in reverse pattern, as humanity ascends in the Spirit through the Son to the Father. Cf. Ire-

tation of Romans 11:36, joined this Pauline passage with 1 Corinthians 8:6 and 1 Corinthians 2:10 to argue that all things are from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit, though he does not seem to have made extensive use of the phrase.⁹² Above I pointed to Gregory of Nyssa's argument for inseparable operations in his *Ad Ablabium* as a possible source for Cyril. It is striking that in the course of his argument he presents the same order of operations as does Cyril, writing that the divine power (δύναμις) 'issues (ἀφορμώμενος) from the Father as from a spring, is brought into operation (ἐνεργούμενος) by the Son, and perfects (τελειῶν) its grace by the power of the Spirit'.⁹³ In other words, the 'motion' (κίνησις) of the divine will is 'from the Father, through the Son, to the Spirit'.⁹⁴ Similarly, in his *Epistles to Serapion*, Athanasius said 'the Father does all things through the Word in the Holy Spirit', and, like Irenaeus, relied upon an exegesis of Ephesians 4:6 to present his case.⁹⁵ Moreover, Athanasius argues for this order of operation by noting how the Spirit bears a relation to the Son that is parallel to the Son's relation to the Father.⁹⁶ This twofold emphasis on the relations of Father to Son and Son to Spirit as the basis for the pattern of Trinitarian operations is the same sort of logic that we will find below in Cyril. Nevertheless, whatever prior patristic sources he might have relied upon for this phrase, he certainly put the formula to greater use than these earlier authors and made it much more integral to his Trinitarian theology.

Boulnois is correct that in his usage of the phrase, Cyril rarely ties it closely to the exegesis of any given verse. He never quotes Romans 11:36 with respect to Trinitarian agency, as had some previous authors.⁹⁷ Moreover, Boulnois noted that in one instance Cyril legitimates the formula by appealing to 1 Corinthians 8:6 ('For there is one God the Father, from whom

naeus, *dem.* 7. On Irenaeus' usage of Ephesians 4:6, see D. Jeffrey Bingham, 'Himself Within Himself: The Father and His Hands in Early Christianity', *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 47 (2005): 137-51; Barnes, 'Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology', 98. See also Hippolytus' similar usage of the passage in *Noet.* 14.4-6.

⁹² Origen, *comm.* in *Rom.* 8.13.9-10. Earlier in the commentary, at 3.10.3, Origen quotes Romans 11:36 and does not connect the verse to Father, Son, and Spirit. Gregory of Nazianzus also brought together 1 Corinthians 8:6 and Romans 11:36 to express this point (*or.* 39.12; cf. *or.* 34.15).

⁹³ Gregory of Nyssa, *tres dii* (GNO 3.1, 50).

⁹⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *tres dii* (GNO 3.1, 51).

⁹⁵ Athanasius, *ep. Serap.* 1.28.3 (AW I/1, 520).

⁹⁶ Athanasius, *ep. Serap.* 1.20.4-7. Cf. *ep. Serap.* 1.30.4-31.4.

⁹⁷ I can find no references at all to Romans 11:36 in either the *Dialogues on the Trinity* or the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Unfortunately, the portion of Cyril's *Commentary on Romans* that dealt with this passage has not survived.

are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things'), a passage that Gregory of Nyssa had also relied upon to formulate a principle of Trinitarian operations.⁹⁸ In addition to the one passage Boulnois noted, there are two further citations or allusions to this same verse in the midst of discussions about Trinitarian agency, once in the *Dialogues on the Trinity*, and once in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*.⁹⁹ In all three instances, the specific issue under discussion is humanity's participation in the divine through the impartation of the indwelling Spirit, so these three passages seem to be conceptually close to one another. Thus, 1 Corinthians 8:6 is the closest we can come to identifying an explicit biblical source for this idea in Cyril, and it is possible that he arrived at his full Trinitarian axiom ('from . . . through . . . in') through a consideration of how the principle 'from the Father . . . through the Son' applied to the specific case of humanity's sanctification by the sending of the Spirit. On the latter point, it is perhaps significant that nearly all of his early usages of the phrase have to do with the impartation of the Spirit to humanity.¹⁰⁰

The Son as the Power of the Father

I want in this section to look at two further instances of Cyril's adherence to inseparable operations, noting specifically the way that the 'from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit' phrase forms the contours of his argument. It is important to note that what remains the same throughout Cyril's corpus is the logic that this phrase implies rather than the specific set of prepositions he uses. Moreover, at times he states the phrase only partially, even though the same overall picture is usually presupposed in such cases. Thus, the concept itself is what was most important, and its expression in any given context can be fluid. The first example is

⁹⁸ Cyril, *Jo.* 14:16-17 (Pusey, 2.468-9). Cf. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 585. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* I.396 (GNO 1.142): ἐν πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ὁ πατήρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα κατὰ ταῦτὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας εἶδος ἐργάζονται, πῶς οὗτος τὴν κατὰ τὰς οὐσίας διαφορὰν ἐπὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ἀποδεικνύειν οἴεται διὰ τοῦ παρηλλαγμένου τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐνεργείας ἀπ' ἀλλήλων χωριζομένης; Gregory quotes or alludes to 1 Corinthians 8:6 several times in his treatise (I.213, 396, 548, 575; III.3.22, 3.23, 3.44, 5.30, 8.35, 10.9 (GNO 1.89, 142, 185, 192; 2.115, 116, 123, 170, 252, 292)).

⁹⁹ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* VI (641d-e) (SC 246.172); *Jo.* 14:16-17 (Pusey, 2.468-9).

¹⁰⁰ At *thes.* XII (PG 75.192) Cyril says that the Father gives gifts 'through the Son in the Holy Spirit'. At *thes.* XIII (PG 75.228) he speaks of participation in the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. At *thes.* XXXIV (PG 75.572) he notes that the Spirit progresses from the Father, through the Son. At *glaph. Lev.* (PG 69.549) he says that nothing in all creation is sanctified in any other way except, 'from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit'. At *Is.* 26:19 (PG 70.588-9) he says the life-giving dew that implants incorruption to earthly bodies is 'the Spirit from the Father through the Son'.

Cyril's exegesis of John 1:3 in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Here the evangelist writes, 'All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made'. The notion of agency is already present in the biblical text, so it is not surprising that this proved to be a prime opportunity for him to comment upon this theme. Cyril's main concern is given in his title to this chapter of the commentary, 'That the Son is Creator by nature, with the Father, as being from his substance, and is not taken to be an assistant' ('Ὅτι κατὰ φύσιν δημιουργὸς ὁ Υἱὸς μετὰ Πατρὸς, ὡς ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ὑπάρχων αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐχ ὡσπερ ὑπουργὸς παραλαμβανόμενος).¹⁰¹ Thus, his primary aim is to show that the Son is 'consubstantial' (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father, enjoying 'by nature' (φυσικῶς) all the things that the Father also enjoys 'by nature'. He first notes that the passage implies the Son is other than and separate from everything created, since he himself is said to be the one through whom they were created. Implicit in his argument is that the Son must be God 'by nature' since the act of creating is a 'dignity appropriate to God' (θεοπρεπὲς καὶ τοῦτο περιτίθησι τὸ ἀξίωμα).¹⁰²

However, at this point he faces a challenge. The fact that the evangelist uses the phrase 'through him' (δι' αὐτοῦ) could be taken to mean that the Son has a status subordinate to that of the Father, as an 'assistant' (ὑπουργὸς) or a 'servant of the wishes of others' (ἄλλοτρίων θελημάτων καὶ ὑπηρέτης). To answer this possible exegesis, Cyril turns to language we have already seen him use to argue that the Son is intrinsic to the Father's existence and operation:

[The Son] alone, being himself the power (ἡ ἰσχύς) of God the Father, as Son, as Only-begotten, accomplishes all things, that is, with the Father and the Holy Spirit working with him (συνεργαζομένου) and existing (συνόντος) with him. For (γὰρ) all things are from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. And we understand that the Father exists with (συνεῖναι) the Son, not as though the Son were powerless to accomplish something of what exists, but as being wholly in him on account of the immutability of substance (τὸ ἀπαράλλακτον τῆς οὐσίας), and on account of his proceeding from him by nature, perfectly, immediately, and without an intermediary (τὸ ἄκρως προσεχές τε καὶ ἄμεσον αὐτοῦ).¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:3 (Pusey, 1.65). The titles to the chapters in the commentary are from Cyril himself. Cf. *Jo.*, praef. (Pusey, 1.7), where he calls them ἡ ὑποτεταγμένη τῶν κεφαλαίων ὑποσημείωσις. This seems to have been Cyril's typical practice. See especially his detailed description of his usage of titles at *thes.*, prol. (PG 75.12-3).

¹⁰² Cyril, *Jo.* 1:3 (Pusey, 1.66).

¹⁰³ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:3 (Pusey, 1.68).

2. The Son as Word and Will of the Father: A Trinitarian Theology of Revelation

Here we see in short compass the way that Cyril uses his Trinitarian axiom to explain the principle of inseparable operations. He begins by asserting that the Son is the Father's 'power' and on the basis of this identification argues that the Son must be present and operative in the Father's works. Assumed in his argument at this point is that the Father cannot work without his power, so the Son, as the Father's power, must be involved anytime the Father acts. Although the main concern in the present context is the relationship of the Son to the Father, Cyril makes a brief mention of the Spirit as well, before anchoring his argument with his Trinitarian axiom. We should also note that his argument moves from the divine operations *ad extra* to the relation between the Father and Son. He grounds the inseparability of their operation in their mutual indwelling, and then states that their mutual indwelling is a consequence of both their consubstantiality and the Son's generation.

The remainder of his argument in this section is also suggestive of his Trinitarian axiom. Cyril goes on to cite John 5:17 and then argues that Father and Son do not accomplish the work of creation separately, for then there necessarily would be two creators. Moreover, if the Father and Son worked separately, then the Father would not always dwell within the Son, nor the Son within the Father (cf. John 14:10). To explain this mutual indwelling, Cyril turns once more to the Son's eternal generation to argue that the Son is 'from the Father', but nevertheless remains 'in the Father'.¹⁰⁴ After once more arguing that the titles 'Word and Wisdom' (λόγος . . . καὶ σοφία) and 'power' (δύναμις) indicate that the Son cannot be separated from the Father, since a mind is not separated from its 'word and mind' nor a person from his 'power', he concludes his argument against those who want to subordinate the Son by summarizing his understanding of Trinitarian agency, writing,

Therefore, since each one is in the other naturally and necessarily, when the Father works the Son will work (ἐργάζεται), as his natural and substantial and hypostatic power (δύναμις φυσική τε καὶ οὐσιώδης καὶ ἐνυπόστατος). And similarly when the Son works the Father also works, as source (πηγή) of the Word who creates, which naturally exists (ἐνυπάρχουσα) in his own offspring, as fire also exists in the heat that proceeds from it.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Cyril, Jo. 1:3 (Pusey, 1.68).

¹⁰⁵ Cyril, Jo. 1:3 (Pusey, 1.70). Cyril rounds out his exegesis of John 1:3 by considering Genesis 1:26 ('Let us make . . .') as further evidence for the Son's inseparability from the Father's nature and inseparable operation with the Father. I have also passed over here two analogies that he gives in the midst of his exegesis of John 1:3 to illustrate this principle, that of a flower and its fragrance, and that of a light and its radiance. For a discussion of these analogies in Cyril's thought, see Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 121-8, 159-70. For a discussion of the

2. The Son as Word and Will of the Father: A Trinitarian Theology of Revelation

This passage clearly grounds the principle of inseparable operations in the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son. However, this mutual indwelling does not erase the distinctions between the Father and Son. Only the Son is ever said to be ‘from’ the Father, and only the Father is called the ‘source’ of the Son.¹⁰⁶ Similarly with respect to operation, the Son is never said to work ‘through the Father’, whereas the Father always works ‘through the Son’. Thus, both Father and Son are operative in the act of creating, but their manner of operation differs. The Son acts as the Father’s ‘power’, and the Father acts as the Son’s ‘source’. In other words, the intra-Trinitarian relations imply the manner of Trinitarian operation, and in both cases there is a distinct and irreversible pattern of relating Father and Son to one another.¹⁰⁷

The Spirit as the Finger of the Son

The last passage focused almost exclusively on Trinitarian operations as seen through the relation between the Father and the Son, and only drew in the Spirit briefly when Cyril cited his Trinitarian axiom. To complete the picture it is necessary to consider another passage to show how he applies the same logic to the role of the Spirit in Trinitarian operations. Given what we have seen, we might expect Cyril to argue that the Spirit is intrinsic to the existence and operation of the Father and Son, and indeed he does so using several analogies. One analogy that he frequently uses is that of a human person and her spirit or mind, often basing the comparison on an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 2:10-16. The Spirit, as the mind of Christ, is inseparable from the Son, just as a human spirit is inseparable from the person whose spirit it is.¹⁰⁸ However, Cyril’s main point with the analogy of a human spirit or mind is to argue for the inseparability of the Spirit from the Son, and he does not often extend it to argue for a cer-

role that analogies play in Cyril’s Christology, see McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ*.

¹⁰⁶ Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 83-4, also notes that the Father works ‘through’ the Son in Cyril’s Trinitarian theology.

¹⁰⁷ So also Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 577-8, who writes with respect to this Trinitarian axiom, ‘d’une part elle peut s’appliquer aussi bien à l’économie qu’à la théologie, car elle illustre clairement le rapport qui existe entre l’activité divine dans le monde et les relations intra-trinitaires’. See also Cyril’s similar development of inseparable operations with respect to creation at Cyril, *dial. Trin.* VI (618b-e) (SC 246.102-4).

¹⁰⁸ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* VI (598d) (SC 246.44-6). He offers similar exegesis several times in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Cf. *Jo.* 14:18; 14:21; 14:25; 16:12 (Pusey, 2.471, 494, 506, 628-9). See Boulnois’ discussion of this analogy in *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 154-7.

tain understanding of Trinitarian operations. For the latter purpose he uses another analogy, one that we have already seen him allude to in his debate with Nestorius.

In his *Five Tomes against Nestorius* Cyril argues that the Spirit was the ‘power’ by which the incarnate Son performed his miracles, though in that passage he did not anchor this principle with his Trinitarian axiom.¹⁰⁹ Homily 81 from his series on the Gospel of Luke, preached sometime during or after the Nestorian controversy, provided Cyril with an opportunity to comment again on the relation of the Spirit to the mission of Christ. The homily covers Luke 11:19-26, including verse 20 in which Jesus declares to the Jews, ‘If I cast out the devils by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you’.¹¹⁰ Cyril initially spends some time focusing on the calumny of the Jews in the passage, who alleged that Christ was casting out the demons by using ‘the powers’ (ταῖς . . . δυνάμεσι) of Satan, before then turning to explicate the proper understanding of the Son’s agency.¹¹¹ The ‘finger of God’ (δάκτυλον . . . θεοῦ) mentioned in the passage, he says, is none other than the Holy Spirit. Cyril does not explicitly cite it, but underlying this identification is probably the parallel passage of Matthew

¹⁰⁹ Cyril, *Nest. IV.1* (ACO 1.1.6, 78).

¹¹⁰ The textual history of Cyril’s series of 156 *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke* is complicated. The Greek has partially survived in the catena tradition, which, as always, is of mixed value. In addition to the catena fragments, the Greek text of three homilies survives complete, printed in PG 77.1009-16, 1039-49 (the latter reference is a conflation of two originally separate homilies). However, at some point a Syriac translation of the entire series was made, and a surviving manuscript contains most of the homilies in this recension, although a few dozen are missing or fragmentary. The text of the Syriac translation of the homilies was first published in R. Payne Smith, ed., *S. Cyrilli Alexandrini Commentarii in Lucae evangelium quae supersunt syriace e manuscriptis apud Museum Britannicum* (Oxford: E Typographeo Academico, 1858), and a few more Syriac fragments were then published in W. Wright, ed., *Fragments of the Homilies of Cyril of Alexandria on the Gospel of S. Luke, Edited From a Nitrian Ms* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1874). The first 80 homilies of the Syriac recension were then later published in a critical edition in CSCO 70, with a Latin translation in CSCO 140. A critical collection of Greek fragments were also published in J. Sickenberger, ed., *Fragmente der Homilien des Cyrill von Alexandrien zum Lukasevangelium*, TU 34 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1909), and additional Syriac fragments were published in A. Rucker, ed., *Die Lukas-Homilien des hl. Cyrill von Alexandrien: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Exegese* (Breslau: Goerlich & Coch, 1911). Joseph M. Sauget, ‘Nouvelles homélies du commentaire sur l’Evangile de S. Luc de Cyrille d’Alexandrie dans leur traduction syriaque’, in *Symposium Syriacum 1972* (Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1974), 439-56, announced the discovery of four new homilies, which as of yet have not been published. For a discussion of these textual issues, see Joseph Reuss, *Lukas-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*, TU 130 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984), xxv-xxix, who also printed a critical edition of the verifiable Greek catena fragments. A new critical edition of the entire series, combining both the Greek and Syriac remnants, is a desideratum, but thus far no one has taken up the challenge. In this thesis I will cite the Greek original where it is available, using the edition of Reuss. Where it is not available I will revert to the Syriac translation, using the editions of Chabot (CSCO 70) for homilies 1-80 and Payne Smith for the remaining ones. Cf. Daniel King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria: A Study in Translation Technique* (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters, 2008), who focuses mainly on the Syriac translation of Cyril’s Christological texts rather than the Lucan homilies.

¹¹¹ Cyril, *fr. Lc. 140* (11:19) (Reuss, 126).

12:28 which is identical to Luke 11:20 except that it has ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ in place of ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ. To explain this identification Cyril writes,

For the [Son] has been called the hand and arm of God the Father, since he [i.e., the Father] does (ἐνεργεῖ) all things through him [i.e., the Son], and the Son similarly works by the Spirit (ἐν Πνεύματι). Therefore just as the finger is dependent (ἀπήρτηται) on the hand, as something that is not foreign (ἄλλότριος) to it, but in it by nature (φυσικῶς), so also the Holy Spirit is joined into unity with the Son by reason of his consubstantiality (ὁμοουσιότητος), even though he proceeds from God the Father. For, as I said, the Son does everything through the consubstantial Spirit (διὰ τοῦ ὁμοουσίου Πνεύματος).¹¹²

Cyril here applies a similar logic to the operation of the Son and Spirit as he does to the operation of the Father and Son. The Son is the ‘arm’ of the Father, and thus is always active when the Father acts, and the Spirit is the ‘finger’ of the Son, and thus is always active when the Son acts. Moreover, here again we see that Cyril argues from the intra-Trinitarian relations to arrive at a principle of Trinitarian operation. It is because the Spirit is inseparable from the Son, by virtue of their unity of substance, that the Son works always by the Spirit as his ‘finger’.

In concluding his argument in this section, Cyril turns to his Trinitarian axiom to bring in all three divine hypostases. As he writes, the Son ‘uses as his own (ܡܠܟܘܬܗ) that power that is from him. For he is consubstantial with him (ܠܘܘܫܘܬܗ ܠܘܚܘܬܗ), and whatever is said to be done by God the Father, this by all means is done by the Son in the Spirit’ (ܠܘܘܫܘܬܗ ܠܘܚܘܬܗ).¹¹³ In this homily he makes no reference to the debate with Nestorius, even though he preached it at some point after the Nestorian controversy.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, we see here the same basic argument as before in the *Five Tomes against Nestorius*, that the Son acts by the Spirit, and in this instance his argument is firmly rooted in his overall understanding of Trinitarian agency. Moreover, as we saw in the last passage, so also here there is an irreversible pattern to Trinitarian operations, since the Son operates ‘by the Spirit’, while the Spirit is never said to operate ‘by

¹¹² Cyril, fr. Lc. 141 (11:20) (Reuss, 126). The subject ‘Son’ in the first line of this quotation is not made explicit in the Greek fragment, which simply has αὐτὸς. However, the Greek fragment implies that the Son is the subject, and this is made explicit in the Syriac translation which reads ܠܘܘܫܘܬܗ (Payne Smith, 198).

¹¹³ Cyril, hom. Lc. LXXXI (Payne Smith, 199). This part of the homily was not preserved in the Greek catena tradition. Hence I refer here to the Syriac translation. The argument that the Son works miracles by the Spirit also occurs in Cyril, dial. Trin. VII (654c) (SC 246.210), so it was already in Cyril’s mind prior to the controversy with Nestorius.

¹¹⁴ On the dating of the Lukan homilies, see Reuss, *Lukas-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*, xxix.

the Son', in keeping with his fundamental axiom. In other words, the Spirit's operation is shaped by his relation to the Son. When he acts, he always does so as the Son's 'finger'. In addition to the two examples I have looked at so far where Cyril uses this axiom—with respect to creation and with respect to the Son's miracles—he elsewhere applies it to the incarnation and the resurrection of Christ, as well as the eschatological resurrection of all humanity, the spiritual nourishment of Christians, and the giving of the Spirit by Christ, in each case using the phrase to summarize the principle of inseparable operations.¹¹⁵

We should note that Cyril does not often speak about the agency of the Spirit in connection with the Spirit's relation to the Father. Since a connection was implied between the Son's generation and his manner of operation from the Father, we might assume that Cyril would make a similar argument from the procession of the Spirit. The Spirit proceeds 'from the Father', so Trinitarian agency must also proceed in some sense from the Father 'through' or 'in' the Spirit.¹¹⁶ However, even though Cyril grounds the Son's agency in his generation from the Father, he does not typically ground the Spirit's agency in the procession from the Father, and instead focuses on the Spirit's relation to the Son. Almost the only time he does talk about procession from the Father in the context of a discussion of Trinitarian agency is when he discusses the giving of the Spirit to humanity. For example, in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, when commenting upon John 14:11, Cyril writes that the Spirit 'proceeds' (προϊόν) from the Father, even while 'always remaining (μένον) in him', and 'is given to the saints through Christ. For all things are through the Son in the Holy Spirit'.¹¹⁷ Similarly, in comment upon John 14:20, he writes, 'the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, but comes through the Son, and is his own (ἰδίον). For all things are through the Son, from the Father'.¹¹⁸ In both these instances, Cyril is speaking about the gift of the Spirit to humanity, a gift which comes only 'through' the Son. Moreover, in both instances, after mentioning the Spirit's procession, he

¹¹⁵ For the example of the incarnation, see Jo. 6:57 (Pusey, 1.537-9); for the resurrection of Christ see Nest. V.6 (ACO 1.1.6, 103); for the eschatological resurrection of all humanity, see hom. Lc. XXXVI (CSCO 70.71); for the spiritual nourishment of Christians, see Jo. 15:1 (Pusey, 2.534-47); for the impartation of the Spirit to humanity, see Jo. 14:16-17 (Pusey, 2.468-9). Also, at fr. Lc. 329 (22:17) (Reuss, 208) he writes 'every grace and every perfect gift comes from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit'. On Jo. 15:1, see the discussion in Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 282-4.

¹¹⁶ On Cyril's understanding of generation and spiration, cf. Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 12-6; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 346-59, 492-529.

¹¹⁷ Cyril, Jo. 14:11 (Pusey, 2.432).

¹¹⁸ Cyril, Jo. 14:20 (Pusey, 2.487).

connects the Spirit to the Son before drawing the broader conclusion about Trinitarian agency. A further passage from his debate with Nestorius illustrates well this tendency. Cyril writes,

For just as the Holy Spirit proceeds (πρόεισιν) from the Father, belonging to him by nature, so in an identical manner (κατὰ τὸν ἴσον τούτῳ τρόπῳ) he proceeds also through the Son himself, being naturally his and consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with him. Therefore even if he is glorified through the Spirit, he is to be understood as glorifying himself through his own (ἰδίου) Spirit and not as something external to him that he uses, even if he is regarded as having become man like us.¹¹⁹

In this paragraph Cyril notes the Spirit's procession¹²⁰ from the Father, but before drawing his conclusion about Trinitarian agency, he shifts his focus to the Spirit's relation to the Son. It is the Spirit's relation to the Son that specifically grounds the Spirit's role in divine operations. Thus, the Spirit's operation, like that of the Son, is also grounded in his intra-Trinitarian relations, but it is the relation of Son-Spirit that Cyril emphasizes rather than that of Father-Spirit.¹²¹ This pattern of speaking is probably related to the fact that Cyril also conceives of the Spir-

¹¹⁹ Cyril, Nest. IV.3 (ACO 1.1.6, 82). For a strikingly similar passage, see Jo. 16:14 (Pusey, 2.636), where Cyril says that the Spirit ὁμοούσιόν τε ἐστὶ τῷ Υἱῷ, καὶ πρόεισι θεοπρεπῶς δι' αὐτοῦ, πᾶσαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐφ' ἅπασι τελεωτάτην ἔχον ἐνέργειάν τε καὶ δύναμιν

¹²⁰ The verb he uses here, πρόειμι, is, according to Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 524-7, his preferred one for referring to the procession of the Spirit. Gregory of Nazianzus in or. 39.12 famously made a technical distinction between the Son's going forth from the Father in the manner of generation (γεννητῶς) and the Spirit's going forth in the manner of procession (ἐκπορευτῶς) (SC 358.174). Cyril appears not to have followed Gregory in this linguistic distinction, as he does not use the adverbial form ἐκπορευτῶς at all, uses the noun form ἐκπόρευσις only once (Is. 57:15-16 (PG 70.1276)), and uses the verb πρόειμι more frequently for the Spirit's procession than ἐκπορεύω, except when he is commenting upon or quoting John 15:26. A. Edward Sicienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, OSHI (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 49-50, suggests that Cyril presents a clear distinction between πρόειμι and ἐκπορεύω, reserving the latter term for 'describing a unique relationship between the Spirit and the Father'. Cyril, in his view, was 'leading the way' in giving greater clarity to the eastern tradition's distinction between 'the Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις from the Father, and his eternal προΐέναι through or from the Son'.

I argue, on the contrary, that Cyril does not give evidence of such a technical distinction. In fact, on one occasion, as Boulnois notes, he uses ἐκπορεύω to refer to the Son's proceeding from the Father's substance (Jo. 15:26-27 (Pusey, 2.608)), contrary to Sicienski's scheme. In the passage that Sicienski cites as evidence that Cyril used this distinction (Jo. 15:26-27 (Pusey, 2.607)), Cyril does indeed use ἐκπορεύω for the Spirit's procession from the Father, but this is because he is directly quoting John 15:26. For a clear example of Cyril using πρόειμι to refer to the Spirit's eternal procession, see Jo. 16:14 (Pusey, 2.635-6), where he says that the Spirit 'emerges and goes forth' (προκύπτει τε καὶ πρόεισιν) from the 'substance of God'. Nevertheless, Boulnois proposes that Cyril does indeed imply some sort of distinction between the two terms, reserving ἐκπορεύω for 'une relation à la source absolue', which is why he never explicitly describes the Spirit's relation to the Son using ἐκπορεύω. If Cyril did consciously distinguish between the terms, it was in the sense which Boulnois proposes, rather than the one suggested by Sicienski. Moreover, it should be acknowledged that even this distinction is an inference drawn from his usage of the terms, not one that he ever, as far as I can tell, states explicitly.

¹²¹ So also Aloysio M. Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit according to Saint Cyril of Alexandria* (Oniae, 1963), 44, who writes, 'Cyril gives much more prominence, without doubt, to the relation Son-Spirit than to the relation Father-Spirit'. Cf. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 508, 'A diverses reprises, Cyrille mentionne ainsi la mission de

it as eternally proceeding ‘from’ the Father and ‘through’ the Son.¹²² Because the Spirit proceeds through the Son, the Spirit is proper to the Son, and is therefore intrinsic to any operation that the Son undertakes. Moreover, this emphasis on the relation Son-Spirit is in keeping with his Trinitarian axiom, insofar as the formula situates the Spirit in proximity to the Son rather than to the Father.¹²³

Furthermore, this emphasis on the relation of the Spirit to the Son is most likely a sign of Cyril’s conservative Athanasianism, since in his *Letters to Serapion* Athanasius displayed a similar pattern of argument, focusing on the parallel between Father-Son and Son-Spirit. Nevertheless, Cyril never, as far as I can tell, presents this parallel as an explicit and formal principle as does Athanasius.¹²⁴ Cyril’s thought is much more guided by his axiom that all things proceed from

l’Esprit Saint juste après avoir fait allusion à ses relations intra-trinitaires avec le Père. Mais de plus, il établit aussi ce lien entre théologie et économie à propos des relations entre le Fils et l’Esprit’.

¹²² Since at least the thirteenth century Cyril has been claimed as a supporter of the filioque. For a discussion of the Spirit’s procession ‘through’ the Son, as well as a consideration of Cyril’s role in the debate, see Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 492-529, who concludes, rightly I believe, that he cannot be classed on either side because it is a question that is foreign to his own time. However, Brian E. Daley, ‘The Fullness of the Saving God: Cyril of Alexandria on the Holy Spirit’, in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria*, 144-8, is right to point out that Cyril ‘does show a tendency, unusual in the Greek theological tradition, to stress the Son’s role, alongside that of the Father, in being genuinely the source of the Holy Spirit’. On the issue of the Spirit’s procession, see also Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 14-6; A. Palmieri, ‘Esprit Saint’, in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1924), 5.789-94; Du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité*, 224-30; Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, 40, n.69; A. de Halleux, ‘Cyrille, Théodoret et le “Filioque”’, *RHE* 74 (1979): 597-625; George C. Berthold, ‘Cyril of Alexandria and the Filioque’, *STPatr* 19 (1989): 143-47; B. Meunier, ‘Cyrille d’Alexandrie au concile de Florence’, *Annuaire historiae conciliorum* 21 (1989): 147-74; Ferraro, *Lo Spirito Santo nel quarto vangelo*, 191-2; Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria’s Pneumatology*, 31-50; Sicienski, *The Filioque*, 47-50. On Cyril’s relation to Western theology more broadly, see P. Renaudin, *La théologie de S. Cyrille d’Alexandrie d’après S. Thomas d’Aquin* (Tongerloo: Anvers, 1937); N. M. Haring, ‘The Character and Range of the Influence of St. Cyril of Alexandria on Latin Theology (430-1260)’, *Mediaeval Studies* 12 (1950): 1-19; Ciriaco Scanzillo, ‘Influssi di S. Cirillo d’Alessandria nella cristologia di S. Tommaso’, in *Tommaso d’Aquino nel suo settimo centenario*, vol. 4: *Problemi di teologia* (Naples: Edizioni Domenicane Italiane, 1976); Benjamin John King, *Newman and the Alexandrian Fathers: Shaping Doctrine in Nineteenth-Century England*, CPHST (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 149-79, 212-5.

¹²³ Cf. his statement in thes. XXXIV (PG 75.596) that the Spirit is ‘the natural, living, and enhypostatic operation of the divine substance’ (τῆς θείας ὑπάρχον οὐσίας ἐνέργεια φυσική τε καὶ ζῶσα καὶ ἐνυπόστατος).

¹²⁴ See Athanasius, ep. *Serap.* 1.2.3; 2.10.2-4; 3.4.1-2. Cyril does sometimes come close to Athanasius, as when he writes that the Spirit is ‘proper (ἰδίον) to the Son, just as also the Son is proper to God the Father (Jo. 15:26-27 (Pusey, 2.607)). Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianus*, 322, suggests in passing, without offering evidence for the claim, that Cyril’s pneumatology was ‘heavily’ dependent upon Gregory of Nazianus. For a criticism of this thesis, see Gregory K. Hillis, ‘Pneumatology and Soteriology according to Gregory of Nazianus and Cyril of Alexandria’, *STPatr* (forthcoming), who looks specifically at the issue of the Spirit’s soteriological role and concludes that Cyril’s thought owes little to Gregory. The outline of Trinitarian agency that I have sketched in this chapter further supports Hillis’ reading of Cyril against Beeley, since Cyril’s thought appears much more Athanasian than Gregorian with respect to the Spirit’s role in divine operations. Beeley himself acknowledges the difference between the pneumatology of Athanasius and Gregory, particularly in the way that Athanasius speaks of the ‘the Spirit of the Son’ (p.281, especially n.52). The same difference, I suggest, holds true for Cyril and Gregory as well. Gudrun Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken bei Cyrill von Alexandrien: Die verschiedenen Betrachtungsweisen der Heilsverwirklichung in seinem Johannes-Kommentar* (Bonn: Borengässer, 1996), 85-6, also notes the similarities

the Father through the Son in the Spirit than he is by the Athanasian parallel between Father-Son and Son-Spirit. In this respect his understanding of Trinitarian agency reveals the influence of other pro-Nicenes beyond simply Athanasius, most likely Gregory of Nyssa among others.¹²⁵ Moreover, perhaps the most unique aspect of his argument for inseparable operations is the emphasis that he places upon the mutual indwelling of the *hypostases*. Earlier pro-Nicenes had certainly discussed before the fact that the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son, but in Cyril the Son's being 'from and in' the Father becomes a constant refrain and is almost always noted in his discussions of Trinitarian agency. However, the mutual indwelling does not negate distinctions, since, as I have argued in this section, Cyril regularly construes inseparable operations in an ordered fashion, corresponding to the order of the persons. It is time now to return to the theme of revelation to see how ordered, inseparable operations relates to the divine unveiling.

A TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF REVELATION

I noted at the outset of this chapter an apparent conundrum in Cyril's thought. On the one hand he insists on the primacy of the Son's agency in bringing revelation to humanity, while, on the other hand, he states in the most emphatic terms that Father, Son, and Spirit are involved in every divine operation. How can the Son's agency as revealer be squared with inseparable operations? By now it should be clear how I intend to answer this question. Cyril's insistence on the Son's agency is not at odds with his principle of inseparable operations because he construes inseparable operations as a process by which the Father does all things through the Son, in the Spirit. In other words the Son reveals the Father in the Spirit, or, otherwise stated, revelation comes from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. The agency of the Son as revealer is thus preserved within the context of Cyril's broader Trinitarian commitments. In this respect, his theology of revelation is not only traditional and conservative, but has also been profoundly transformed by his pro-Nicene heritage.

between Cyril's pneumatology and that of Athanasius' *Ad Serapionem*.

¹²⁵ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 516, n.300, says it is 'sans doute' that Cyril is nearest to Gregory of Nyssa in his understanding of the Spirit proceeding 'through' the Son, pointing to *Ad Ablabium* (GNO 3.1, 56). Cf. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 217: 'the major contribution of pro-Nicene pneumatology is the insistence that the work of the Spirit is inseparable from Father and Son'.

Inseparable Operations and Revelation

In this section I intend to look at three passages in which Cyril explicitly discusses revelation in light of inseparable operations, thus returning to the discussion with which I began this chapter. Each suggests in different ways that revelation comes from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. In the first of these passages, while commenting on John 6:45 ('Everyone who has heard and who learns from the Father comes to me'), Cyril includes revelation among the divine operations that are accomplished by the entire Trinity. He first states the obvious reading of the text, writing, 'Understanding in Christ is given by the Father' (ἡ ἐπὶ Χριστῷ σύνεσις χορηγεῖται παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς), but he then moves to qualify this reading. Drawing the text into the orbit of his overall Trinitarian theology, Cyril writes,

But we must know that even if the Father is said to teach (ἐκπαιδεύειν) someone about the mystery in Christ, yet he will not bring this about (ἐνεργήσει) alone, but rather will fulfill it (ἐπιτελέσει) through his own (ιδίως) Wisdom, that is through the Son. For it is fitting to consider that the revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) from the Father that accords with understanding in someone will not be without Wisdom, and the Son is the Wisdom of the Father. Therefore, the Father will, through Wisdom, bring about (ἐνεργήσει) the revelation of his own offspring in those who are worthy. And in general terms (ἀπαξαπλῶς), to speak the whole truth and nothing else, you would not be wrong in saying that all of God the Father's operations (ἐνεργήματα) or will (θελήματα) towards anyone belong to the entire holy Trinity, and similarly those of his Son also, and those of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, as I suppose, although God the Father is said to reveal (ἀποκαλύπτειν) his own Son and to call to him those who are more ready to believe, the Son himself is found doing this, and no less the Holy Spirit also.¹²⁶

Cyril first uses an argument we have seen before to suggest that the Son is necessarily involved in the Father's act of revelation. The Son is the Father's Wisdom, and the Father does not reveal without his Wisdom, so the Son is involved in the Father's actions. However, from this point he broadens the scope even further, as he indicates when he says he is speaking the truth 'in general terms'. In the broadest possible sense, all the operations of the Father, or those of the Son, or those of the Spirit, in fact belong to the entire holy Trinity. For this reason Scripture

¹²⁶ Cyril, *Jo. 6:45* (Pusey, 1.508). Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 94-6, briefly discusses Cyril's interpretation of this passage.

sometimes says that the Father reveals, sometimes that the Son does so, and sometimes also the Spirit.

Just following this statement in the passage above, Cyril cites a series of biblical texts to prove his point. In Matthew 16:17 Jesus attributes the revelation given to Peter to the activity of the Father, in Galatians 1:12 Paul attributes the revelation he received to Jesus Christ, and in 1 John 2:27 the author speaks of the ‘anointing’ that abides within the saints and that teaches all things, presumably meaning the Spirit. Perhaps since the last text did not explicitly mention the Spirit, Cyril next cites John 16:12-14 in which Jesus says the ‘Spirit of truth’ will teach the disciples.¹²⁷ His point is that each text presents a different divine hypostasis as the agent of divine revelation. The argument focuses on the same sort of Scriptural ambiguity he picked up on earlier in his *Dialogues on the Trinity* to argue that all the words of God in Scripture can be attributed to all three. Cyril follows this biblical argument with a more explicitly theological one. In order to avoid ‘splitting’ (κατασχίζοντες) the Trinity into pieces, one must affirm that the ‘undivided divine nature will work (ἐνεργήσει) through itself in an inseparable manner (οὐ μεμερισμένως)’. He concludes his exegesis of this passage with one final argument. The Father and Son can both be said to reveal because their very names ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ imply the existence of one another. It is therefore ‘entirely necessarily’ (ἀνάγκη . . . πᾶσα) that the Father is revealed by the Son and the Son by the Father. He does not extend this last principle to include the Spirit as well, perhaps because the biblical text at hand speaks only of the Father and the Son, though in other places he does use a similar argument for the Spirit.¹²⁸ Even if it is the Father and Son who are primarily in view in this passage, what we see here is Cyril extending his principle of inseparable operations to the act of divine revelation. Father, Son, and Spirit can all be said to reveal the divine to humanity because all divine operations involve all three, as a result of the one undivided nature. The fluidity of Scripture’s language is a consequence of this divine reality.¹²⁹

In the preceding passage Cyril presented revelation almost as an unordered operation, as if any of the three hypostases might at any time take the initiative to grant revelation, albeit with the intrinsic involvement of the other two. However, even in the above passage, he ini-

¹²⁷ Cyril, Jo. 6:45 (Pusey, 1.508-9).

¹²⁸ Cyril, *di. Trin.* VII (634ab) (SC 246.148). Cf. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 155.

¹²⁹ For a similar exposition of this theme, see Cyril, Cyril, Jo. 17:26 (Pusey, 3.12-4).

tially argued for the Father revealing ‘through’ his own Wisdom, suggesting his more common manner of speaking about Trinitarian operations. In the following two passages, this ordering of operations is more clearly stated with respect to revelation. He develops this theme in a striking passage from his early work *De adoratione*, which draws together several of the Trinitarian ideas and biblical texts we have been considering. The primary question of *De adoratione* is how Christians should relate to the Mosaic Law, and in answer Cyril turns to a number of types or images to offer a spiritual reading of the Old Testament.¹³⁰ Close to the beginning of the work, he presents the ‘outlining’ (ἔσκειογραφεῖτο) of the Mosaic Law on tablets of stone as a ‘type’ (Τύπος) of what occurs to Christians ‘in Christ’, since

God, the Creator of all, writes (καταγράφει) the knowledge of his own counsel (βουλή) in us, as if using the Son in the Spirit for a pen. For thus he calls him through David, saying, ‘My tongue is the pen of a stenographer’ (Ps. 44:2). For the pen of the Father, that is the Son, engraved (ἔνεχάραξε) on the hearts of all the knowledge of everything good, as if using some finger of God, that is, the Spirit of the Father and of himself (ἰδίω). For he called the Spirit of God a finger, saying, ‘But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God’ (Matt. 12:28), and again, ‘But if I cast out demons by the finger of God’ (Luke 11:20). And Paul also called us a spiritual (πνευματικὴν) epistle, saying, ‘You are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, known and read by all men, revealing that you are an epistle of God ministered to by us, written, not in ink, but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on fleshly tablets of the heart’ (2 Cor. 3:2-3).¹³¹

In the first section of this chapter I commented upon Cyril’s exegesis of Psalm 44:2 in his *Commentary on the Psalms*. There he identified the Son as agent who ‘inscribed’ the Father’s will in the hearts of the faithful, and he made no mention of the Spirit. In this passage he provides a fuller account that does not conflict with the psalter fragment, but which does go beyond it. Moreover, as we noted in that previous passage, indeed, in the entire first section of this chapter, Isaiah 9:6 appears once more to be lying behind Cyril’s thought here, as evidenced in his mention of the Father’s ‘counsel’ (βουλή).

We should further note that in this passage from *De adoratione* he alternates the acting subject. He first identifies the Father as the one who ‘writes’ his own will in the heart, al-

¹³⁰ On *De adoratione*, see Robert Louis Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria’s Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 69-92; Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*; B. Lee Blackburn Jr., *The Mystery of the Synagogue: Cyril of Alexandria and the Law of Moses* (diss., University of Notre Dame, 2009); Mark W. Elliott, ‘What Cyril of Alexandria’s *De Adoratione* Is All About’, *STPatr* 50 (2011): 245-52.

¹³¹ Cyril, *ador.* I (PG 68.144).

though he makes sure to say that the Father works, ‘using’ the Son in the Spirit, relying upon Psalm 44:2 for this identification. However, in the next sentence he shifts the subject. Now it is the Son, as the pen of the Father, who is engraving knowledge in the heart, although again this operation is not accomplished without the Spirit, since the Spirit is the ‘finger’ by which the Son acts. For this identification of the Spirit with the finger of God, Cyril relies on a textual variance between two parallel gospel passages, Matthew 12:28 and Luke 11:20, the same ambiguity that I suggested above was likely guiding his interpretation in his homily on Luke 11:20.¹³² Didymus the Blind is probably Cyril’s source here, as well as in the Lucan homily I looked at before.¹³³ In his *On the Holy Spirit*, the blind Alexandrian also noted the textual variance and used it to argue that ‘the Trinity has a single nature and power’. Moreover, Didymus notes that a finger is always connected to the hand, and is ascribed to the substance of the person whose finger it is, echoing Cyril’s same argument in his homily on Luke 11:20 in which he said that, like a finger, the Spirit is connected ‘by nature’ to the Son. Finally, Didymus concludes by noting in passing that it was with this finger that the Mosaic Law was written on stone tablets, a point close to the typological reading that Cyril offers here in *De adoratione*.¹³⁴

Thus, at several points this Cyrilline passage parallels the work of Didymus. What Cyril appears to add to his source here is a clearer sense of the order in which Trinitarian operations occur: from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit (though this point is at least implicit in Didymus). Cyril concludes his typological interpretation of the Mosaic tablets with a nod to

¹³² Cf. Cyril, fr. Lc. 141 (11:20) (Reuss, 126). Marcellus, inc. 19 (PG 26.1017-20) and Evagrius, ep. 11 (=ps-Basil, ep. 8.11 (PG 32.265)), had previously noted this textual variance and concluded that the Spirit is the finger of God, though without using this identification to explain inseparable operations. John Chrysostom also noted the variance, but did not use it to identify the Spirit with the finger of God (hom. in Mt. 41.2). Gregory of Nyssa identified the Spirit as the finger of God in his encomium to his brother Basil, albeit without reference to the two gospel texts (laud. Bas. 21), as did Gregory of Nazianzus in his Fifth Theological Oration (or. 31.29).

¹³³ So also Du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité*, 229, who notes that Cyril drew upon Didymus for his description of the Spirit as the ‘finger of God’, pointing to his usage of the analogy in thes. XXXI (PG 75.576). Du Manoir did not point to any specific text of Didymus, but he was likely following the work of Palmieri (‘Esprit Saint’, 789, 792) who had previously noted the similarity between Cyril, thes. XXXI (PG 75.576) and Didymus’s *De Spiritu*.

¹³⁴ Didymus, Spir. 87-90 (SC 386.224-8). Moreover, in book five of the pseudo-Basilean *Against Eunomius*, a work possibly written by Didymus, the two parallel gospel texts are again quoted in order to make the point that the Spirit is included in divine operations (PG 29.716). There are significant parallels between books four and five of the *Adversus Eunomium* and the *De Trinitate* by ps-Didymus, so the two works are likely by the same author. See Walter M. Hayes, ‘Didymus the Blind Is the Author of *Adversus Eunomium* IV/V’, *STPatr* 17/3 (1982): 1108-1114. Liébaert, *La doctrine christologique*, 56-61, has shown that Cyril likely had recourse to books four and five this *Against Eunomius* for formulating his Trinitarian theology, so it is possible he picked up this argument from either of these (ps-)Didymean works, though there are more explicit parallels with *De Spiritu*.

Paul's description of the law written on the heart of Christians, a biblical passage that also supports his understanding of Trinitarian agency, since it describes the Spirit as the ink by which the Father writes on human hearts. Though there is some variation in the acting subject even in this short passage, the archbishop here provides a clearer order of operation than he did in the last passage we considered, since here he states that the Father reveals by the Son and the Son reveals by the Spirit. Moreover, we should also note that the *De adoratione* is typically regarded as a very early text, perhaps even his first exegetical work, composed during the first years of his episcopal tenure.¹³⁵ This dating suggests that even though the Trinitarian axiom is relatively rare in his earlier works, such as the *Thesaurus*, the basic logic behind it was already in place in his earliest theological writings.

In the last passage Cyril shifted back and forth between the agency of the Son and the Father in revelation, even while insisting on the ordered involvement of all three divine hypostases. To conclude this section I want to look at one further example to see how Cyril's more typical pattern of granting primacy to the agency of the Son in dispensing divine revelation is situated alongside his fundamental Trinitarian axiom. We looked at the beginning of this chapter at Cyril's exegesis of John 12:49-50 and his usage of this text to highlight the agency of the Son as the messenger of the Father's will. When he came to John 17:6-8 in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, he was presented with a passage similar to John 12:49, though on this occasion he provided greater clarity regarding the Trinitarian mode of operations. In praying to the Father, Jesus declared, 'The words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and have come to know truly that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me'. Cyril's approach to explaining this passage is similar to that which we saw with respect to John 12:49. This time, however, he spends little time answering the possible 'Arian' interpretation of the text, simply noting in passing that the Son bears witness to 'what belongs to the status of servanthood'. After this brief nod to the economy, the Alexandrian goes straight for the Trinitarian implications of the passage. The words of the Son are called the words of the Father because of 'their identity of substance' (διὰ τὸ ἐν οὐσίᾳ ταῦτόν), and because the Son is God the Word who 'reveals the will of the Father' (τῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς θελημάτων ἐκφαντικῶς).

¹³⁵ On the dating of *De adoratione*, see Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 29-37, who gives a date between 412 and 418. He develops the earlier work of G. Jouassard, 'L'activité littéraire', who suggested a date prior to 423. Schurig's dating is followed by Blackburn Jr., *The Mystery of the Synagogue*, 29-30.

2. The Son as Word and Will of the Father: A Trinitarian Theology of Revelation

After again giving the analogy of a mind and its word, which we have seen him use before, and after calling in Isaiah 9:6 for support, Cyril writes,

The Word, who is in the Father and from the Father, transmits the truly extraordinary, lofty, and great counsel of the one who begot him. He does so, on the one hand, through the utterance of words, as a man, when he became like us, and, on the other hand, through spiritual knowledge and illumination after his ascension into heaven. For he reveals to those who are worthy the mysteries concerning himself, as Paul also testifies, saying, ‘If you seek proof of Christ who speaks in me’.¹³⁶

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, Cyril here shows a preference for the language of Isaiah 9:6, describing the content of the revelation as the ‘great counsel’ (μεγάλην . . . βουλήν) of the Father. Moreover, implicit in the passage are two arguments we have already seen Cyril use in his case for inseparable operations. The Son is both ‘from the Father’, that is eternally generated from him, and also ‘in the Father’, that is indwelling him and inseparable from him. We may conclude therefore, that in this passage he is assuming his doctrine of inseparable operations, especially since he has already alluded to the principle earlier in his exegesis of this text.¹³⁷ This short passage is particularly illustrative of this principle, insofar as the biblical text speaks only of the Father and Son, while Cyril brings the Spirit into view as well. The mention of ‘spiritual knowledge and illumination’ must refer to the giving of the Spirit following the Son’s ascension. What is striking, therefore, is that Cyril here preserves the agency of the Son even when speaking about the Spirit’s revelatory function and the Father as the object of revelation. The subject of the sentence remains the same. It is the same Son who reveals the Father, whether in his incarnate state, or through the impartation of his Spirit after his ascension. Thus, what this passage gives us that the previous two did not is a return to the primacy of the Son which we observed at the beginning of this chapter, using the same language and biblical

¹³⁶ Cyril, *Jo.* 17:6-8 (Pusey, 2.685). τὴν γὰρ ὄντως ἐξαίσιόν τε καὶ ὑπερφυᾶ καὶ μεγάλην τοῦ τεκόντος βουλήν, ὃ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ διαπορθμεύει Λόγος, διὰ μὲν γὰρ ῥημάτων προφορᾶς, ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ὅτε γέγονε καθ’ ἡμᾶς, διὰ δὲ γνώσεως καὶ φωταγωγίας πνευματικῆς μετὰ τὴν εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνάβασιν· ἀποκαλύπτει γὰρ τοῖς ἀξίοις τὰ ἑαυτοῦ μυστήρια, καὶ μαρτυρήσει λέγων ὁ Παῦλος “Εἰ δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε τοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ;”

¹³⁷ Cyril spends several pages interpreting this text. In the portion leading up to what immediately concerns us here, he argues that it was only with the coming of the Son that God was clearly revealed not as a generic divine being, but as a Father who eternally begets a Son. In the midst of his discussion, he clearly refers to the pro-Nicene principle of inseparable operation, using the classic example of the Father creating all things ‘through the Son, in the Spirit’ (*Jo.* 17:6-8 (Pusey, 2.682)). Thus, Trinitarian operations were on his mind as he led up to his statement about revelation.

texts to present the case for it, albeit now situated in the framework of inseparable operations and assuming the logic of his Trinitarian axiom.

To say that the Son reveals the Father through the Spirit is nothing less than to say that divine revelation comes from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. In Cyril's view, the Father begets a Word who expresses what resides in him, and the Son reveals the Father's will through his incarnation and through his indwelling of the saints by his Spirit. The Son is thus the primary agent of divine revelation, although the Father is the object of revelation and the Spirit is the indispensable means by which the Son operates. As he wrote in his *Dialogues on the Trinity*, 'now that we know God and are known by God, we have come to know the Father of the universe through the Son in the Spirit'.¹³⁸ I suggest that it is proper to describe Cyril's theology of revelation as 'Trinitarian' in light of the fact that his understanding of divine unveiling has clearly been formed to correspond to the contours of his pro-Nicene theology.

A Pro-Nicene Theology of Revelation

In concluding this chapter I want to look at a small case study that picks up on a theme that has run throughout this chapter, and that illustrates the difference between a theology of revelation in the third century and one in the fifth century. Origen provides a useful point of contrast here both because of the similarities and differences between his own thought and that of his later Alexandrian counterpart. As I noted briefly at the outset of this chapter, the theme of the Son serving as mediator of the revelation of the Father was not uniquely pro-Nicene, but was a dominant theme of the so-called Logos theology that emerged in the second century. In his appropriation of this tradition, Origen presented it in a form that bears some similarities with Cyril's writings, basing his argument on the fact that Scripture calls the Son the 'Word' and even citing Psalm 44:2 and Isaiah 9:6 for support.¹³⁹ Dionysius of Alexandria later repeated this exegesis of Psalm 44, possibly having picked it up from Origen, and in the

¹³⁸ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* VII (647c) (SC 246.188-90). So also Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 580-3.

¹³⁹ Origen, *Jo.* 1.38.277-83. Cf. Origen, *princ.* 4.1.5 where he also applies Psalm 44 to Christ, and *princ.* 1.2.6 where he explains the Son's status as 'image' of the Father by pointing to his generation from the Father, and links this with his role as the one who reveals the Father, though without explicit mention of Psalm 44. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 135, n.30, following the work of Marguerite Harl, *Origène et la fonction révélatrice du Verbe Incarné*, *Patristics Sorbonensia 2* (Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1958), 124-9, notes that Cyril in this respect is the heir of Origen, for whom 'cette fonction révélatrice du Verbe est fondamentale'.

fourth century Athanasius perpetuated this tradition by quoting from Dionysius.¹⁴⁰ Boulnois is probably right that this strand of theology stretching back to Origen could have reached Cyril through his reading of Dionysius in Athanasius, and Cyril himself therefore represents the continuation of this tradition.¹⁴¹

However, despite this continuity, there exists beneath the surface a significant development. In Origen's view, the language of the Father working 'through' the Son implied that the Father was somehow 'better and greater' than the Son.¹⁴² Moreover, although he affirmed that the Son has knowledge of the Father and is glorified by him for this reason, it remains true that the Father's 'contemplation of himself' (ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ . . . περιωπῆ) 'surpasses the contemplation in the Son'.¹⁴³ If this were the case, then the words of the Son could be understood as standing at some distance from the ultimate source of divine reality, the Father, and humanity's encounter with the divine in revelation would stand at one step removed from the fullness of the divine presence and truth. Indeed, in an important study Rowan Williams concludes that Origen 'at the very least toyed with the view that the Son was not capable of knowing or experiencing all that was known by the Father, in the sense that he cannot share an identical self-awareness with the Father'.¹⁴⁴ Origen himself is a complex figure, and the simple label 'subordinationist', commonly used to describe him, fails to do justice to his thought.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, his understanding of the Father's self-contemplation leaves open the possibility that divine rev-

¹⁴⁰ Athanasius, *Dion.* 23.2-4 (AW II/1, 63-4). In this passage Dionysius uses Psalm 44:2 to support the word-intellect analogy for eternal generation, and he ties this point to the Word's role as the one who reveals the Father, probably alluding to Isaiah 9:6 when he calls the Son the Father's 'interpreter and messenger' (ἑρμηνεὺς καὶ ἄγγελος).

¹⁴¹ Cf. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 130-1, although she does not note that Cyril, like Origen, Dionysius, and Athanasius, uses Psalm 44 to argue not only for the ontological solidarity between Father and Son, but also for the revelatory function of the Word. She includes discussion of Cyril's exegesis of Psalm 44 under the heading 'Solidarité ontologique du verbe et de l'intellect', but does not mention the passage again when she comes later to deal with the 'Fonction révélatrice du Verbe' (p.135f).

¹⁴² Origen, *Jo.* 2.10.72 (SC 120.252).

¹⁴³ Origen, *Jo.* 32.28.345-50 (SC 385.334-8).

¹⁴⁴ Rowan D. Williams, 'The Son's Knowledge of the Father in Origen', in *Origeniana Quarta*, ed. L. Lies, Innsbrucker theologische Studien 19 (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1987), 148. Williams argues that it is 'the personal metaphor and rhetoric of Christian faith' that holds Origen back from following whole-heartedly the Plotinian implications of his thought. 'Two central religious impulses collide—the need to assert the uncircumscribable nature of the divine, and the need to speak of it in terms of action and love, of limitless gift and accessibility in grace' (p.150).

¹⁴⁵ On the question of whether or not Origen should be described as a 'subordinationist', see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 21.

elation is brought to humanity by a divine being who himself lacks the fullness of knowledge, and this lack might undermine the legitimacy or veracity of the Son's revelation. The Father's perfect knowledge of himself ultimately remains unknown even to the Son who is charged with making it known to created beings.

It is here that the difference with Cyril becomes apparent. In the first section of this chapter, when discussing the mind-word analogy, I pointed out Cyril's repeated insistence that the Son speaks the same words as the Father. As a human person begets a word in the mind that expresses exactly what was hidden in the depths of thought as it passes outward via the voice, so the divine Word who became incarnate makes known precisely what the Father intended without any interval or change. Moreover, in the discussion of Trinitarian agency I noted three compound words Cyril coined using the word ταῦτός ('identical'), in order to express his principle of inseparable operations. Elsewhere he used a similar word to express the identity of the Son's words with the Father's and the Spirit's words with those of the Son. In Cyril's summary of Jesus' words in John 8:26, the Son declares 'I speak in a manner identical (ταυτολογῶ) to the Father who sent me', and he elsewhere says that the Spirit 'has words identical' (ταῦτοέπειαν) to the Son.¹⁴⁶ Cyril was not the first to use the former word, but he did coin the latter. At one level, such an idea is nothing more than a fairly straightforward reading of several Johannine passages (cf. John 3:34; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10; 15:15). What I want to draw attention to here is that Cyril explicitly grounds the identity of the words of Father and Son in their ontological solidarity. As he glosses the Son's statement in John 14:10:

If the Father had spoken anything to you, he would have used these very same words that I am speaking to you now and no others. For I have such a great substantial likeness (οὐσιώδη τὴν ἐμφέρειαν) with him that my sayings (φωνὰς) are his, and whatever things I should do are believed to be his accomplishments. For by 'dwelling in me' on account of the exact identity of substance (τὸ ἀπαράλλακτον ἐν οὐσίᾳ), 'he performs the deeds' (John 14:10). And since the Godhead is one and is understood to be in Father and Son and Spirit, absolutely every word that comes from the Father is through the Son in

¹⁴⁶ For ταυτολογέω, see Jo. 8:26; 16:14 (Pusey, 2.27, 636). For ταῦτοέπεια, see *dial. Trin.* VII (658a) (SC 246.220). Unlike the other words I noted previously, the verb ταυτολογέω did not always have a loaded theological meaning. See its more mundane usage at Jo. 7:37; 9:26 (Pusey, 1.688; 2.181). The only other usage of ταῦτοέπεια that I can find in his corpus is at Ps. 46:10 (PG 69.1057) where he uses it to stress the continuity between the revelation in the Hebrew Scriptures and that in the New Testament. Even though Cyril was the first to use the noun ταῦτοέπεια, its verbal cognate ταῦτοεπέω had been used at least once prior to him (ps-Didymus, *Trin.* III (PG 39.781)). Cyril himself used the verbal form on several occasions (*Mich.* 3:9-10 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.652); *Is.*, prooem.; 41:1 (PG 70.9, 828); *Juln.* II.29 (SC 322.264)). At Jo. 8:28 (Pusey, 2.46), he says that the Son speaks a 'word identical' (ταυτολογία) to the Father.

the Spirit, and every deed or miracle is through the Son in the Spirit, and yet is accomplished as though from the Father. For the Son is not external to the substance of the one who begot him, nor is the Holy Spirit. Rather, the Only-begotten exists in him, and again has his begetter in himself, and thus he says that the Father works. For the nature of the Father is effective (*ἐνεργῆς*) and shines forth beautifully in the Son.¹⁴⁷

In this passage we see a fuller explication of the theme that I noted earlier. Once again Cyril asserts that the Son's words are also the Father's to such an extent that if the Father were to speak he would say nothing more than what the Son says, but in this case Cyril explicitly grounds this identification in the Son's 'substantial likeness' with the Father. Thus, the Son's consubstantiality with the Father preserves the veracity of the revelation that he brings.¹⁴⁸ For Cyril, there is no sense in which the Father's self-knowledge extends beyond the knowledge of the Son. Thus, pro-Nicene theology has the benefit of ensuring that the Son's revelation is a divine unveiling to the fullest degree possible.¹⁴⁹ Origen himself had affirmed that the Son is the 'unspotted mirror of the Father's activity' (*ἔσοπτρον ἀκηλίδωτον τῆς ἐνεργείας αὐτοῦ*), and that in this mirror the apostles 'see God' (cf. John 14:9), but Cyril has placed this principle upon much firmer footing with his pro-Nicene understanding of the unity that obtains between Father and Son.¹⁵⁰

Furthermore, Cyril also argued that the *homoousios* preserves not only the veracity of revelation, but also its unity. In his *Dialogues on the Trinity*, he points out that, if the Spirit were not consubstantial with the Father and were instead of some lesser divine status, then those in-

¹⁴⁷ Cyril, *Jo.* 14:10 (Pusey, 2.428-9). Cf. Cyril's argument at *Jo.* 3:34 (Pusey, 1.252) that the Son must speak words that are 'fitting to God' because he is begotten from the Father as 'God from God', and at *Jo.* 8:28 (Pusey, 2.38) where he says the Son speaks what the Father speaks because he is of the same substance as him. Also, at *Jo.* 14:11 (Pusey, 2.442), Cyril argues in response to an unnamed 'Arian' heretic that Paul, in whom Christ dwells and speaks (cf. 2 Cor. 13:3), cannot truly be a 'God-bearer' (*θεοφόρος*) if Christ is not truly 'God'. Elsewhere, Cyril makes a parallel argument regarding the Spirit. The Spirit can reveal God because he is 'from and in God by nature' (*thes.* XXXIII (PG 75.565)). On the latter passage, see Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 154.

¹⁴⁸ Cyril's exegesis of John 14:10 that I excerpted above does not address the question of what it means for the Son to 'receive' his words from the Father. For an answer to this question, see *Jo.* 8:28 (Pusey, 2.45-6), where he explains the Son's being 'taught' by the Father as an aspect of his eternal generation from the Father. As a human child learns to speak rather than to roar like a lion by virtue of his inherent human nature, so the Son, by virtue of his generation from the Father, speaks words befitting God.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Basil, *Eun.* II.32, where Basil argues that the Son must be consubstantial with the Father in order to make the Father known to humanity.

¹⁵⁰ Origen, *Jo.* 13.25.153 (SC 222.114). Furthermore, the Johannine passages that Cyril relies on to make this point (John 3:34; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10; 15:15) do not appear at all in Origen's *De principiis*, aside from one, unrelated citation of John 15:15 at *princ.* 1.6.4, and, moreover, they play no significant role in the surviving portions of Origen's own *Commentary on the Gospel of John*.

spired authors who spoke by the Spirit, the evangelists and apostles, would be in a lesser condition than those of the Old Testament who spoke by the Lord God, since the revelation brought by the Spirit would be of a lesser value than the revelation brought by the Father.¹⁵¹ It is unlikely that Cyril has in mind any specific opponent in this passage, but his logic holds true nonetheless. Certain Scriptural passages attribute divine revelation to the Father, other passages to the Son, and still others to the Spirit. Without the consubstantiality of Father, Son, and Spirit, the union of the three lacks a sufficient grounding, and the unity of the revelation they give forth is therefore also placed in jeopardy. The Spirit's consubstantiality with the Father, as well as the fact that all three *hypostases* are involved in every divine act, thus makes certain that all of Scripture tells the same story and derives from the same divine source. In this respect, the principle of inseparable operations is not simply an idea derived from Scripture, but proves to be remarkably adept as an explanatory tool for unifying the variegated witness of Scripture. I noted earlier in this chapter the fact that Cyril frequently pays close attention to the divine subject acting or speaking in scriptural passages, and uses this fluidity as an argument for inseparable operations. He sees such scriptural ambiguity not as a problem, but in fact as a sign of the consubstantiality of Father, Son, and Spirit which grounds the unity of their divine revelation.

In these last two paragraphs I have been stressing the difference that a pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology makes for a theology of revelation. However, we should not press this distinction to such an extent that we fail to recognize the significant continuity that exists between the second and fifth centuries. Some who have studied this period speak of the 'end' of the earlier Logos theology as the later 'Nicene' theology gained dominance.¹⁵² However, Cyril, as emphatically as Justin Martyr or Irenaeus, stresses the fact that the Son reveals the Father, a supposed hallmark of Logos theology. For this reason, it is better to speak of this transition from pre- to pro-Nicene theologies as a 'transformation' rather than an abrupt change, since what occurred in the fourth and fifth centuries was not the 'end' of earlier theologies, but their adaptation in light of pro-Nicene principles.¹⁵³ Cyril's theology of divine revelation serves as a

¹⁵¹ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* VII (642e-643a) (SC 246.174-6).

¹⁵² For an account that sees an abrupt change between the earlier Logos theology and later pro-Nicene theology, see R. P. C. Hanson, 'The Transformation of Images in the Trinitarian Theology of the Fourth Century', *STPatr* 17/1 (1982): 97-115. Hanson writes of a 'distinct and unmistakable change of direction' that occurred in the fourth century (p.110).

¹⁵³ Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 302-4; Barnes, 'De Régnon Reconsidered'. On this point, Ayres and Barnes are following the work of Theodore de Régnon, *Études de théologie positive sur la sainte trinité* (Paris: Retaux, 1898).

2. *The Son as Word and Will of the Father: A Trinitarian Theology of Revelation*

clear example of just such a transformation, since he preserves a notion going back to the second century, albeit couched within a new understanding of inseparable operations. The Son makes known the Father to humanity by means of the Spirit.

3

‘One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit’: The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

The inspired Scripture was sealed in a certain manner by God, as in single a book. For all of Scripture is one book, and has been spoken through the one Holy Spirit.¹

This chapter and the following one focus on the act of divine inspiration as a specific instance of divine revelation. In keeping with my argument in chapter two, chapters three and four function together to suggest that Cyril regards the origination of Scripture in divine inspiration as a process that is both Trinitarian and Christological—Trinitarian in structure and Christological in focus. In this chapter I deal almost exclusively with his understanding of the Spirit’s role in inspiration, such that the Father and the Son do not significantly come into the picture. However, the more explicitly Trinitarian and Christological themes will become apparent once more in the following chapter, and will stand out more sharply against the background that I provide in the pages that follow. In the present chapter I argue that Cyril regards the Spirit as the agent responsible for the authoring of Scripture in both the Old and the New Testaments. Scripture arises by a process of the Spirit indwelling human authors who then produce inspired composition, and in this process neither side of the equation—either human or divine agency—can be reduced to the other. For Cyril, Scripture consists of many sacred books, because it has many human authors, and yet it is one book, because it is all spoken by the Spirit.

¹ Cyril, Is. 29:11-12 (PG 70.656).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

Since he left no extended discussion of the Spirit's role in composing Scripture, this chapter necessarily draws upon several different themes in his corpus. I begin by looking in detail at the language he uses for Scripture itself and for the authors of Scripture, since his choice of terms highlights the centrality of the Spirit's role in Scripture's composition. After establishing this fact on the basis of his language, I follow with two extended sections that look at two relevant themes in his corpus, the Spirit as the 'prophetic' Spirit and the Spirit's 'mystagogy', both of which reinforce my argument that the Spirit is responsible for inspiring Scripture. I then spend some time looking at how his understanding of divine inspiration by the Spirit relates to the redemptive-historical cast of his theology and to later fathers of the church, revealing continuities and discontinuities in the way this inspiration operates. Finally, I conclude this chapter by noting how Cyril's theology of spiritual inspiration undergirds his understanding of the kind of book that Scripture is. The unity of the biblical witness as a testimony to Christ depends upon the unified work of the Spirit.

INSPIRATION BY THE SPIRIT IN THE PRIOR TRADITION

Prompted by Scripture's own clear statements of the Spirit's work, patristic theologians frequently connected the Spirit with Scriptural inspiration.² One of the earliest witnesses to this theme is Justin Martyr. In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Trypho the Jew asks Justin what it means that the Spirit 'rests' upon Christ (cf. Is. 11:1-2). In response Justin argues that it signifies the cessation of the prophetic Spirit among the prophets of Israel, and the transfer of the Spirit to Christ who then dispenses spiritual gifts to those who believe.³ Irenaeus also attributes the inspiration of Scripture to the Spirit. In a context in which he is seeking to point out the limitations of human knowledge and investigation, he affirms that 'the Scriptures are indeed perfect, and in fact were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit'. Because Scripture comes from these two authors who so far surpass humanity, he asserts that we should not be surprised that it contains

² On patristic theologies of divine inspiration, see C. Pesch, *De inspiratione sacrae scripturae* (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Herder, 1906), 38-128; J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 3rd ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1965), 60-4; Luis Alonso Schökel, *The Inspired Word: Scripture in the Light of Language and Literature*, trans. Francis Martin (London: Burns & Oates, 1967); Bruce Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1972), 20-42.

³ Justin Martyr, *dial.* 87 (PTS 47.220-2). Cf. *dial.* 7. See the recent discussion of this theme in Justin in Oskar Skarsaune, 'Justin and His Bible', in *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 53-76; Susan Wendel, 'Interpreting the Descent of the Spirit: A Comparison of Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* and Luke-Acts', in *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, 95-103.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

statements that defy explanation.⁴ In fact, the Spirit's inspiration was regarded by some as a hallmark of right belief. Eusebius preserves an extract from a work against the heresy of Artemon, and his unnamed source suggests that those who 'do not believe that the divine Scriptures have been spoken by the Holy Spirit' are in fact 'unbelievers'.⁵

The most extended discussion of the nature of Scripture in patristic literature is found in Origen's *On First Principles*. Book four opens with the title 'Concerning the Inspiration (θεοπνεύστου) of the Divine Scripture'.⁶ In the ensuing discussion he states that both the Old and New Testaments are 'divine', and then provides a series of reasons that prompt him to regard them as such.⁷ His first argument is that, in contrast to all other lawgivers and sacred texts, the writings of Moses and the words of Jesus Christ have spread all over the known world, prompting people to abandon their ancestral religions.⁸ In addition to this, he spells out several arguments from fulfilled prophecies such as the persecution of Jesus' followers, the end of the Jewish kingdom and worship, the details of Christ's birth, the calling of the Gentiles, and the preaching of the apostles.⁹ Since these prophecies were fulfilled only with the coming of Christ, Origen argues that the divine and inspired nature of the word could not be clearly perceived previously and has only become apparent with the incarnation.¹⁰ He concludes his argument from prophecy on a more subjective note, insinuating that Scripture is almost self-authenticating. The one who 'reads the prophetic words with care and diligence, experiences from the very act of reading the traces of divine inspiration, and in this way he will thus be persuaded that the words we believe to be from God are not the writings of men'.¹¹ Neither the obscurity of some parts of Scripture, nor the unbelief of some, nor the humility of Scrip-

⁴ Irenaeus, *haer.* 2.28.2 (SC 294.270).

⁵ Eusebius, *h.e.* 5.28.18 (SC 41.78-9).

⁶ On Origen's view of inspiration, see R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959), 187-209; E. Nardoni, 'Origen's Concept of Biblical Inspiration', *SCe* 4 (1984): 9-23; Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 132-6.

⁷ Origen, *princ.* 4.1.1 (SC 268.256-8). The Latin translation of this passage mentions the Spirit as the cause of inspiration (*dei spiritu inspiratae*), but the Greek preserved in the *Philocalia* does not.

⁸ Origen, *princ.* 4.1.1 (SC 268.260-2).

⁹ Origen, *princ.* 4.1.2-5 (SC 268.264-80).

¹⁰ Origen, *princ.* 4.1.6 (SC 268.280).

¹¹ Origen, *princ.* 4.1.6 (SC 268.282).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

ture's style can undermine Origen's confidence in its divine quality.¹² The source of this inspiration is the Spirit who has 'enlightened' the minds of the prophets and apostles, such that the goal of biblical interpretation is to discern the 'aim of the Spirit'.¹³

The pro-Nicene accounts of the Spirit's person and work that were produced in the fourth century also frequently highlight the inspiration of the prophets by the Spirit. In his *Letter to Marcellinus on the Interpretation of the Psalms*, Athanasius points out that the grace of the Spirit is 'common' to all the writers of Scripture and differs only according to the specific purpose of each author 'in each book of the Scripture', such that there is 'the same harmony (συμφωνία) of the Spirit' throughout all its parts.¹⁴ Basil of Caesarea's treatise *On the Holy Spirit* says that calling Scripture 'divinely inspired' (θεόπνευστος), means that it is 'written through the inspiration (διὰ τῆς ἐπιπνοίας) of the Holy Spirit'¹⁵, and Gregory of Nazianzus likewise attributes to the Spirit the knowledge of divine revelation in the prophets, apostles, and even angels.¹⁶ Didymus's *On the Holy Spirit*, preserved in a Latin translation by Jerome, makes the same point, as he argues from a litany of biblical prooftexts that the Spirit was present in the prophets and apostles.¹⁷ Furthermore, in his *Catechetical Lectures* Cyril of Jerusalem based the unity of the Old and New Testaments on the fact that they were inspired by the same Spirit.¹⁸ Finally, the Council of Constantinople in 381 formally codified the connection between the Spirit and scriptural inspiration. The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed expanded on the Nicene Creed of 325 by adding, among other things, 'we believe . . . in the Holy Spirit . . . who spoke by the prophets'.¹⁹

¹² Origen, *princ.* 4.1.7 (SC 268.284-90).

¹³ Origen, *princ.* 4.2.7 (SC 268.326-8). Cf. *princ.* 4.3.11; 4.3.14; and 4.3.15 where inspiration is attributed to the Spirit.

¹⁴ Athanasius, *ep. Marcell.* 9-10 (PG 27.17-20). See also his *ep. Serap.* 1.31.5-12 where he attributes prophesy to the Spirit. I will consider the latter passage at more length in the following chapter.

¹⁵ Basil, *Spir.* 21.52 (SC 17.210). Basil is alluding here to 2 Timothy 3:16. He also connects the Spirit with prophecy in *Spir.* 16.37; 26.61. In *Spir.* 29.74 he says that Gregory Thaumaturgus walked by the Spirit like the apostles and prophets.

¹⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus, *or.* 31.29. Like Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus also notes the inspiration of Gregory Thaumaturgus in *or.* 31.28.

¹⁷ Didymus, *Spir.* 125-130. The biblical passages he adduces are Isaiah 38:4-5; Zechariah 1:6; Matthew 22:43-45; Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:25-26; Isaiah 6:8-11. I will return to this passage from Didymus in the next chapter, as it is one of the key precursors to Cyril's understanding of the unity of operations as expressed in the act of divine revelation.

¹⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem, *cat.* 16.4.

¹⁹ For the Greek text of the creed, see G. L. Dossetti, *Il simbolo di Nicea e di Costantinopoli: Edizione critica* (Rome:

Opinion is divided over whether or not Cyril had knowledge of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed²⁰, but regardless, the inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit was a well established concept in the prior patristic tradition, and he was undoubtedly familiar with it from reading a number of authors. However, as we shall soon see, this was a concept that Cyril appropriated and very much made his own.²¹

SPIRIT-BEARING AUTHORS OF A SPIRITUALLY-BREATHED BOOK

The best place to begin considering Cyril's understanding of divine inspiration is to look at the language with which he describes Scripture and the authors of Scripture, since his terminology most clearly reveals his emphasis on the Spirit's role. One such word is the noun πνευματοφόρος ('Spirit-bearer') and its cognate verb πνευματοφορέομαι ('carried by the Spirit'). These words were not present in the classical tradition, and make their first appearance in the Septuagint where they were used for false prophets (Jer. 2:24; Hos. 9:7; Zeph. 3:4). In the patristic tradition prior to Cyril, the words were used to refer to three different categories of persons or activities. First, in a minority of cases, they were used in a negative sense in keeping with the usage of the Septuagint. Relying on an earlier anti-Montanist source, Eusebius uses the words twice to refer to Montanist prophetic activity, and Theodoret uses them to refer to false prophecy in general while commenting upon these Septuagintal texts.²² Second, some

Herder, 1967), 244f; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 818. On the theological character of the creed, see Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 818; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 255-9.

²⁰ On whether or not Cyril was aware of the creed, see E. Schwartz, 'Das Nicaenum und Das Constantinopolitanum auf der Synode von Chalkedon', ZNW 25 (1926): 38-88; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 509; Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 214, n.92; de Durand, SC 231.362-3. Cyril's comment at Nest. I.8 (ACO 1.1.6, 29) possibly implies that he was not aware of the creed. Nestorius had quoted a line from the creed of 381 (σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου) in support of his position, and Cyril responds by quoting the creed of Nicaea in its entirety and pointing out that the line does not occur therein, thereby charging Nestorius with innovation (καινοτομέω). However, Cyril might simply be feigning ignorance of the creed of 381, or he might be aware of the creed and yet denying its legitimacy over against the creed of 325.

²¹ There is little secondary literature on Cyril's theology of inspiration. See Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 215-40; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 58; Pesch, *De inspiratione sacrae scripturae*, 73-4; de Durand, SC 231.59, n.1.

²² Eusebius, h.e. 5.16.7; 5.17.3 (SC 41.47-8, 52-4); Theodoret, Os. 9:7 (PG 81.1600); Soph. 3:4 (PG 81.1853); Jer. 2:24 (PG 81.512). Cf. John Chrysostom, hom. in Mt. 43.3 (PG 57.460), where Chrysostom quotes Hosea 9:7 and says it refers to false prophets, and Didymus, comm. in Ps. 38:12 (codex page 279) (Gronewald, 4.248), where he quotes Jeremiah 2:24. At comm. in Ps. 39:5 (codex page 283) (Gronewald, 4.276), Didymus also associates the word with the Montanists (οἱ κατὰ Φρύγαν). In Eusebius' account he states that he is relying on earlier sources, so the usage of the term for Montanist prophecy may even go back to the second century. The fact that he elsewhere uses the terms in a positive sense (see below) suggests that the negative use of the term derives

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

authors used the terms in a broad manner such that they might describe all Christians. In this vein Chrysostom says that when souls entered the waters of baptism they become 'rational and Spirit-bearing', and Marcellus, referring to the soteriological impact of the incarnation, writes that God himself 'is flesh-bearing (σάρκοφόρος), and we humans are Spirit-bearing'.²³ Third, in the majority of cases authors reserved the word for those who had a special prophetic gift. At least as early as Theophilus of Antioch πνευματοφόρος was used as a descriptor for scriptural authors, who were inspired by the Spirit.²⁴ Similarly, Basil of Caesarea in his *On the Holy Spirit* speaks of 'Spirit-bearing souls' that 'are made spiritual and send grace to others', and in the context it seems that he has in mind those who possess prophetic powers by virtue of the indwelling Spirit.²⁵ In the monastic literature this usage is especially common, with the word occurring as an epithet for persons, such as Anthony and Macarius the Egyptian, who possessed prophetic gifts.²⁶

It is the last of these three meanings that Cyril takes up. He uses the verbal form only infrequently²⁷, but employs the adjective πνευματοφόρος more than all other previous authors combined.²⁸ For him it becomes a quasi-technical term for those possessing prophetic inspiration, including the authors of Scripture. For example, the prophet Isaiah is a 'Spirit-bearing

from his source.

²³ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Jo.* 26.1 (PG 59.153); Marcellus, *inc.* 8 (PG 26.996). Similarly, Irenaeus wrote that paradise was prepared for 'righteous and Spirit-bearing persons' (*haer.* 5.5.1 (SC 153.64, fr. 6)).

²⁴ For references to biblical prophets or other scriptural authors, see Theophilus of Antioch, *Autol.* 2.9; 2.22; 3.12 (SC 20.120, 154, 228); Eusebius of Caesarea, *d.e.* 6.18.6; 8.2.34 (GCS 23.275, 372); Cyril of Jerusalem, *cat.* 2.4; 16.28 (PG 33.388, 960); Epiphanius, *pan.* 8.3.3; 65.5.8; 69.75.4 (GCS 25.188; 37.8, 223); Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Ps.* 44, *proem.* (Devresse, 277); Theodoret, *eran.* II (Ettlinger, 150). It is used for prophets more generally in *Hermas*, *past.* 43.16. There is a fragment that purports to be from Peter of Alexandria that also uses the term positively to describe the Hebrew prophets (PG 18.516).

²⁵ Basil, *Spir.* 9.23 (SC 17.148). Dionysius of Alexandria also addressed Dionysius of Rome as a 'Spirit-bearer' (Athanasius, *decr.* 26.5 (AW II/1, 22)).

²⁶ *Apophth. Patr.*, Anthony 30; Macarius 38 (PG 65.85, 280); ps-Macarius, *Apophth.* 38 (PG 34.257); *hom.* (B) 5.2.1; 11.3.6; 18.4.7; 18.7.2 (Berthold, 75, 148, 198, 207); *hom. spir.* 16.13; 47.14 (PTS 4.166, 310); Palladius, *h. Laus.* 11.5 (Bartelink, 54). Cf. William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 194-5, 221, and especially the wall painting of Macarius on p.197 which contains the epithet.

²⁷ Cyril, *Is.* 54:10-11; 57:10 (PG 70.1208, 1265); *Jo.* 7:39 (Pusey, 1.691).

²⁸ At the time of writing, a search on TLG resulted in 82 occurrences. Of course, the greater number of occurrences of the word in Cyril's corpus is partly due to the fact that more of his writings survived compared with other patristic authors. Nevertheless, the frequency of his usage of the word is clearly greater than previous patristic authors.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

(Πνευματοφόρος) man who is enriched with the knowledge of the future through the torch (δαδουχίας) from above'.²⁹ In fact, on every occasion that he uses the term, he refers to an author of Scripture or to someone in Scripture who displays prophetic ability. Moses was a Spirit-bearer, as well as the psalmist, John the Baptist, the evangelists Matthew and John, the Apostle Paul, and James.³⁰ In fact, Cyril's usage is so consistent, that when he comes across the passages in the Septuagint that used the term with a negative connotation, he massaged their meaning so as to preserve a positive sense for the term.³¹ It is worth noting that there was apparently another stage in the development of the term shortly after Cyril's time. A letter from the Egyptian bishops that was read at Chalcedon in 451 spoke of the 'orthodox faith' handed down by the 'holy and Spirit-bearing fathers', including Mark, Athanasius, Theophilus, and Cyril.³² This usage of the term to refer to earlier church fathers departs from Cyril's own tendency of restricting it only to those who authored Scripture or who spoke with prophetic power in Scripture, although, as we shall see later in this chapter, his understanding of church tradition probably supported such an extension of the term. However, the fact that Cyril reserves the word for the authors of Scripture and refuses to see any negative connotations in it, even when the biblical text did so, highlights his assumption that the Spirit is the source of the inspiration enjoyed by the prophets, evangelists, and apostles.

²⁹ Cyril, Is. 11:11 (PG 70.329). Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology*, 219-22, briefly notes Cyril's usage of the term to refer to the prophets and the apostle John. On Cyril's usage of the term δαδουχία, see below page 99, n.154.

³⁰ Moses: Jo. 7:39 (Pusey, 1.695); the psalmist: Jo. 1:1 (Pusey, 1.29); John the Baptist: Jo. 1:15 (Pusey, 1.144); Matthew: Jo. 20:1-9 (Pusey, 3.109); John: Jo. 1:1 (Pusey, 1.24); James: Jo. 3:31 (Pusey, 1.241). These are but a handful of the many usages of the term, especially in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. I can find only one possible instance in which Cyril uses πνευματοφόρος to refer to someone who is not a prophet, apostle, or evangelist. In commenting on the judgment to come upon Satan, he says that Satan has been put 'under the feet of those who bear the Spirit (τῶν πνευματοφόρων)', and these are those who are 'faithful, who have also confessed that Christ is God' (πιστῶν, οἳ καὶ Θεὸν ὑπάρχειν ὡμολογήκασιν τὸν Χριστόν) (Jo. 16:8-11 (Pusey, 2.624)). The statement could be interpreted as a reference to all Christians, but since it occurs in the context of Christ addressing the apostles, it is possible, perhaps even likely, that they are the 'Spirit-bearers' in view here.

³¹ See Os. 9:7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.188), where the passage says that the false prophets are 'Spirit-bearers', but he interprets the passage as if the people merely thought the false prophets were such (ὄν σὺ νενόμικας εἶναι πνευματοφόρον). He employs a similar strategy when he encounters the negative use of the term at Soph. 3:4 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.215-6), stating that the false prophets were 'wishing to be prophets and Spirit-bearers' (θέλοντες τοίνυν εἶναι . . . καὶ προφήται καὶ πνευματοφόροι).

³² Lampe lists this passage as Cyril himself using πνευματοφόρος to refer to the 'doctors of the Church' (PGL, s.v., πνευματοφόρος, A.3). However, the word does not occur in the passage that he cites (Cyril, ep. 39.7 (ACO 1.1.4, 19)), and the line that he provides actually comes from the acts of the Council of Chalcedon, not from Cyril (4.25 (ACO 2.1.2, 110)).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

Aside from Cyril, the next patristic author who used the term with some frequency was Didymus the Blind, and his usage of the word closely parallels that of Cyril. By my count he uses the word group fourteen times, referring to prophets, apostles, and evangelists as πνευματοφόροι. On at least one occasion he used the word to describe Montanist prophecy, but he does not seem to have objected to their usage of the term.³³ The fact that Didymus was close in time and location to Cyril is probably not coincidental. Whether he learned it from reading Didymus' works or from listening to his lectures, it is possible and maybe even likely that Cyril picked up the term from the older Alexandrian. Moreover, given that the term was not common in the fourth century aside from the monastic literature, we may also tentatively propose that Didymus' usage might come from the influence of the growing monastic theology of the time, since during his lifetime there was cross-fertilization between the asceticism of the Egyptian desert and the intellectual life of Alexandria.³⁴ In addition to his probable drawing upon Didymus for the term πνευματοφόρος, Cyril also on one occasion coined his own term to refer to the Spirit's inspiration of the prophets and apostles. In interpreting Isaiah 8:1-2, a passage that he interpreted as a prophecy of the writing of the New Testament, he refers to the authors of the New Testament as the πνευματογράφοι ('Spirit-writers').³⁵ No extant writer prior to Cyril uses this term, so it appears to be his own creation, coined in order to emphasize the Spirit as intrinsic to the authoring of Scripture.

³³ Didymus, *Zach.* 1.307 (4:7); 2.4 (6:9-11); 4.20 (11:1-2); 4.207 (12:5); 5.115 (14:9-11) (SC 83.354; SC 84.428; SC 85.812, 908, 1034). At *Zach.* 4.207 Didymus refers to prophets, apostles, evangelists, and 'teachers'. It is not clear who he has in mind as the 'teachers' who are Spirit-bearing, but it might refer to those (such as himself?) who teach in the church as the successors of the apostles. Montanists (οἱ κατὰ Φρύγαν) are referred to at *comm.* in *Ps.* 39:5 (codex page 283) (Gronewald, 4.276), but Didymus does not for this reason reject the word. See also his usage of the term at *Eccl.* 3:4b (codex page 73) (Gronewald, 2.44); *comm.* in *Ps.* 20:2; 38:12; 44:1 (codex page 7, 279, 327) (Gronewald, 1.30; 4.248; 5.188); *fr. Ps.* 995 (103:13-15) (PTS 16.237-8). It also shows up twice in *ps-Didymus*, *Trin.* II.14; 17 (PG 39.693, 725), both times to refer to David.

³⁴ Evagrius Ponticus is a good example of this, as is Didymus himself. Also important is Athanasius' relationship with Anthony and Serapion. On Evagrius, see Julia Konstantinovskiy, *Evagrius Ponticus: The Making of a Gnostic* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), and on Didymus, see Richard A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004). It is possible that Cyril himself picked up the term directly from its monastic usage, since one tradition states that he spent several years in the desert prior to becoming archbishop (Severus ibn al-Muqaffa', *hist.* 1.11 (PO 1.427-8)). However, it is unclear how much credence to grant this late tradition. Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 12-30, argues at length for the authenticity of the story of Cyril's time in the desert, but her case remains ultimately inconclusive. On this issue see also Wickham, *Select Letters*, xii-xiii, n.3; McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 3-4, who both see little evidence for its authenticity, and Éviéux, SC 372.14-7; Davids, 'Cyril of Alexandria's First Episcopal Years', who accept it.

³⁵ Cyril, *Is.* 8:1-2 (PG 70.220).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

A final word group that he uses to refer to the authors of Scripture is **θεσπέσιος** ('divine'), or occasionally its verbal form **θεσπίζω** ('to prophesy'). These words arise out of the Greek classical tradition, and were appropriated by Christian authors to refer to divine inspiration.³⁶ They are extremely common in Cyril's corpus, occurring well over 1,000 times, and are usually given as a description of an author of Scripture prior to a citation of a scriptural passage. Moses, Aaron, Abraham, David, the psalmist, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, Stephen and others are all described as being **θεσπέσιος**.³⁷ Lexically these words have no obvious reference to the Spirit, but they are clearly a way for Cyril to distinguish the authors of Scripture as those who have received a unique divine revelation. Furthermore, they appear to function for Cyril basically as synonyms for **πνευματοφόρος**. In the preface to book five of the *Five Tomes against Nestorius*, Cyril begins by citing two quotations from the Apostle Paul. He introduces Paul as the 'divine' (**θεσπέσιος**) apostle, and then goes on to describe him as the 'Spirit-bearer' (**πνευματοφόρος**) who inducts others into divine mysteries (**μυσταγωγεῖν**).³⁸ The significance of Cyril's mystagogical language will become apparent later in this chapter, but we should note at this point that here we see him using two of his favorite terms to describe scriptural authors, **θεσπέσιος** and **πνευματοφόρος**, in a basically synonymous fashion. Therefore, since the Spirit's agency is clearly in view with the latter term, we may suppose that it is at least implicitly so in the former one as well.

Alongside these descriptions of the authors of Scripture as those inspired by the Spirit stands Cyril's terminology for the text of Scripture itself, which again highlights the Spirit's agency. One word that he frequently employs for this purpose is **θεόπνευστος**, a term that was an obvious choice since it had clear biblical warrant. The author of 2 Timothy writes, 'all Scripture is divinely inspired (**θεόπνευστος**), and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness' (2 Tim. 3:16). In light of its clear scriptural legitimacy, patristic authors made wide use of the term to refer to the inspired text³⁹, and Cyril is

³⁶ See LSJ, s.v., 'θεσπέσιος' and 'θεσπίζω'; PGL, s.v., 'θεσπέσιος' and 'θεσπίζω'.

³⁷ Moses: Os. 1:2-3 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.16); Aaron: Os. 4:8-9 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.102); Abraham: Os. 1:4-5 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.27); David: Os. 2:3 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.47); the psalmist: Os. 5:15 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.136); Jeremiah: Joel. 3:13-16 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.357); John the Baptist: Os. 1:4-5 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.29); Peter: Os. 1:2-3 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.16); Paul: Os. 2:7 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.54); Stephen: Am. 5:25-27 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.475). Cyril also says that Lot and the angels are 'divine' (*ador. I; VI* (PG 68.177, 440)).

³⁸ Cyril, Nest. V, proem. (ACO 1.1.6, 91).

³⁹ See, e.g., Origen, *princ.* 4.1.6 (SC 268.280); Jo. 10.39.266 (SC 157.544). The word seems to be more

no exception. Although explicit citations of 2 Timothy 3:16 are very rare in his corpus⁴⁰, he uses the term **θεόπνευστος** hundreds of times, often when making comments *en passant* about Scripture, as when he refers to 'the divinely inspired Scripture's customary way (ἔθος) of speaking'.⁴¹ At other times he uses the word when engaging in explicit discussions of the nature of Scripture, as when he says that the 'divine and holy table' of Psalm 22:5 (LXX) is the 'divinely inspired Scripture' (ἡ θεόπνευστος Γραφή).⁴² When he uses the term, it is nearly always as an adjective describing **γραφὴ**, following its usage in 2 Timothy 3:16.⁴³ In other words, Cyril for the most part reserves the term as a description for Scripture. The term **θεόπνευστος**, literally, 'divinely breathed', implicitly suggests an association with the Spirit (**πνεῦμα**), and some of Cyril's comments suggest that he understood the term in this way.⁴⁴ On one occasion, he cites 2 Timothy 3:16 and joins it with Christ's declaration to the disciples that when they spoke 'they were not the ones speaking, but the Spirit of God the Father speaking in them' (Matt. 10:20).⁴⁵ However, on another occasion, after considering a difficult and obscure Old Testament passage, he quotes 2 Timothy 3:16 and glosses it without specifying the Spirit's role, stating simply, 'whatever God should speak, this is in every way conducive to salvation'.⁴⁶ The latter passage creates ambiguity because it does not identify a spe-

frequent in the corpus of Gregory of Nyssa and that of Didymus. It is not as common in the Syrian tradition, including Diodore, Theodore, Chrysostom, and Theodoret.

⁴⁰ The only citations of the passage that I can find are *dial. Trin. I* (388b) (SC 231.138); *ep. 41.5* (ACO 1.1.4, 41); *hom. Lc. LII* (CSCO 70.182). I will consider the last passage from the *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke* in the next chapter. There is also a likely allusion to the passage in the preface to his *Commentary on the Psalms*: Πᾶσα μὲν οὖν γραφή θεόπνευστος καταπλουτεῖ τὸ ἐπωφελές (Ps., prooem. (Mercati, 140)). Diodore of Tarsus had also cited 2 Timothy 3:16 at the outset of his own psalter exposition (Ps., prooem. (CCSG 6.3)).

⁴¹ See, e.g., Cyril, *Os. 2:21-22* (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.77).

⁴² Cyril, *Ps. 22:5* (PG 69.841). For a similar passage, see *Jo., praef.* (Pusey, 1.2).

⁴³ Among the several hundred occurrences of **θεόπνευστος** in Cyril's corpus, the only usages I can find where he does not use it to modify **γραφὴ** are *Abac. 3:9-10* (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.148) where he speaks of the **θεόπνευστος διδασκαλία** ('divinely inspired teaching'); *ador. X* (PG 68.665) where he speaks of the **θεόπνευστος μυσταγωγία** ('divinely inspired mystagogy'); and *Jo. 15:12-13* (Pusey, 2.577) where he speaks of the **θεόπνευστοι κεφαλαί** ('divinely inspired chapters'). In each instance the reference seems to be to Scripture, even though he does not use **γραφὴ**.

⁴⁴ Basil of Caesarea understood the word in a similar sense: ὁ θεόπνευστος τὴν Γραφὴν ὀνομάζων, διὰ τῆς ἐπιπνοίας τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος συγγραφεῖσαν (*Spir. 21.52* (SC 17.210)).

⁴⁵ Cyril, *dial. Trin. I* (388b) (SC 231.138).

⁴⁶ Cyril, *ep. 41.5* (ACO 1.1.4, 41). Πᾶσα μὲν οὖν γραφή θεόπνευστός τε καὶ ὠφέλιμος· ὁ γὰρ ἄν φθέγγατο θεός, τοῦτο δὴ πάντως ἐστὶ σωτήριον.

cific divine person speaking. Nevertheless, given the fact that the word itself implies a connection to the Spirit, and that on one occasion Cyril explains the term with reference to the Spirit, it is most likely that θεόπνευστος serves as another way for him to draw attention to the Spirit's role in the origination of Scripture.

THE PROPHETIC SPIRIT

Cyril's terminology for Scripture and the authors of Scripture clearly implies a connection with the Spirit, but it does little to specify the nature of that relationship. In this section and the following one I intend to look at two themes in his corpus that give a denser account of the way the Spirit operates in the origination of Scripture. The first theme is the description of the Spirit as the prophetic Spirit. In this section I advance two arguments. First, in his presentation of the Spirit as prophetic Spirit, Cyril views inspiration as a spiritual vision given to the prophet. Second, his theology of inspiration, even while emphasizing the role of the Spirit, allows a significant place for human agency, and, possibly for this reason, he almost entirely avoids the imagery that was present in the prior tradition to describe the process of inspiration, since those metaphors were tainted by Montanist and pagan associations. Cyril's most explicit discussions of prophetic inspiration occur in his *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*, so these texts will be my focus. However, before looking in detail at Cyril, it will be useful to look briefly at some theories of inspiration that were put forward by Christians in late antiquity in order to see how he fits into this tradition.

Patristic Theories of Agency in Divine Inspiration

One of the more notable treatments of inspiration from the ancient world was that of Philo who outlined four different types of 'ecstasy' (ἔκστασις). In discussing Abraham's trance in Genesis 15:12, he said there is one kind of ecstasy that is equivalent to madness, another that is excessive terror or amazement, a third that is equivalent to the rest or stillness of the mind, and a final kind that consists of 'supernatural possession and frenzy' (ἔνθεος κατοκωχή τε καὶ μανία).⁴⁷ According to Philo, prophetic inspiration falls into the final category. When

⁴⁷ Philo, q. rer. 249-250 (LCL 261.408-11). On this topic in Philo, see Helmut Burkhardt, 'Inspiration der Schrift durch weisheitliche Personalinspiration. Zur Inspirationslehre Philos von Alexandrien', TZ 47 (1991): 214-225; Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 31-2; Peter Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

the Spirit came upon prophets like Abraham, their 'mind' (νοῦς) was removed from them, and it then returned when the Spirit departed. In such a state, the words they uttered were not their own, since the Spirit was moving their vocal cords to cause them to express whatever he wanted.⁴⁸ To express this theology of inspiration Philo turns to a musical analogy. The prophet is the 'musical instrument of God, played and struck by him invisibly' (ὄργανον θεοῦ ἐστιν ἡχεῖον, κρουόμενον καὶ πληττόμενον ἀοράτως ὑπ' αὐτοῦ).⁴⁹ This analogy will enjoy wide usage in the later patristic tradition.

Athenagoras was perhaps the first extant Christian author to have described inspiration in this manner. He contrasts the pagan philosophers and poets with the biblical prophets who, 'in a state of ecstasy removed from their own thoughts (κατ' ἔκστασιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς λογισμῶν), while the divine Spirit was moving them, uttered the things that were inspired, with the Spirit using them, in the way a pipe-player plays a pipe'.⁵⁰ Similarly, pseudo-Justin contrasts the Greek philosophers who depended upon rhetorical flourish with the prophets who simply had to 'present themselves pure to the working of the divine Spirit, so that the divine plectrum from heaven might reveal knowledge of divine and heavenly things by using righteous men like an instrument, as some harp or lyre'.⁵¹ Origen appears to avoid this analogy for inspiration, and instead speaks of prophecy in terms that allow for the agency of the human author as well as the divine Spirit.⁵² However, there is evidence that this analogy still had currency in the fourth century among pro-Nicene authors. Basil of Caesarea points out that 'every holy prophet is figuratively called a pipe (αὐλὸν) on account of the movement from the Holy

Press, 2011), 164-74.

⁴⁸ Philo, q. rer. 265-266 (LCL 261.418-9).

⁴⁹ Philo, q. rer. 259 (LCL 261.416-7). The same musical analogy is given at q. rer. 266 (LCL 261.418-9).

⁵⁰ Athenagoras, *leg.* 7.3; 9.1 (SC 379.92-4, 98). See also the analogy in Clement of Alexandria, *prot.* 1.5.3 (GCS 12.6). On the αὐλός in Greek antiquity, see M. L. West, *Ancient Greek Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 81-107; Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre: Greek Music and Music Theory in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Publications of the Center for the History of Music Theory and Literature 2 (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 177-222. West points out that the traditional rendering of αὐλός as 'flute' is unacceptable. He proposes that 'oboe' is more precise, though 'pipe' also suffices (p.82-5). Mathiesen asserts that it is neither a flute nor an oboe, and should simply be called an aulos (p.182, n.52). I have translated it as 'pipe' throughout this chapter because it is a sufficiently generic term to avoid being misleading.

⁵¹ Ps-Justin Martyr, *coh. Gr.* 8 (Otto, 40).

⁵² So Nardoni, 'Origen's Concept of Biblical Inspiration', who disagrees with some previous scholarship on this issue, such as A. Zöllig, *Die Inspirationslehre des Origenes*, *Strassburger theol. Stud.* 5,1 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1902), 62; Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, 187-91. Nardoni's point is especially clear in Origen, *princ.* 3.3.4.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

Spirit'.⁵³ Didymus, Basil's contemporary, similarly writes, 'just as the pipe receives sound from a breath (ἐκ πνεύματος), thus also the Spirit-bearing (πνευματοφόροι) men are praiseworthy pipes'.⁵⁴ The context of this comparison suggests that Didymus has in mind the biblical prophets who were inspired by the Spirit. In a passage that is strikingly similar to Didymus, pseudo-Macarius says, 'as the wind (πνεῦμα) which passes through the pipe speaks, thus also is the Holy Spirit who, through holy and Spirit-bearing (πνευματοφόρων) persons, sings hymns and psalms and prays to God with a pure heart'.⁵⁵ The context of this comparison does not suggest that the author has in mind the inspiration of Scripture. His interest has more to do with the role of the Spirit in the life of the ascetic. However, in another passage from the Macarian corpus the same analogy is employed, and on this occasion the author concludes 'the Spirit spoke in the apostles as he wished'.⁵⁶ Since in the last passage it is the apostles who are mentioned, it is possible and perhaps even likely that the inspiration of Scripture is included in the author's scope. Thus, we see both pseudo-Macarius and Didymus suggesting that the Spirit's operation upon 'Spirit-bearing persons' (πνευματοφόροι) is comparable to the playing of a musical instrument, and indicating that this analogy is suitable for scriptural inspiration.

However, by a certain point this analogy, and the idea of inspiration that it implied, began to come under censure by some authors. The first bit of evidence that some objected to it comes from polemic against the Montanists. Epiphanius, who apparently had access to a collection of Montanist oracles, records that Montanus, who regarded himself as the Paraclete, compared a man to a lyre over which he flies and plays as a pick.⁵⁷ In such a state the inspired

⁵³ Basil, *hom. in Ps. 29.7* (PG 29.321). Basil is here commenting upon the mention of pipes in Luke 7:32.

⁵⁴ Didymus, *Eccl. 3:4b* (codex page 73) (Gronewald, 44).

⁵⁵ Ps-Macarius, *hom. spir. 47.14* (PTS 4.310). This homily appears to be identical to Homily 11 in the collection of sixty-four. The metaphor of a lyre and plectrum is used to describe the Spirit's action just before this line that I have quoted above.

⁵⁶ Ps-Macarius, *hom. 15.1* (Klostermann and Berthold, 76). In addition to the passages I have surveyed above, see also the musical metaphor used to describe King David in Asterius the Homilist, *hom. 26.1* (Richard, 205-6): Καλὸς ὁ τοῦ ποιμένου καὶ βασιλέως προφητικὸς αὐλός· ἔχει γὰρ κάλαμον τὴν γλῶσσαν καὶ πνεῦμα τὸν παράκλητον καὶ φθόγγον τὸν λόγον καὶ μέλος τὴν σώφρονα ἡδονὴν καὶ ἀρμονίαν τὴν προφητείαν καὶ ὄχημα τὸ ἄνωθεν χάρισμα. This homily is probably roughly contemporary with Basil, Didymus, and Chrysostom, since Asterius is mentioned by Jerome (*ep. 112.20* (CSEL 55.390)).

⁵⁷ Epiphanius, *pan. 48.3.11-4.1* (GCS 31.224-5). On Epiphanius' source, see H. G. Voigt, *Eine verschollene Urkunde des antimontanistischen Kampfes: Die Berichte des Epiphanius über die Kataphryger und Quintillianer* (Leipzig: Fr. Richter, 1891). On the 'lyre' in antiquity, see West, *Ancient Greek Music*, 49-70; Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre*, 237-70. On the opposition to the Montanist theory of inspiration, see Robert M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: SPCK, 1957), 73-5; William Tabbernee, *Fake Prophecy and Polluted Sacraments: Ecclesiastical and Imperial Reactions to Montanism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 340. According to Alistair Stewart-Sykes, 'The Original Condemnation of Asian Montanism', *JEH* 50

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

person loses his mind and has no control over what is said. Epiphanius opposes this Montanist theology of inspiration, and instead proposes that the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New prophesied in the same way, 'with sound mind and sober reason, and not in madness'.⁵⁸ In addition, he disagrees with the Montanist usage of the word 'ecstasy' and he counters them with his own definition of the term. He acknowledges that there are many different forms of ecstasy, and suggests that prophetic ecstasy is the removal of a person from his 'senses' (αἰσθήσεις), but in such a state the 'soul' (ψυχή) of the prophet is still very much active in 'ruling and thinking', unlike the 'ecstasy of folly' (ἐν ἔκστασει . . . ἀφροσύνης) practiced by the Montanists.⁵⁹ In addition to Epiphanius, Jerome also polemicizes against Montanist theories of inspiration. In the prologue to his *Commentary on Nahum*, he points out that the biblical text does not say that the prophet spoke 'in ecstasy' (*non enim loquitur in ἔκστασει*), as did Montanus, Priscilla, and Maximilla who 'were deranged' (*delirant*), but rather that he saw a vision (*uisio prophetæ*).⁶⁰ Similarly, in the prologue to his *Commentary on Isaiah*, Jerome again describes Montanist inspiration as 'ecstasy' (*in ecstasi*), and explains that it means the prophet under inspiration does not understand what he is saying.⁶¹ The word he uses in these passages for ecstasy, ἔκστασις, was the same word Philo had used for prophecy, and Jerome seems to have understood it in similar terms as Philo, though he objected to it as a suitable description for prophecy. Although he does not mention the musical analogy in these passages, his description of Montanist inspiration is in keeping with Epiphanius' report, and his rejection of it is strikingly similar, even though he seems to reserve an exclusively negative sense for the word 'ecstasy', unlike Epiphanius' more nuanced definition. We should not necessarily assume that the reports of Jerome and Epiphanius preserve accurate accounts of the manner of Montanist prophecy, but this question is somewhat irrelevant for my argument. Even if their report is a

(1999): 1-22, the manner of prophecy was one of the two 'fundamental objections' to Montanism in the primitive sources, and this feature was related to the movement's rural origins. For an introduction to Montanism, see Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁵⁸ Epiphanius, *pan.* 48.7.10 (GCS 31.229): ἐν ἔρρωμένη διανοίᾳ καὶ σώφρονι λογισμῷ, καὶ οὐκ ἐν παραπληξίᾳ. Epiphanius also adduces as examples of prophetic inspiration Adam's sleep and Abraham's vision, both of which Philo had previously noted.

⁵⁹ Epiphanius, *pan.* 48.4.6-5.8 (GCS 31.226-7).

⁶⁰ Jerome, *Nah.*, prol. (CCSL 76A.526).

⁶¹ Jerome, *Is.*, prol. (CCSL 73.2). Another anti-Montanist writing from roughly the same time period as Epiphanius and Jerome is ps-Didymus, *Trin.* III (PG 39.881, 889, 924, 977, 984-9), although the author of this work does not mention any concern about Montanist theories of inspiration.

misrepresentation of Montanist activity, they serve as evidence for a late fourth-century reaction against supposedly mantic prophecy, and this reaction serves as the background for understanding Cyril's theology of inspiration.

Even though some authors, such as Epiphanius and Jerome, rejected the musical analogy and the word ἔκστασις as implying a manner of inspiration in which the prophet temporarily lacked control of his faculties, we should not assume that all authors were likewise minded. For example, although Jerome associated ἔκστασις with the Montanists, and thus rejected it, Didymus presents a more nuanced perspective on the issue, more in line with Epiphanius. He also acknowledges Montanist usage of the word 'ecstasy', but nevertheless approves of it. The Montanist mistake, according to Didymus, is to regard 'madness' (μανίαν) and 'ecstasy' (ἔκστασιν) as equivalent states. They are correct to say 'the Spirit-bearing persons' (τοὺς πνευματοφόρους ἄνδρας) prophesied 'in ecstasy', but such persons certainly do not speak 'in derangement or madness' (τὴν παραφοράν . . . τὴν παραφροσύνη[ν]), as the Montanist suppose.⁶² In support of this positive use of ἔκστασις, he adduces Paul's mention of his own ecstasy in 2 Corinthians 5:13. Similarly, Theodore of Mopsuestia, at the outset of his own *Commentary on Nahum*, states that the prophets received knowledge 'by ecstasy' (ἐκστάσει), and explains the term to mean that when receiving a vision they had to 'be removed in their thinking from what was present before them'. As evidence of this positive sense of the term, he cites Acts 10:9-13 where it is used to describe Peter's rooftop vision. Moreover, for Theodore, as for Didymus, the word apparently did not mean the absence of the prophet's

⁶² Didymus, *comm. in Ps. 39:5* (codex page 283) (Gronewald, 4.276). Robert C. Hill, trans., *Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on the Twelve Prophets, Volume 1*, FOC 115 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 9; *ibid.*, trans., *Didymus the Blind: Commentary on Zechariah*, FOC 111 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 10, has argued that Didymus, who was a likely source for Cyril, presents an ecstatic view of inspiration, since he called the prophet 'possessed by God' (θεοληπτούμενος), and connected this state with the presence of the Spirit. As Hill points out, this term came from an Aristotelian background. See *eth. Eud.* 1214a (LCL 285.200) where the adjectival form θεόληπτος is used. Origen used this form at least once (*comm. in Mt.* 15.16 (GCS 40.397)). The only two authors to use the verbal form prior to Didymus were Philo (*cher.* 27 (LCL 227.24)) and Eusebius of Caesarea (*Ps.* 60:2-3 (PG 23.576)), assuming the Eusebian fragment is authentic. Didymus, however, seems to have had a particular liking for it. See *Zach.* 1.21 (1:8); 1.339 (4:11-14); 2.138 (7:8-10); 3.75 (9:1-2); 4.6; 4.160 (11:15-16); 4.177 (12:1-3); 5.73 (14:5-7) (SC 83.202, 372; SC 84.484, 654; SC 85.804, 882, 892, 1008). Hill, however, apparently assumes that ecstasy is the same as madness, and does not note the distinction Didymus makes in the passage I refer to here. Didymus also talks about the prophet having a conversation with the angel within him who was inspiring him, which suggests that the prophet still had some control over his mental state. See Didymus, *Zach.* 1.32 (1:9); 1.334-5 (4:11-14) (SC 83.208, 370). It is worth noting that even though, as I am arguing in this chapter and the next, Cyril likely drew upon Didymus for his understanding of inspiration, he never uses θεοληπτούμενος for inspiration.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

mental capacity, since he asserts that the inspired authors have to 'focus exclusively on the vision (θεωρία) of those things shown to them'.⁶³

In light of this more nuanced understanding of 'ecstasy', we should not automatically assume that all authors who employed the musical analogy for spiritual inspiration held that the human author's mind was vacated by the presence of the Spirit, such that human agency is completely overridden. Basil is a good example here. Even though, as I noted above, he uses the musical analogy, he asserts that the 'wind' is a 'co-worker' with the pipe, implying that the human prophet and the divine Spirit work together in the act of inspiration.⁶⁴ For some authors, such as Athenagoras and Epiphanius, the analogy clearly implies lack of human agency, but for others it might simply have been a way of conveying the ultimate divine origin of what was spoken, rather than serving an explanation for the actual mechanics of inspiration.

In addition to using the musical analogy I have considered thus far, patristic authors also turned to another set of imagery drawn more directly from Scripture. Robert Hill has drawn attention to Psalm 44:2 (LXX) as a source for ideas about inspiration ('My heart erupted with a good word; it is I that address my works to the king; my tongue is a pen of a swift scribe'). Calling this verse a *locus classicus* for patristic thinking on biblical inspiration, he noted that the unusual word ἐξερεύγομαι, which could mean 'erupted' or 'belched', particularly occupied the attention of patristic commentators, along with the scribal metaphor in the second half of the verse.⁶⁵ In his short survey of patristic discussions of the text, he suggests that Basil, Chrysostom, and Theodoret interpreted ἐξερεύγομαι as 'belching' and understood it to imply the loss of control by the human author under the Spirit's compulsion. Chrysostom, for example, notes that 'we belch not when we intend to do so', in contrast to normal speech which we can restrain when we wish to do so. Therefore, the verse means that the words spoken by the prophet do not come from 'human effort' (ἀνθρωπίνης σπουδῆς), but rather from 'divine inspiration which moves him' (θείας ἐπιπνοίας τῆς κινούσης αὐτὸν).⁶⁶ Theodoret also implies

⁶³ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Nah.* 1:1 (Sprengrer, 239).

⁶⁴ Basil, hom. in Ps. 29.7 (PG 29.321). Ἔστι δὲ ὁ ἀλλότῳ ὄργανον μουσικὸν πνεύματι συνεργῶ πρὸς τὴν μελωδίαν χρώμενον.

⁶⁵ Robert C. Hill, 'Psalm 45: A *locus classicus* for Patristic Thinking on Biblical Inspiration', *STPatr* 25 (1993): 95-100.

⁶⁶ Chrysostom, exp. in Ps. 44.1 (PG 55.183). On Chrysostom's theology of inspiration, see Robert C. Hill, 'St John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in 'Six Homilies on Isaiah'', *VC* 22 (1968): 19-37; *ibid.*, *St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in His Old Testament Homilies* (diss., Pontificia Studiorum Universitas a S. Thomas Aq. in

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

the absence of human agency, although he develops this idea, not through the belching imagery, but rather through the scribal analogy. He states that the psalmist 'utters nothing of [his] own', nor does he 'bring forward anything from the labors of [his] mind (διανοίας)'. Rather, his 'tongue is the minister of a different operation (ἐνεργείας)', and the 'grace of the Spirit' writes 'whatever it wishes' through him.⁶⁷ Hill notes that Eusebius of Caesarea, Diodore, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Jerome also make use of the scribal image to describe inspiration.⁶⁸ We can add to Hill's list Origen, who also uses this passage to describe prophetic inspiration, picking up on the belching imagery, and Cassiodorus, who later does the same, using both the belching and scribal metaphors.⁶⁹ Moreover, Augustine is clearly aware of this tradition of interpreting the psalm, though he seems to prefer taking the imagery as referring to the Son rather than to the prophet.⁷⁰

Urbe, 1981).

⁶⁷ Theodoret, Ps. 44:2 (PG 80.1188). Cf. Theodoret, Ps., praef. (PG 80.861) where he again picks up the scribal analogy as a description of inspiration. On Theodoret's theology of inspiration, see Jean-Noël Guinot, *L'exégèse de Théodoret de Cyr, Théologie historique* 100 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1995), 77-124.

⁶⁸ Eusebius, Ps. 44:2 (PG 23.396): ὄργανον ἦν ἡ προφητικὴ γλῶσσα ἐτέρου τοῦ χρωμένου αὐτῆ, ἁγίου Πνεύματος; Diodore, Ps. 44:2c (CCSG 6.269): τὴν γλῶσσάν μου ἐναρμόζω, ὅσον ἐστὶ δυνατόν, ὑπηρετῆσαι τῆ διανοίᾳ τῆς χάριτος ὡς ὑπηρετεῖ κάλαμος ὀξυγράφου λόγῳ προηγουμένῳ; Theodore, Ps. 44:2c (Devreesse, 282): Τὸ γὰρ Πνεῦμα, ὡς τις γραφεὺς ἄριστος, —τοῦτο γὰρ λέγει γραμματέα, —δίκην μέλανος πληρώσαν τὴν καρδίαν τῶν τῆς ἀποκαλύψεως νοημάτων, ἐκέιθεν παρέχει τῆ γλώσσει λοιπὸν τὸ φθέγγεσθαι; Jerome, ep. 65.7 (CSEL 54.623-4): debeo ergo et linguam meam quasi stilum et calamum praeparare, ut per illam in corde auribus audientium scribat spiritus sanctus; meum est enim quasi organum praebere linguam, illius quasi per organum sonare, quae sua sunt. Hill quotes from Eusebius, but includes in his quotation a passage that is possibly spurious. According to Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs*, 111, the fragment is uncertain after χρωμένου αὐτῆ, ἁγίου Πνεύματος.

Hill, 'Psalm 45', 98-9, regards the 'Antiochenes' Diodore, Theodore, and Chrysostom as doing more 'justice to the humanity of the Scriptures' in their development of the scribal analogy, which is also present in Psalm 44:2, to describe the inspired author. His statement implies that there is a direct correlation between a theory of inspiration that does more justice to the human author and a theory of biblical exegesis that does more justice to the 'humanity' of Scripture. However, in his article he makes no argument for this correlation, and simply assumes that it is true. His assertion could be correct, but this remains to be demonstrated. For a critique of the metaphor of Scripture's 'two natures' (i.e., divine and human) that seems to underly Hill's statement, see Lewis Ayres and Stephen E. Fowl, '(Mis)reading the Face of God: The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church', *TS* 60 (1999): 513-28.

⁶⁹ Origen, Jo. 1.39.284; Cassiodorus, exp. Ps. 44:2 (CCSL 97.403-4). Mark Vessey, 'From Cursus to Ductus: Figures of Writing in Western Late Antiquity (Augustine, Jerome, Cassiodorus, Bede)', in *European Literary Careers: The Author From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Patrick Cheney and Frederick A. de Armas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 82-5, suggests that Cassiodorus was heavily relying on Jerome's interpretation of the psalm. Given how common this interpretation of the psalm was, he might also have been using other sources as well.

⁷⁰ In his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Augustine acknowledges that some interpret Psalm 44:2 as referring to the prophet's own act of speaking. He does not object to this reading, but seems to prefer seeing the verse as referring instead to the Son, since this is the interpretation he gives first and spends more time developing (en. Ps. 44.4-10

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

Hill, however, fails to note that the 'belching' analogy can serve other functions besides simply negating human agency. For Chrysostom, Jerome, and Theodoret, the imagery suggests that the interior state of the prophet determines the quality of the prophetic word that is brought forth.⁷¹ Moreover, for Basil this is the primary connotation of the metaphor. He writes, 'belching is a hidden wind (πνεῦμα) which is dissipated when the bubbles from the digestion of the food burst upwards'. He then explains the metaphor to mean that 'the soul, nourished with the holy teaching, brings forth a belch that corresponds to the food. For this reason, since the food was rational and good, the prophet belches a good word'.⁷² Basil's explanation of the belching metaphor gives no indication of loss of control on the part of the human author, and focuses rather on the prior action of the prophet in preparation for receiving inspiration from the Spirit. The only possible hint that he had the cessation of human agency in view is his brief comment that the Holy Spirit 'moves' (κινέω) the tongue of the 'righteous person' such that 'he inscribes words of eternal life', but we should be cautious to conclude that for Basil this spiritual movement is incompatible with human action.⁷³ As with the musical imagery I discussed above, we should not assume that the mere presence of the analogy in an author is definitive evidence that he thought there was no place for human agency in divine inspiration.

Even though many authors employed the gastroenterological and scribal imagery of Psalm 44, there is evidence that this set of metaphors also could elicit an ambivalent response in light of the possible implications that might be drawn from it. As I noted above, Chrysostom interprets the belching analogy as implying the loss of human control, but he nevertheless goes on to contrast prophetic inspiration with a more 'mantic' kind of inspiration. He says that, unlike the pagan 'seers' (οἱ μάντις), who lose control of their reason when in a prophetic state and are like 'a lifeless pipe blowing', the human authors of Scripture cooperate with the

(CCSL 38.496-501)). For a discussion of the exegesis of Psalm 44 among some Western authors, see David G. Hunter, 'The Virgin, the Bride, and the Church: Reading Psalm 45 in Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine', *ChH* 69 (2000): 281-303.

⁷¹ Chrysostom, *exp.* in Ps. 44.1 (PG 55.183); Jerome, *ep.* 65.5 (CSEL 54.622); Theodoret, Ps. 44:2 (PG 80.1188).

⁷² Basil, *hom.* in Ps. 44.3 (PG 29.393). If the fragments addressing this psalm that are attributed to Athanasius are to be trusted, then he did not see any reference in the psalm to prophetic inspiration (*exp.* Ps. 44:2 (PG 27.208)).

⁷³ Basil, *hom.* in Ps. 44.3 (PG 29.396).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

Holy Spirit such that they maintain their understanding even while prophesying.⁷⁴ As an example of pagan inspiration, Chrysostom cites Plato's *Apology*: 'the soothsayers and seers say many things, but they know nothing of what they are saying' (Ὡσπερ οἱ χρησμοῦδοι καὶ οἱ θεομάντιες λέγουσι μὲν πολλὰ, ἴσασι δὲ μηδὲν ὧν λέγουσιν).⁷⁵ Chrysostom's polemic against the pagan seers is in keeping with the attacks of Epiphanius, Jerome, and Didymus upon the Montanists, in that he insists the mind of the human author must be engaged in the event of inspiration, and he rejects the musical analogy as implying the negation of human agency. The fact that he polemicized against pagan prophecy while commenting upon Psalm 44:2 perhaps suggests that he was aware that the gastroenterological and scribal imagery of the verse might suggest the idea of mantic inspiration. Thus, despite the wide usage by patristic authors of musical, gastroenterological, and scribal metaphors for inspiration, by the end of the fourth century some authors were clearly taking issue with such imagery as a result of the need to distinguish their understanding of inspiration from supposedly pagan and Montanist conceptions. Epiphanius, Jerome, Didymus, and Chrysostom all insisted on the presence and operation of the human mind in the act of inspiration.

Analogies for Inspiration in Cyril's Corpus

With this backdrop in place, I now want to argue that Cyril presents a theology of inspiration that emphasizes the operation of the Spirit, but without the negation of human agency. As we approach his ideas about inspiration, one of the striking features is the absence of any explicit evidence of these prior polemics, even though he might well have been familiar with the texts of Epiphanius and Chrysostom, and almost certainly was acquainted with some of Jerome's and Didymus' writings. In certain respects, Cyril's understanding of inspiration is clearly in keeping with the tradition, such as his explanation of Nahum 1:1 ('An oracle for Nineveh'). Cyril explains the term *λήμμα* ('oracle') by connecting it with *λαμβάνω* ('receive'), seeing it thus as a reference to the prophet's receiving of a divine word. This etymology was

⁷⁴ Chrysostom, *exp. in Ps. 44.1* (PG 55.184). See Hill's lengthy quotation of this passage in Hill, 'Psalm 45', 97. My translation above differs slightly from his.

⁷⁵ Plato, *Apol. 22c* (LCL 36.84). Cf. the almost identical statement in *Meno 99d* (LCL 165.368). For an overview of 'seers' in the classical tradition, see Michael Attyah Flower, *The Seer in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). On Plato's view of inspiration, see also *Ion 534c-d* in which he says that the same mode of inspiration is operative in poets, seers, and soothsayers.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

widespread in the prior tradition, so Cyril likely picked it up from one or more earlier authors.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, nowhere, as far as I can tell, does he deal with the Montanist heresy⁷⁷, so it does not appear to have been an issue that troubled him. Furthermore, he was certainly aware of mantic inspiration, since he describes an inspired seer (ὁ ἔνθους καὶ μαινόμενος) as a 'mad' person (παρεξοστηκῶς) who has 'lost of his mind' (ἀπολωλεκῶς τὰς φρένας).⁷⁸ However, he does not contrast this mode of inspiration with that of the Spirit, as had earlier authors. In addition, although Jerome had described Montanist prophecy as an ἔκστασις, Cyril was not troubled by the word, noting Scripture can use it in various ways, both positive and negative, though he did not regularly use it for prophetic inspiration.⁷⁹ Cyril's understanding of the term thus stands closer to that of Epiphanius, Didymus, and Theodore, who also did not outright reject it and pointed to its positive use in certain Scriptural passages. Cyril was not usually hesitant to engage in polemic against a view that he thought was in error. The fact that

⁷⁶ Cyril, *Nah.* 1:1 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.3): τὸ μὲν γὰρ λῆμμά φησιν, τουτέστιν, ἢ ληφθεῖσά τε καὶ προκειμένη καὶ ἐν χερσὶν προφητεία. Cyril gives the same etymology at *Abac.* 1:1 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.70). The etymology goes back at least as far as Eusebius of Caesarea (*Is.* 1.80), and is also given by pseudo-Basil (*Is.* 1.9), Theodore of Mopsuestia (*Nah.* 1:1), John Chrysostom (*Is.* 1:1), and Theodoret (*Abac.* 1:1). Jerome does not explicitly make the etymological link between λῆμμα and λαμβάνω, but it seems to be in view since he interprets λῆμμα as *assumptio*, *onus*, and *pondus* (*Nah.*, prol. (CCSL 76A.526)). However, authors differ over whether the prophet's use of λῆμμά indicates merely the reception of a prophetic word (Cyril, Jerome) or the 'taking' of the prophet himself by the Holy Spirit (Eusebius, ps-Basil, Theodore, Theodoret). Cf. Robert C. Hill, *Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on the Twelve Prophets, Volume 2*, FOC 116 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 283, n.1. Cyril does not reserve the term λῆμμα exclusively for divine revelation. Following Habakkuk 1:7 he uses it also to describe the divination (τὸ μάντευμα) used by the Babylonian kings prior to going into battle (*Abac.* 1:7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.78)). Cf. *Os.* 12:4-5 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.247) where he uses τὸ μάντευμα to refer to demonic inspiration, and *Zach.* 13:2 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.500) where it refers to the visions of false prophets.

⁷⁷ Neither Μοντανός nor Μοντανιστής occur in Cyril's writings collected in TLG. There is a passing reference to the 'Phrygians' (Φρυγῶν) in a list of heretics occurring in *hom. div.* 11 attributed to Cyril (PG 77.1032). However, this homily is actually a retouched and expanded version of Cyril's *hom. div.* 4, which does not contain the word. So A. Ehrhard, 'Eine unechte Marien-Homilie des Cyrill von Alexandrien', *Römische Quartalschrift* 3 (1889): 97-113. Cyril was also familiar with Pseudo-Didymus's *De Trinitate*, which, as I noted above, also contains anti-Montanist polemic. On Cyril's knowledge of this treatise, see Robert M. Grant, 'Greek Literature in the Treatise *De Trinitate* and Cyril *Contra Julianum*', *JTS* 15 (1964): 265-279.

⁷⁸ Cyril, *Os.* 9:7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.188). Cyril uses the word μάντις a handful of times, always with a negative connotation. He refers to the prophet Balaam as such at *ador.* VI; XIV (PG 68.440, 897). At *Mich.* 3:5; 3:7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.647, 650); *Zach.* 10:1-2 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.430-1); and *Is.* 16:6 (PG 70.412) he refers to false prophets. Also, at *ador.* VI (PG 68.469) he quotes Euripides, *Hipp.* 1055. Similarly, μαντεία is, in his thinking, false prophecy. See, e.g., *Os.* 9:7-9 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.188-92). Cf. his polemic against astrology in *hom. pasch.* 14.2 (SC 434.144-58). Cyril's negative usage of the term is in keeping with the usage of the LXX. See J. Reiling, 'The Use of Ψευδοπροφήτης in the Septuagint, Philo and Josephus', *NovT* 13 (1971): 147-156.

⁷⁹ Cyril, *Abac.* 3:14 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.156-7). He offers as evidence for this varied usage Jeremiah 2:12 and 5:30, and 2 Corinthians 5:13. As I noted above, Didymus had also pointed to the latter passage. In commenting upon Habakkuk 3:14, Jerome notes that the Greek ἐν ἐκστάσει means in stupor (*Abac.* 3:14-16 (CCSL 76A.646)), but does not make the same point that Cyril makes here.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

he was almost certainly aware of Montanism from other patristic sources, but failed to discuss it, must indicate that he did not regard it as a significant threat to his church.

Furthermore, although, as I argued in the previous chapter, Cyril used Psalm 44:2 to develop his theology of revelation, he did not refer the imagery in these verses to the prophet himself in the way that so many earlier authors had done. Instead, in his estimation, the entire psalm is about Christ.⁸⁰ Nowhere, as far as I can tell, does Cyril use either the gastroenterological or scribal analogies for inspiration. In fact, when he does speak of 'belching' it is usually in connection with false prophets or teachers who speak from their own hearts rather than from the mouth of the Lord.⁸¹ The story is slightly different, however, with respect to the musical analogy. On a number of occasions he introduces a biblical citation by noting that the inspired word comes 'through the lyre of the psalmist' (διὰ τῆς τοῦ ψάλλοντος λύρας). His usage of the phrase is quite consistent in that he always refers to the 'lyre', rather than the 'pipe', and he always uses the formula to introduce a citation from the Psalms. He sometimes says that the Father⁸² speaks thus, sometimes the Son⁸³, and sometimes the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴ The fact that Cyril reserves this formula only for citations from the psalter should make us hesitant to draw con-

⁸⁰ Jerome suggested the same when he wrote in his short commentary on Psalm 44: totus psalmus referatur ad Xpistum (comm. in Ps. 44 (CCSL 72.209)). However, in his much lengthier treatment of the psalm contained in his Letter 65 he does interpret 44:2 as a description of the psalmist's own composition (ep. 65.7 (CSEL 54.623-4)). The collection of Cyrilline psalter fragments in PG contains one fragment which might sound like a description of divine inspiration: Νοήματα δὲ ἡμῖν ἐγγράφει τὸ Πνεῦμα κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τοῦ πλάτους τῆς καρδίας, καὶ πλεῖονα ἢ ἐλάττονα, ἢ ἐμφανῆ πᾶσιν ἢ ἀμυδρότερα κατὰ τὴν προπαρασκευὴν τῆς καθαρότητος (Ps. 44:2 (PG 69.1032)). However, this passage is wrongly attributed to Cyril, and is actually an extract from Basil, hom. in Ps. 44.3 (PG 29.396).

⁸¹ See, e.g., Cyril, Jo., book 1, praef.; 1:2; 4:22; 8:37 (Pusey, 1.14, 48, 280; 2.72); Os. 9:8; 12:9-10; Mal. 3:5 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.190, 253; 2.603); Is. 19:11-12 (PG 70.461); resp. ad Tib. 2 (Wickham, 144). The word he uses in these instances is ἐρεύγομαι, which sometimes means simply 'to utter' or 'to proclaim', but can also mean 'to belch'. However, he does not always use the term negatively for false prophecy. See Os. 11:10-11 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.239). Cyril never uses ἐξερεύγομαι, the word used in Psalm 44:2, for anything other than referring to the Son's eternal generation, as I noted in the previous chapter. The one occasion where he might be taken to use the belching imagery for inspiration is at Jo. 6:57 (Pusey, 1.540), where he speaks of 'the choir of the saints belching (ἐρευγόμενος) words through the Spirit'. However, it is not clear on this occasion if he simply means 'utter' or 'belch'. At any rate, he simply mentions it in passing, and does not develop the analogy to draw implications about the manner of inspiration.

⁸² Cyril, Mal. 3:2-3 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 2.600).

⁸³ Cyril, hom. pasch. 23.3 (PG 77.880).

⁸⁴ Cyril, hom. pasch. 30.1 (PG 77.969). For other examples where he uses the formula, see, e.g., quod Chr. un. 732e; 769b (SC 97.362, 484); ador. X (PG 68.676); glaph. Gen.; Ex. (PG 69.165, 517); Is. 33:18-19; 45:20; 49:1-3; 51:15-16; 52:8; 53:4-6; 54:1-3; 55:3-5; 60:14; 61:1-3; 63:1-7; 66:18-19 (PG 70.733, 981, 1040, 1129, 1156, 1173, 1192, 1224, 1340, 1357, 1384, 1445); Heb. 2:7-8 (Pusey, 384); thes. XXXII (PG 75.520, 536).

clusions about his view of inspiration simply from the mere presence of the musical imagery. He most likely introduces psalter citations in this manner due to the simple fact that the Psalms are, after all, musical. He does not seem to have intended such language as a description of the mechanics of inspiration.

Nevertheless, there are two passages that might be read to suggest that Cyril viewed inspiration in terms of the Spirit operating upon the human person like a musical instrument. In his exegesis of John 14:11 in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, he is at pains to refute an unnamed opponent who seems to think that the Father dwells in the Son in the same manner that Christ dwells in the Apostle Paul speaking and doing miracles. In order to illustrate the absurdity of his opponent's interpretation, Cyril states that his position implies that the Son is like 'tool' (ὄργανον) or 'instrument' (σκεῦός), which 'would differ in no way from a pipe or a lyre, sounding forth whatever might be blown into it or whatever the plectrum might command it to sound forth musically'.⁸⁵ Since Cyril regards this description as an inappropriate one for the Son's relationship to the Father, the logic of his argument suggests that Christ does dwell and work in Paul in the manner of a musical instrument. However, we should note carefully here that Cyril does not straightforwardly affirm the suitability of this analogy for prophetic inspiration. In his attempt to refute his opponent, he might be going beyond what he would consider to be an appropriate description of Christ's indwelling of the apostle in order to make his point more forcefully.

The second passage is much like the first, although it is directed against Nestorius rather than an 'Arian' opponent. In his *Letter to the Monks of Egypt*, Cyril once more argues that the manner of the divine presence in the incarnate Son is different than the usual mode in which the divine indwells human persons. He suggests that Nestorius, whom he has not explicitly

⁸⁵ Cyril, *Jo. 14:11* (Pusey, 2.439). I have argued elsewhere that in this passage Cyril is responding to the *Commentary on the Gospel of John* written by the fourth-century 'Eusebian' theologian Theodore of Heraclea. See 'The Triumph of Pro-Nicene Theology Over Anti-Monarchian Exegesis: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodore of Heraclea on John 14:10-11', *J ECS* (forthcoming 2013); 'On the Diversity and Influence of the Eusebian Alliance: The Case of Theodore of Heraclea', *J EH* (forthcoming 2013). On this passage see also D. Pazzini, 'Il Liber Adversariorum nel Commento a Giovanni di Cirillo Alessandrino', *STPatr* 42 (2006): 199-203. There is a fragment from the catena tradition attributed to Cyril that also employs a musical analogy in an exposition of Luke 7:32. The fragment says that Christ and the apostles sounded forth the gospel 'in the manner of a pipe' (αὐλοῦ δίκην) (*fr. Lc. 7:32* (PG 72.620)). However, it is unclear whether Cyril is the author of this fragment, since Reuss, in his critical edition of the Lukan fragments, included this passage in the collection of fragments that do not match the Syriac translation of the Lukan homilies, and so are of uncertain authenticity (cf. Reuss, *Lukas-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*, 286). Even if this fragment is truly Cyril's, it is clear that he uses the analogy of a pipe on this occasion simply because the word occurs in the biblical passage upon which he is commenting.

named at this stage in the controversy, assigns to Christ 'only and merely an instrumental service' (ψιλὴν καὶ μόνην . . . τὴν ὀργανικὴν ὑπουργίαν), as if the Son simply assumed a man for the purpose of working miracles and teaching. To illustrate this point he turns to a musical analogy. 'Let us suppose, for the sake of the argument, that we take a man, and let him also have a son who is skilled to play on the lyre and who has practiced to sing most beautifully. Would such a man then regard the lyre and the ability to sing as on par (τάξει) with his son?' Cyril asserts that such a conclusion is absurd, because the son is a true son, while the lyre is merely an instrument used by the son. Thus, when the man Jesus is called 'Son' by the Father, it must mean that he is his true Son, and not merely an instrument. Cyril then argues that, if Nestorius' description of the incarnation holds true, then 'each of the holy prophets also should be called an instrument (ὄργανον) of the deity'.⁸⁶ As in the previous passage, his argument here implies that the prophets who are indwelt by the Spirit are properly described as an 'instrument' or 'lyre' used by the divine. However, once again, in this passage he stops short of an unambiguous affirmation of the suitability of this analogy for explaining divine inspiration. The fact that in both cases Cyril is polemicizing against an opponent by engaging in a *reductio ad absurdum* and that he nowhere else employs this analogy as a positive description of inspiration suggests that the musical analogy does not shed much light on his own views. His apparent avoidance of musical imagery is in keeping with his reticence regarding the belching and scribal analogies from Psalm 44. Cyril, it seems, did not much prefer the metaphors that were already present in the tradition for expressing his own theology of inspiration. This is all the more striking given that Didymus, upon whom Cyril almost certainly relied, as well as pseudo-Macarius explained the term 'Spirit-bearer' by turning to the musical metaphor. Cyril keeps the term 'Spirit-bearer', but drops the musical analogy that previously had been explanatory of it. His apparent avoidance of such imagery is perhaps due to the polemics against the Montanists and pagan seers from the end of the fourth and early fifth centuries.

Inspiration as a Prophetic Vision

Even though Cyril avoided using traditional metaphors to describe divine inspiration, he did on occasion give positive descriptions of it, usually describing it as a vision of future

⁸⁶ Cyril, ep. 1.21 (ACO 1.1.1, 20).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

events given to the prophet by the Spirit.⁸⁷ One such passage is his commentary on the opening lines of Habakkuk's prophecy ('The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw'). The verse uses the term *λήμμα* ('oracle') that I already commented on above in connection to Cyril's commentary on Nahum 1:1. What I want to draw attention to here is that in this passage he adds more explanation of the term, defining *λήμμα* as 'the reception of the vision, or premonition' (*τὴν τῆς ὀράσεως, ἥτοι τῆς προγνώσεως λῆψιν*) given to the prophet by God. In the next line, this general principle becomes more specific, as Cyril states that God foretold the future to the prophets 'through the Holy Spirit' (*διὰ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος*), 'by setting it before their sight as though already happening'. As a result of this operation of the Spirit, Habakkuk and the other prophets did not 'utter sentiments of their own heart, but rather communicated to us the words of God', having been 'filled with grace for that purpose'.⁸⁸ Thus, the point that Cyril makes at the outset of commenting on this book is that the prophet speaks not his own words, but the words of God, and he does so by virtue of the vision of future events granted to him by the Spirit.

Cyril unpacks this same theme in more detail when he comes to Habakkuk 2:1 ('I shall stand at my watch post, climb upon a rock, and keep watch to see what he will say to me and what response I should make to my correction'). Cyril takes this statement as a description of the process of inspiration by the Spirit, which he terms the 'prophetic mystery' (*Προφητικὸν μυστήριον*), and he sees it thus as a continuation of the prophet's actions in the first chapter. Upon being informed of the judgment coming upon Israel from the Babylonians in the first chapter, Habakkuk recalled the Lord's purity and questioned why he allowed them to prosper instead of pouring out divine justice upon the 'cruel hordes of the Babylonians'.⁸⁹ Thus, at the outset of chapter 2, the prophet positions himself in such a way as to be prepared to receive the Lord's answer. For Cyril, Habakkuk's action here is not an isolated event, but is the normal manner by which the prophets sought inspiration from the Lord. He outlines two steps the prophets took when the Lord 'inspired their heart and mind' (*εἰς νοῦν καὶ καρδίαν*

⁸⁷ So also Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 222, 227-8.

⁸⁸ Cyril, *Abac.* 1:1 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.70). Cf. *Abac.* 1:11 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.84-5) where Cyril says that David knew the future 'through the Spirit' when he composed Psalm 84:2-3 (LXX); and *Os.* 11:9-10 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.236) where the Spirit's activity of showing the future is described as 'illumination' (*ἐναστράπτω*).

⁸⁹ Cyril, *Abac.* 1:12-14 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.85-7).

ἐνηχοῦντος αὐτοῦ). First, the prophet must remove from himself all 'distractions, concerns, and every care of this life' and keep his mind 'at leisure and in quiet'. Second, he takes himself to a high peak or rock and surveys the terrain 'in an intellectual sense' (νοητῶς), to wait and see what 'the Lord of knowledge would choose to reveal to them'.⁹⁰ In this way, the prophet puts himself in a position to receive a word from God. It is unclear in the context who Cyril means by 'Lord of knowledge', whether Father, Son, or Spirit, but we should recall that only a few pages prior in exegesis 1:1 he has described the prophetic word as coming 'through the Holy Spirit'. Moreover, when he comes to comment on Habakkuk 3:16, he again notes the role of the Spirit in prophetic inspiration. When the prophet declares in 3:16 'I kept watch', recalling his statement in 2:1, Cyril says this 'watching' (φυλακὴν) or 'listening' (ἀκοήν) is the customary way to refer to the way the Holy Spirit conveys knowledge of future events to the prophets.⁹¹ Thus, it is likely that the 'Lord of knowledge' is the Spirit. Furthermore, in commenting on Habakkuk 3:16 he offers another hint here about the mode of this prophetic inspiration. Previously he said that the Spirit showed the prophets in a vision what would come to pass in the future, but now he says the Spirit is also involved as the prophet speaks forth the words about what he has seen. Cyril describes this process as the Spirit 'putting into words' (διαρθρῶ) within the prophet the things which were to come to pass.⁹²

Thus, in Cyril's exposition of Habakkuk 2:1 and 3:16, we see that the Spirit is central to the inspiration of the prophets, that this inspiration consisted of a prophetic vision, and that the prophets had to purify themselves in preparation for receiving the vision.⁹³ Moreover, as in his comments on Habakkuk 1:1, the Spirit is uniquely tied to a vision of future events, and the role of the Spirit is now extended beyond simply revealing the future to also bringing to expression the prophet's very words. It is quite possible that Cyril has been prompted to speculate about prophetic inspiration in commenting on this passage by reading Jerome, for he too understands Habakkuk 2:1 as the prophet's description of his 'prophetic vision' (*propheticam ui-*

⁹⁰ Cyril, *Abac.* 2:1 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.91-2). See his reference to Habakkuk 2:1 in *Os.* 1:2 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.13); *Is.* 21:6-7 (PG 70.489); *thes.* XV (PG 70.261).

⁹¹ Cyril, *Abac.* 3:16 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.160).

⁹² Cyril, *Abac.* 3:16 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.161). Cf. the use of *διαρθρῶ* to refer to the Spirit's inspiration of Paul in Gregory of Nyssa, *hom. in Cant.* 7 (GNO 6.236).

⁹³ For other passages where Cyril also describes inspiration in terms of vision, see *Os.* 1:2 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.14); *Am.* 1:1 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.368); *Mich.* 2:12-13 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.642); *Is.* 1:1 (PG 70.13); *glaph. Dt.* (PG 69.673).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

sionem).⁹⁴ Theodore of Mopsuestia also holds that Habakkuk was talking about divine revelation in 2:1 and 3:16, and, although he did not go into much detail there about the manner of inspiration, he elsewhere also described it in terms of a vision.⁹⁵ Didymus as well uses Habakkuk 1:1 and 2:1 as descriptions of inspiration, explaining it in terms of a prophetic vision, so he might also have been a source for Cyril.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, even if Cyril is drawing upon Jerome, Theodore, or Didymus in his usage of Habakkuk, he goes beyond them by explaining in more detail how the prophet received his vision.

The preceding passages demonstrate that Cyril viewed the Spirit as instrumental to the role of the prophets whose words are recorded as the Christian Old Testament. However, it is reasonable to suppose that he intends to extend this understanding of spiritual inspiration beyond the Book of the Twelve to others who also demonstrated evidence of prophetic insight. For example, interpreting the ascent of Moses and Aaron on Mt. Sinai as a prefiguring of Christ and the church, Cyril roots this exegesis in the fact that Moses was inspired by the Spirit. As he ascended the mountain, Moses was apparently fully conscious of 'prefiguring' (προανειτύπου) Christ's 'unblemished sacrifice to God for us', for he was 'led by the illumination of the Spirit towards a knowledge of the things to come' (τῆ τοῦ πνεύματος φωταγωγία πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἔσομένων προηγούμενος γνώσιν). Moreover, it was by virtue of this spiritual illumination that he 'wrote all the words of the Lord' (cf. Ex. 24:4).⁹⁷ As before, Cyril connects the Spirit specifically with a knowledge of future events, and he ties this spiritual inspiration to the actual writing of the words of Scripture by Moses, as the Spirit also brought to expression the words within the prophets. In addition to Moses, Cyril also writes that Adam was not 'bereft of a prophetic spirit' (προφητικοῦ πνεύματος), and offers as evidence of his prophetic gift the fact that Adam gave a name to Eve when he awoke from his divinely induced slumber.⁹⁸ Similarly,

⁹⁴ Jerome, *Abac.* 2:1 (CCSL 76A.596). Pace Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 239, who says that he can find no parallels between Cyril and Jerome regarding prophetic vision.

⁹⁵ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Abac.* 2:1; 3:16; *Nah.* 1:1. Theodoret, perhaps under the influence of Cyril, also discusses prophetic inspiration when commenting on Habakkuk 1:1 and 2:1, noting in the first instance that the prophet speaks under the 'operation' (ἐνεργείας) of the Spirit, and in the second instance that he looked out 'with prophetic eyes' to see the solution to his quandary (*Abac.* 1:1; 2:1 (PG 81.1812, 1817)).

⁹⁶ Didymus, *Zach.* 1.33 (1:9); 3.75 (9:1-2) (SC 83.208; SC 84.654-6). Cf. Didymus, fr. Ps. 853 (84:9) (PTS 16.152) where he also references the verse, this time in connection with Psalm 84:9. I will look again at Didymus' usage of these two verses in the following chapter.

⁹⁷ Cyril, *glaph. Ex.* (PG 69.517).

⁹⁸ Cyril, *Joel.* 2:28-29 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.337). The idea that Adam engaged in prophecy was wide-

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

when faced with Jesus' declaration that Abraham 'saw his day and rejoiced' (John 8:56), Cyril asks how this could possibly be true, and answers that God revealed the mystery to the patriarch 'just as to one of the holy prophets', such that he even saw that his near sacrifice of his son was a 'type' (εἰς τύπον) of Christ's own sacrificial death. As one fulfilling the role of a priest, Abraham made clear the exact meaning of the 'mystery'.⁹⁹ Additionally, Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, 'foreknew in the Spirit' (προεγνωκῶς ἐν πνεύματι) and so prophesied of his son's future ministry (Luke 1:76).¹⁰⁰ Finally, Cyril describes the four evangelists as composing their works by 'beholding' what is of profit to their hearers, as if looking out 'from some hill or summit' (ἀπό τινος γηλόφου καὶ περιωπῆς).¹⁰¹ This description of the evangelists recalls Cyril's exegesis of Habakkuk 2:1 where he said the prophet goes up to some 'peak or summit' (εἰς τινα κολωνὸν καὶ περιωπῆν) to obtain his prophetic vision.¹⁰² In light of such passages it seems reasonable to conclude that Cyril regarded the mode of inspiration described in Habakkuk 2:1 as normative for all prophets and inspired authors.

The descriptions of inspiration that I have looked at so far might yet leave open the possibility that Cyril could have held to a mantic understanding of inspiration such that the prophet's mind and agency were entirely removed from the process. In order to show that, on the contrary, he affirmed and emphasized the agency of the human author, I want now to look at a handful of passages that more clearly make this point. One example comes from his exposition of Isaiah 30:25 in which the prophet announces, 'on every high mountain and on every lofty hill there will be water flowing on that day when many perish and when towers fall'.¹⁰³ The 'hills' and 'mountains' of the passage Cyril takes to be the 'holy evangelists and apostles',

spread among patristic authors. See Theophilus of Antioch, *Autol.* 2.28; Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* II.1.443; Epiphanius, *pan.* 48.6.5; John Chrysostom, *hom. in Gen.* 15.4; 16.5.

⁹⁹ Cyril, *Jo.* 8:56 (Pusey, 2.130). καθάπερ ἐνὶ τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν ἀπεκάλυψεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ μυστήριον.

¹⁰⁰ Cyril, *Is.* 40:3-5 (PG 70.801).

¹⁰¹ Cyril, *Jo.*, book 1, praef. (Pusey, 1.11).

¹⁰² Cyril, *Abac.* 2:1 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.91).

¹⁰³ Cyril interprets the first half of Isaiah 30 as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar due to Israel's disregard for God's revelation in the law and the prophets (*Is.* 30:8-11 (PG 70.673)). However, he detects a shift in verse 19 from the prophet declaring judgment to announcing a future outpouring of God's mercy, and so he shifts the historical timeframe accordingly to the coming of Christ (*Is.* 30:18-19 (PG 70.677)). Scripture takes a central role in his exposition of the chapter, as the 'rich and broad pasture' on which the church is fed by her ministers (*Is.* 30:23-24 (PG 70.684-5)). The latter theme will be taken up in chapter five.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

along with all those after them 'who were in charge of the holy churches and became ministers of the divine mysteries'.¹⁰⁴ These persons are 'enriched with grace from on high' and then 'pour forth the divine and heavenly word from their own mind (ἐκ τῆς ἑαυτῶν διανοίας), just as, from a spring'.¹⁰⁵ Cyril's brief, allusive remark implies the agency of both the Spirit and the human author in the composition of Scripture, since the words produced by the evangelists and apostles come from their own mind or understanding.

Another indication that he does not hold to a purely mechanical view of inspiration is his usage of the word νῆψις ('sobriety' or 'recovery of the senses'). On several occasions, he describes an author of Scripture, someone who has the Spirit (πνευματοφόρος), as being in possession of νῆψιν, something that a prophet in a state of mantic inspiration certainly would not have.¹⁰⁶ These passages suggest that the operation of the human mind coincides with the influence of the Spirit, and they support the claim that Cyril avoids the analogies current in the prior tradition because they had been criticized as implying otherwise.¹⁰⁷ This balance between

¹⁰⁴ Eusebius of Caesarea takes this verse as referring to the revealing of the Only-begotten Word of God, at which time the 'creative water of immortality and eternal life' will make all who drink of it 'immortal' (Is. 1.99 (Zeigler, 200)). Jerome interprets the 'hills' and 'mountains' as those 'who were raised up in the height of virtue, who hunger and thirst for righteousness' (Is. 30:25 (CCSL 73.394)), but does not mention the evangelists and apostles. Cyril's interpretation is closer to that of Eusebius.

¹⁰⁵ Cyril, Is. 30:25 (PG 70.685). See also the end of Cyril's homily on the feeding of the 5,000 in Luke 9, where he quotes Isaiah 30:25 to make a similar point (hom. Lc. XLVIII (CSCO 70.161)). In Is. 33:20-21 (PG 70.736), he again compares the 'evangelists, apostles, and rulers of the churches through the ages' to 'rivers and channels'. The latter passage is discussed in Norman Russell, 'The Church in the Commentaries of St Cyril of Alexandria', *IJSCC* 7 (2007): 70-85; Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology*, 227-8. Plato had also used the image of a flowing fountain for poetic inspiration (*Laws* 719C), but he takes the imagery to mean that the poet lacks control of his senses when he is inspired, an idea that Cyril does not endorse. Gregory of Nyssa also used this imagery, contrasting the 'prophetic river' of the old covenant, which is filled with water, with the 'evangelical river', which is filled with fragrances (hom. in Cant. 10 (GNO 6.302)).

¹⁰⁶ Cyril, Is. 19:20-21; 22:4-5 (PG 70.472, 505); Jon. 1:5-6 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.571); Jo. 1:1; 1:18 (Pusey, 1.24, 154); 1 Cor. 15:42 (Pusey, 310). Elsewhere he presents νῆψις as a mark of virtue, the opposite of being controlled by the passions. See, e.g., Is. 22:6-9 (PG 70.509); Jo. 6:70-71 (Pusey, 1.577); resp. ad Tib. XII (Wickham, 170).

¹⁰⁷ E. N. Tigerstedt, 'Furor Poeticus: Poetic Inspiration in Greek Literature Before Democritus and Plato', *JHI* 31 (1970): 163-178, and P. Murray, 'Poetic Inspiration in Early Greece', *JHS* 101 (1981): 87-100, point out that in classical Greek literature poetic inspiration differed from 'mantic' or 'ecstatic' inspiration. Descriptions of poetic inspiration often present it as a process involving the agency of both the divine and the human, in contrast to an ecstatic state. A good example of this tendency is *odyssey*. XXII.347-8 where the poet Phemius claims to be both self-taught and inspired by god. Moreover, a 'prophet' was understood to be someone who interpreted the words of the seer or the Muses rather than someone who himself experienced ecstatic inspiration (Pindar, fr. 150; Plato, *tim.* 71E-72B). However, as both Tigerstedt and Murray acknowledge, Plato is an exception with his understanding of poetic inspiration as an ecstatic state. Cyril's theology of inspiration appears closer to classical theories of poetic inspiration rather than to theories of mantic inspiration, though we should not necessarily assume that he was directly drawing from such sources.

the agency of the Spirit and the human author is well illustrated in the preface to book one of Cyril's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Cyril describes the evangelist as someone who is 'taught by God' (θεοδίδακτος), to whom the Spirit has 'revealed' (ἐναποκαλύπτει) knowledge, and with whom the Spirit has conversed (προσομιεῖ), on account of his 'simplicity of thoughts' (ταῖς ἀπλουστέραις διανοίαις).¹⁰⁸ However, the operation of the Spirit does not imply the complete passivity of the evangelist, since Cyril also presents John as deciding to compose the book (ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ βιβλίου τρέχει συγγραφὴν) in order to combat the heresy that was afflicting the church in his day.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, in Cyril's view, inspiration occurs as the prophet purifies his mind in preparation for the Spirit's work, and the Spirit grants the prophet a vision of future events. The Spirit's work extends all the way to the very words the prophet speaks, but these words come forth from the prophet's own mind and understanding.¹¹⁰

THE MYSTAGOGY OF THE SPIRIT

The Apostles as Mystagogues

Most of the passages I looked at in the last section pertained to the inspiration of the Hebrew prophets. In this section I want to look at another prominent theme in Cyril's corpus that is related more specifically to New Testament authors. He frequently speaks of biblical authors as recipients of mystagogical enlightening from the Spirit, and suggests that their mission to disseminate mystagogical instruction is fulfilled through their authoring of Scripture.¹¹¹ The language of mystagogy derives from the mystery cults of the ancient world, wherein it referred to the induction of someone into the pagan mysteries or to mystagogical doctrines, a usage

¹⁰⁸ Cyril, *Jo.*, praef., book 1 (Pusey, 1.11).

¹⁰⁹ Cyril, *Jo.*, praef., book 1 (Pusey, 1.15). Another example of Cyril holding in tension the agency of the Spirit and the human author is his comment in the prologue to his commentary on Hosea that all the prophets 'formed their words quickly in accord with the intention of the Holy Spirit' (ἔθος γὰρ ἅπασιν, οὐς ἂν ἕκαστοι ποιοῖντο λόγους μεταπλάττειν εὐκόλως ἐπὶ τὸ δοκοῦν τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι) (*Os.*, praef. (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.2)). The words are formed by the prophets, but they are formed to suit the intention of the Spirit.

¹¹⁰ My argument here is in keeping with Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 218, who says that, according to Cyril, 'the human authors of Scripture were conscious of the spiritual signification at least at times' (emphasis his).

¹¹¹ Cf. Alexander Kerrigan, 'The Objects of the Literal and Spiritual Senses of the New Testament according to St. Cyril of Alexandria', *STPatr* 1 (1957): 354-74, who notes that for Cyril 'Paul is the μυσταγωγός par excellence'.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

noted by Clement of Alexandria and Origen.¹¹² Irenaeus, and later Eusebius who drew upon him, also use the word to refer to Gnostic rites.¹¹³ Origen also uses such language to refer to initiation into the Christian mysteries, and by the latter half of the fourth century, mystagogy was a common description for the Christian sacraments.¹¹⁴ Although the word group was already well established in the prior tradition, Cyril uses it hundreds of times, much more frequently than any previous author, and one of the distinctive aspects of his usage is his application of such language to the authors of Scripture.¹¹⁵ There was some precedent in the prior tradition for using such language to describe Scriptural authors. One passage from Origen comes close to Cyril's later usage. In his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Origen notes that Jesus 'inducted the disciples into the mysteries' (μυσταγωγούντος) so that they could understand the spiritual sense in the writings of Moses and the prophets who had themselves labored to understand 'the mysteries' (τὰ μυστήρια).¹¹⁶ Occasionally fourth-century authors speak in similar terms. Eusebius of Caesarea, for example, says that the 'holy oracles that were foretold by the theologians and prophets among the Hebrews mystically teach' (μυσταγωγεί) the truth that there is one God who rules over all.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, a handful of times Didymus the Blind

¹¹² See Plutarch, *Alc.* 34.6; Iamblichus, *myst.* 1.1; Proclus, *th. Plat.* 1.1; Clement of Alexandria, *prot.* 2.21.1; Origen, *Cels.* 8.48; Eusebius, *p.e.* 2.3.34.

¹¹³ Irenaeus, *haer.* 1.21.3 (SC 264.298-9); Eusebius, *h.e.* 4.11.4.

¹¹⁴ Origen, *Cels.* 3.60. On baptism see Basil, *Spir.* 29.75; Gregory Nazianzus, *or.* 40.11. On the Eucharist, see Chrysostom, *hom. in 1 Cor.* 27.4. Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses mystagogicae*. The authorship of the latter work is disputed, but it belongs either to Cyril of Jerusalem or his successor John.

¹¹⁵ According to a search on TLG performed at the time of this writing, the word group occurs over 400 times in his corpus. It is especially common in his *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, perhaps because these homilies were delivered in a liturgical setting, as well as in his *Commentary on Isaiah*. J. David Cassel, 'Cyril of Alexandria as Educator', in *In Dominico Eloquio = in Lordly Eloquence: Essays on Patristic Exegesis in Honor of Robert Louis Wilken*, ed. Paul M. Blowers, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 348-68, has argued that the *Commentary on Isaiah* began as a series of instructional lectures given to those training for the priesthood. Perhaps the frequent mention of mystagogy in this commentary adds further weight to Cassel's argument. Whatever the reason may be, it is clear that Cyril talks about mystagogy and mystagogues more often in the Isaianic commentary (108x) than in any of his other biblical commentaries, using some form of μυσταγωγ- on average once every seven columns of the PG text.

¹¹⁶ Origen, *Jo.* 13.50.325 (SC 222.212). There is a fragment attributed to Origen on Psalm 36:21 (LXX) that describes the Apostle Paul as 'one of the holy mystagogues' (*exc. in Ps.* 36:21 (PG 17.132)). However, Rufinus' Latin translation of this homily does not use the descriptor, even though both the fragment and the Latin translation present similar cross-references (Matt. 25:20; Luke 19:16/18; 2 Cor. 13:3) (*hom. in Ps.* 36.3.11 (SC 411.168-70)). The description of Paul might be an addition by a later catenist, or could have been omitted by Rufinus.

¹¹⁷ Eusebius of Caesarea, *d.e.* 4.1.4 (GCS 23.151). Epiphanius describes the revelation given to the prophet Isaiah as God's μυσταγωγία (*pan.* 79.6.6 (GCS 37.481)).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

describes the Apostles Peter, John, and Paul as mystagogues, and explains the inspiration (ὁ θεολημπτούμενος) of the prophet Zechariah as an angel inducting him into the mystery.¹¹⁸ In fact, one of the striking features of Didymus' *Commentary on Zechariah* is the frequency of his usage of mystagogical terminology.¹¹⁹ I suggested above that Cyril's preference for the term πνευματοφόρος to describe scriptural authors possibly came from Didymus. His frequent usage of mystagogical language is another parallel that might suggest a Didymean influence.

Occasionally Cyril speaks of the Hebrew prophets by using mystagogical language. As he says in the opening to his festal letter from the year 422, 'the great and illustrious chorus of the holy prophets itself, since it was enlightened by the mystagogy of the Spirit (διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος μυσταγωγίας), proclaimed [Christ] beforehand and taught in advance about what was to happen to us through Christ'.¹²⁰ In another passage he lists the prophets alongside the apostles and evangelists as recipients of the Spirit's mystagogy, implying a continuity between the manner of inspiration in the Old Testament and that in the New Testament.¹²¹ However, his more developed statements about mystagogy pertain more specifically to the apostles and evangelists. This tendency probably results from the more obvious connection between the apostles and the Christian sacraments. A passage that illustrates well the development of this theme is Cyril's commentary on the impartation of the Spirit to the apostles in the upper room following Christ's resurrection (John 20:19-23), an event that he interprets as the commissioning of the apostles for their ecclesiastical mission. Hillis has pointed to this passage in the context of his argument for the continuity of the Spirit-empowered mission of the apostles and that of later church leaders.¹²² While he is right to see such continuity, here I want to advance a

¹¹⁸ Didymus, *Zach.* 1.336 (4:11-14); 1.339 (4:11-14); 4.66 (11:6-7); 4.92 (11:7-9) (SC 83.370, 372; SC 85.836, 848); fr. in *Ps.* 595a (56:4a), 712a (69:14) (PTS 16.21-2, 79). For other passages that refer to the apostles in mystagogical language, see Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* III.5.13 (GNO 2.164); John Chrysostom, *David* 3.2 (PG 54.697); ps-Athanasius, *Sabell.* 12 (PG 28.117); Athanasius, *exp. Ps.* 48:1; 92:4 (PG 27.224, 408). The Athanasian authorship of the psalter fragments is questionable. Cf. also Athanasius, *exp. Ps.* 97:8 (PG 27.420) where mystagogues are mentioned, but it is not clear that the apostles are in view. I have found no references prior to Cyril where the evangelists are described as mystagogues.

¹¹⁹ In addition to those references in the previous footnote, see Didymus, *Zach.* 1.38 (1:10); 1.114 (2:7-8); 1.278 (4:1-3); 1.309 (4:7); 1.314 (4:8-9); 1.372 (5:5-8); 2.298 (8:7-8); 4.282 (13:1) (SC 83.210, 252, 338, 356, 358, 390; SC 84.572; SC 85.948).

¹²⁰ Cyril, *hom. pasch.* 10.1 (SC 392.184). αὐτὸς ὁ μέγας καὶ περιφανῆς τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν προανεφώνει χορὸς, διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος μυσταγωγίας φωταγωγούμενος, καὶ τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐσόμενα διὰ Χριστοῦ προπαιδευόμενος.

¹²¹ Cyril, *Is.* 26:17-18 (PG 70.585).

¹²² Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology*, 195-233. On Cyril's interpretation of this passage, see also Weigl,

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

parallel argument that, based on his use of mystagogical language, Cyril views the spiritual commissioning of the apostles in the passage as continuous with the books that they have left behind for the church.

I noted above that mystagogical language was often associated with the Christian sacraments, and as Cyril begins exegeting John 20:19-23, the sacraments are definitely in view, since he mentions the apostles' role in presiding over the 'divine altars' (τῶν θείων θυσιαστηρίων), that is the Eucharist.¹²³ However, when he talks about the apostles' sacramental function as such, he usually prefers the word ἱεραργός ('priest'), rather than μυσταγωγός.¹²⁴ When he calls the apostles μυσταγωγοί he seems to have in mind rather the teaching office that the apostles fulfilled by providing the instruction that was to precede reception of the sacraments.¹²⁵ After this brief mention of the apostles' eucharistic role, it is their teaching office that takes center stage in Cyril's exposition. When Christ showed himself to the disciples in the upper room, he ordained them to be 'guides and teachers of the whole world and stewards of his divine mysteries' (τοὺς τῆς οἰκουμένης καθηγητάς τε καὶ διδασκάλους καὶ τῶν θείων αὐτοῦ μυστηρίων οἰκονόμους), and it was by virtue of their teaching that they were to 'save the world'.¹²⁶

Emphasizing the necessity of the Spirit for the fulfilling of this didactic mission, Cyril writes,

Die Heilslehre, 159-65; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 478-82; Ferraro, *Lo Spirito Santo nel quarto vangelo*, 157-60; Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 81-3; Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 43-4.

¹²³ Cyril, Jo. 20:22-3 (Pusey, 3.131-3).

¹²⁴ See Cyril, Jo. 20:22-3 (Pusey, 3.131, 133); Joel. 1:9-10 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 1.302); Soph. 1:10 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 2.181); Zach. 11:8-9 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 2.458); Mal. 3:7-10 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 2.609). Cf. Jo. 5:35 (Pusey, 1.370); 2 Cor. 5:20-21 (Pusey, 356).

¹²⁵ According to Cyril, this teaching function, empowered by the Spirit, was foretold by the prophets of old (Is. 41:1 (PG 70.828)): Πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ τοῖς μυσταγωγουμένοις ἐροῦσιν. Ὡς γὰρ ἐξ ἑνὸς λαλοῦντες πνεύματος οὐ τοῖς ἀλλήλων διαμαχοῦνται λόγοις, συμφώνως δὲ μᾶλλον τὸ περὶ τῶν θείων δογμάτων ποιήσονται κήρυγμα, καὶ καταγγελοῦσι κεκρυμμένως τὸ Χριστοῦ μυστήριον.

¹²⁶ Cyril, Jo. 20:21 (Pusey, 3.130-1). Cf. *hom. pasch.* 13.4 (SC 434.116) where the disciples are described as μυσταγωγούς on the occasion of Christ commanding them to go to the nations; and *hom. pasch.* 23.3 (PG 77.884) where he says that the central task given to the apostles was to induct the nations into the mystery about Christ (μυσταγωγεῖν), as he commanded them just before his ascension to 'baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to keep all that was commanded' (Matt. 28:19-20). The Great Commission is described in similar terms in *glaph. Lev.* (PG 69.548). Cyril's usage of mystagogical language in connection with Matthew 28:18-20 is likely due to the Trinitarian confession contained in the passage. See his exposition of the Trinitarian confession in this passage in *dial. Trin.* VII (633b-634a) (SC 246.146-8). Gregory of Nyssa had previously described the baptismal command as the 'tradition of the divine mystagogy' (*Eun.* III.9.61 (GNO 2.287)).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

He [i.e., Jesus] made known that the gift of the Spirit necessarily accompanies those who have been chosen by him for the divine apostleship. And for what reason? Because they could not have done anything pleasing to God, nor prevailed over the snares of sin, if they had not previously been 'clothed with power from on high' (Luke 24:49), and been transformed (μεταστοιχειούμενοι) into something other than they were before. Therefore, it was also said to some of the ancients: 'The Spirit of the Lord will spring upon you, and you will be turned into another man' (1 Sam. 10:6). And the prophet Isaiah also declared that those who wait for God will change their strength (Is. 40:31). And the all-wise Paul, when he asserted that had labored more than some, that is, in the apostolic deeds, immediately added, 'Though it was not I, but the grace of God that was with me' (1 Cor. 15:10). Besides this, we say that they would not have understood the mystery through Christ at all, nor have become exact mystagogues (ἀκριβεῖς μυσταγωγοί), unless they had progressed through the torch of the Spirit (διὰ τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος δαδουχίας) to a revelation of things surpassing mind and reason, a revelation, that is, which was thus able to teach them the things which were necessarily to come to pass. For it says according to the voice of the Apostle Paul, 'No one is able to say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:3). Therefore, since they were about to say that Jesus is Lord, that is, to proclaim him as God and Lord, they are necessarily already receiving at this point the grace of the Spirit that is associated with the honor of apostleship.¹²⁷

The point of this pastiche of biblical citations is to highlight the centrality of the Spirit's role for the carrying out of the apostles' mission, and what Cyril emphasizes in this passage is the function of the apostles to teach and to preach. As μυσταγωγοί of the mystery that comes through Christ, they were to preach that Jesus is God and Lord, and without the torch of the indwelling Spirit, this preaching would have been impossible. Therefore, it is 'necessary' (ἀναγκάως) that they receive the Spirit to carry out their apostolic mission.¹²⁸ We saw earlier that Cyril connected the inspiration of the Old Testament prophets with their knowledge of future events, and he does the same here with the apostles, since it is by virtue of the Spirit that

¹²⁷ Cyril, Jo. 20:22-3 (Pusey, 3.131-2). In his Isaianic commentary, when commenting upon Isaiah 40:31, which he quotes in the above passage, Cyril brings Scripture into view, saying that the Jews suffered a famine of the 'divine sayings' (Is. 40:29-31 (PG 70.824)). On Cyril's usage of the word δαδουχία to refer to the Spirit, see page 99, n.154.

¹²⁸ Cf. Cyril, Ag. 2:20-22 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 2.279) where Cyril says that the disciples have drawn the 'sword of the Spirit' which is the 'word of mystagogy' in order to carry out their ministry. For other references to the apostles as mystagogues, see, e.g., Is. 26:2-4; 26:17-18; 26:18-19; 32:1-2 (PG 70.569, 585, 589, 704); 2 Cor. 15:42 (Pusey, 312); dial. Trin. I; II (407c; 437a) (SC 231.192, 282); ep. 55.23 (ACO 1.1.4, 58); or. ad dom. 194 (ACO 1.1.5, 112); Nest. I.7; V.2 (ACO 1.1.6, 27, 96). In ep. 39.10 (ACO 1.1.4, 19), he calls the Nicene fathers μυσταγωγοί.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

they knew the things that were to come to pass (ἃ χρῆν ἀναβαίνειν).¹²⁹ Moreover, the extent of the apostles' mission is universal. They were to teach and instruct the whole οἰκουμένη ('world'). Here and elsewhere when speaking of the apostles' teaching office, Cyril often describes them as καθηγηταί ('guides'). His choice of this word might be significant, since in Egypt in Late Antiquity, καθηγηταί were itinerant teachers who offered private tutoring.¹³⁰ Cyril might have understood the term as simply referring generically to teachers, but in light of the universal scope of the apostles' mission, his choice of καθηγηταί could be have the nuance of itinerant teachers.¹³¹

Other authors prior to Cyril had commented on John 20:22. Eusebius of Caesarea, in his *Demonstratio evangelica* points to the giving of the Spirit as the prerequisite for the apostles' miraculous works and worldwide preaching recorded in the book of Acts.¹³² Gregory of Nazianzus also alludes to the passage and describes it as a 'divine inspiration' received by the apostles.¹³³ Probably the most relevant background text that could have served as a source for Cyril comes from Didymus' *On the Holy Spirit*. In a discussion of the 'uncircumscribed' substance of the Spirit, Didymus points to Christ giving the Spirit to the apostles so that they could 'preach what he taught', as they travelled to the farthest ends of the earth.¹³⁴ Later, in a discussion of John 16:12-13, another text about the Spirit guiding the apostles, Didymus again brings in John 20:22 to argue that, when the Spirit enters believers, he guides them to the truth.¹³⁵ Though his primary emphasis in this context is more generically about believers receiving the Spirit, he does note in passing that 'holy men', such as the prophets, receive knowledge of fu-

¹²⁹ He also discusses knowledge of future events when commenting on John 16:12-13 (Jo. 16:12-13 (Pusey, 2.627-8); dial. Trin. VI (592e-593a; 628e-629a) (SC 246.26-8, 134)).

¹³⁰ Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 53-4, 57, 87.

¹³¹ See also the passage in *glaph. Gen.* (PG 69.197), where Cyril discusses the disciples' mission to go to the Gentiles and calls them καθηγηταί. Elsewhere he contrasts the universal scope of the apostles' mission with the limited extent of the revelation given to Israel, and he thereby argues for the epistemic deficiency of the law (*ador. II; VII* (PG 68.252, 489); *glaph. Ex.* (PG 69.505-8)). On this point see Blackburn Jr., *The Mystery of the Synagogue*, 167-8.

¹³² Eusebius, *d.e.* 3.7.23 (GCS 23.144).

¹³³ Gregory Nazianzus, *or.* 41.11 (SC 358.338).

¹³⁴ Didymus, *Spir.* 22 (SC 386.162).

¹³⁵ Didymus, *Spir.* 147-149 (SC 386.282). Cf. Basil, *Spir.* 16.39.

ture events from the Spirit.¹³⁶ Cyril likely picked up some these themes from previous authors such as Didymus, but his usage of mystagogical language in connection with the giving of the Spirit is somewhat distinctive. Important for my argument is that, just as he argued in his *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets* that the Spirit is the means by which prophetic inspiration comes to pass, so in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* he makes a similar point with respect to the apostles.

The Apostles Still Preach Today

So far in my discussion of Cyril's theme of mystagogy, the inspiration of Scripture has not come into view significantly. I now want to look at two passages in which the connection between Scripture and the apostles' mystagogy becomes apparent. The first is his commentary on Isaiah 26:17-18. Here the prophet declares 'Because of the fear of you, O Lord, we conceived, were in labor, and gave birth to a spirit of salvation, with which we were pregnant on earth'.¹³⁷ These verses occur in the midst of a long section that he interprets as referring to the advent of Christ and the turning of those from the nations from the idolatry of paganism to the light of the truth in Christ.¹³⁸ Cyril recognizes a metaphor (τῆ τοῦ λόγου τροπῆ) at work in 26:17-18, and glosses it by saying these people claim, 'they are, from pious love, like a woman who is pregnant by the Father's beloved, that is, by the Son'.¹³⁹ Such an expression, he says, is particularly fitting for the authors of Scripture, the prophets, holy apostles, and evangelists, for they 'abound in the gift of mystagogy from above' (τῆς ἄνωθεν μυσταγωγίας καταπλουτοῦντες τὴν χορηγίαν). Their ability to offer such spiritual guidance depends upon their having received 'some intellectual seed-like ideas' (τινας νοητοὺς σπερματικούς¹⁴⁰), so that they can then give birth to a spirit of salvation. The 'spirit of salvation' is their 'teaching in the Spirit' (τὴν ἐν πνεύματι διδασκαλίαν), but more specifically, their writings (τάς

¹³⁶ Didymus, *Spir.* 173 (SC 386.302).

¹³⁷ Note that Cyril's citation of the passage differs slightly from the LXX, which reads πνεῦμα σωτηρίας σου ἐποιήσαμεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς where he has πνεῦμα σωτηρίας, ὃ ἐκμήσαμεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

¹³⁸ See, e.g., Cyril, *Is.* 25:10-12 (PG 70.568).

¹³⁹ Cyril, *Is.* 26:17-18 (PG 70.585). Οἱ λέγοντες, ἐκ φιλοθείας γενέσθαι τῷ ἀγαπητῷ τοῦ Πατρὸς, δῆλον δὲ ὅτι τῷ Υἱῷ, καθάπερ ὠδίνουσα γυνὴ.

¹⁴⁰ Cyril is here using a substantival adjective, without providing a clear referent. So literally it would read 'some intellectual seed-like things'. Using 'ideas' as I have here seems to be implicit in his argument.

συγγραφέας), since Scripture, Cyril says, frequently refers to the writings of certain people as 'spirit' (cf. 1 John 4:1; 1 Cor. 2:12). As in his exegesis of John 20, in this passage we see Cyril once again tying the Spirit to the mission of the prophets, apostles, and evangelists. What is significant about this passage is that he here emphasizes the books that these inspired individuals have authored under the Spirit's influence. Their authoring of these books can be understood as the fulfillment of their having received the Spirit's mystagogical instruction. As Cyril says, 'the saving message is always spoken in the Holy Spirit'.¹⁴¹

The second passage that I want to look at comes from Cyril's exegesis of Psalm 44. I noted above that in commenting on Psalm 44, he did not see the opening verses as analogies for divine inspiration. However, the way that he concludes his exegesis of this psalm is relevant to the topic of this chapter. As he interprets 44:17 ('In the place of your fathers your sons were born; you will appoint them rulers in all the earth'), Cyril explains that this verse is a prophecy of the appointment of the disciples by Christ, in keeping with his view that the psalm is sung by the Father to the Son. As he writes, 'the prophets . . . seem to make mention through these words of the holy apostles and evangelists'.¹⁴² The 'fathers of the Jews' were the patriarchs and the prophets, but 'since God has appeared to us' (i.e., in Christ), 'fathers of the church have been appointed by him, and the holy disciples have come into the order of the first fathers'.¹⁴³ Didymus had also seen a reference to the apostles in the concluding lines of Psalm 44, but what Cyril does next with this theme is unique to him.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Cyril, Is. 26:17-18 (PG 70. 585): Ἀεὶ γὰρ ἐν ἀγίῳ Πνεύματι τὸ σωτήριον λαλεῖται κήρυγμα. Cf. Is. 26:2-4 (PG 70.569) where Cyril sees the Spirit speaking through the prophet Isaiah to command the apostles and evangelists, as holy mystagogues (τοῖς ἀγίοις μυσταγωγοῖς), to let those who have faith into the church; and Is. 26:14-15 (PG 70.581), where he says that the prophets, apostles, and evangelists are 'spiritual physicians' by 'the grace from above' and 'the gift of the Spirit'.

¹⁴² Cyril, Ps. 44:17 (PG 69.1045): οἱ προφῆται . . . εἴκοσι δὲ διὰ τούτων τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων τε καὶ εὐαγγελιστῶν ποιεῖσθαι μνήμην. See the following passages where he offers the same interpretation of this verse: *glaph. Gen.* (PG 69.364); Is. 1:25-28; 49:16-17; 61:1-3 (PG 70.61, 1069, 1357); Jo. 15:14-15 (Pusey, 2.581). Devresse, *Les anciens commentateurs*, 229, regarded as authentic the two fragments on Psalm 44:17-18 that I am considering here.

¹⁴³ Cyril, Ps. 44:17 (PG 69.1045). ἐπεὶ δὴ δὲ Θεὸς ὢν Κύριος ἐπέφανεν ἡμῖν, κεχειροτόνηνται παρ' αὐτοῦ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Πατέρες, καὶ ἐν τάξει γεγόνασι τῶν πρώτων οἱ θεσπέσιοι μαθηταί.

¹⁴⁴ Didymus, fr. Ps. 468 (44:17) (PTS 15.342-3). Cf. Origen, fr. in Lc. 15 (GCS 49.233); John Chrysostom, *Jud. et Gent.* 6 (PG 43.821); exp. in Ps. 44.13 (PG 55.202-3); Eusebius, Ps. 44:17 (PG 23.404-5). Justin Martyr uses the psalm as a prophecy of Christ, quoting it at length at *dial.* 38.3. Cyril's interpretation is close to that of Jerome, who also identifies the 'fathers' as the Hebrew patriarchs and the 'sons' as the apostles who were sent by Christ to preach to all the earth (*ep.* 65.21 (CSEL 54.645)). Augustine's interpretation is also intriguingly similar. He takes the 'fathers' of Psalm 44:17 as the apostles, and the 'sons' as the bishops who were appointed as their successors (*en. Ps.* 44.32 (CCSL 38.516)). It is possible that both Augustine and Cyril are drawing independently

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

The psalmist concludes, 'I will remember your name in every generation and generation; therefore the peoples will acknowledge you forever, even forever and ever' (Ps. 44:18). Here Cyril turns to consider how the memory of Christ will persist since the disciples as the fathers of the church are no longer with the church. His answer is that the disciples have 'been released from their deeds for us, but still have kept Christ in our memory, and have put into the sacred books the mystical teachings, and they proclaim him as God until this day'.¹⁴⁵ We see here the same themes emerging that come to the fore as Cyril discusses the giving of the Spirit in John 20. The disciples are the fathers, the mystagogues of the church. However, now Cyril makes explicit that they have preserved their 'mystical teachings' (τὰς μυσταγωγίας) for the church by recording them in the 'sacred books' (βίβλοις ἱεραῖς), such that they can even be said still to preach Christ today.¹⁴⁶ If we bear in mind all that Cyril said in comment upon John 20 about the Spirit's role in equipping the apostles to be mystagogues, then we may extend his principle here to say that the Spirit's guidance was necessary for them to record their 'mystical teachings' in Scripture, and that the Spirit's empowering of the apostles is fulfilled through the ongoing witness of the written word within the church.

In concluding this section, I want to note one further way that Cyril uses the mystagogical language that flows from the two passages I have just considered. At times he speaks of Scripture itself as that which has inducted believers into the mystery of Christ, using the same verb (μυσταγωγέω) that he used elsewhere when he describes the task of the apostles. Cyril was not the first to speak in this manner. Gregory of Nyssa, for example, said with respect to

on Jerome's Letter 65, and Jerome might be dependent on Didymus.

¹⁴⁵ Cyril, Ps. 44:18 (PG 69.1045): Εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀπηλλάχθησαν πραγμάτων, ἔτι διαμémνηνται καὶ οὕτω Χριστοῦ, βίβλοις τε ἱεραῖς ἐναπέθεντο τὰς μυσταγωγίας, καὶ εἰς δεῦρο κηρύττουσι Θεὸν αὐτόν. Similar is his mention of the 'books of mystagogy about Christ' composed by the apostles and evangelists at Nest. I.7 (ACO 1.1.6, 27). See also his fragment on the choosing of the disciples in Luke 6:13-16. Cyril takes this as their appointment by Christ to be 'mystagogues of the whole world'. In expositing the passage, he quotes Psalm 44:17-18, and then says that, even though they have been called to their dwellings above, the apostles still 'converse with us about the things concerning Christ through the all-wise writing (διὰ τῆς πανσόφου συγγραφῆς) that they have made about him' (fr. Lc. 75 (6:13-16) (Reuss, 256-7)). This fragment occurs in group 2 of Reuss' collection, which includes those passages that he could not verify by the Syriac translation. I suggest that even though this passage does not survive in the Syriac translation, it is clearly Cyrilline given that it presents the same theology and exegesis as his fragment on Psalm 44:18.

¹⁴⁶ Somewhat similarly to Cyril, Chrysostom, in exegeting this biblical text, argued that the 'memory' (μνήμη) of the apostles is immortal, 'recorded in our books, recorded in practice, recorded in the ordinances' (exp. in Ps. 44.13 (PG 55.203)). However, his emphasis seems to be rather on the memory of the apostles' acts, while Cyril's concern is with the perpetuation of the apostles' mystical teaching through the books they have left behind. Jerome explains the verse by noting that those from all the nations now bear the name Christian (ep. 65.22 (CSEL 54.646)).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

the unity of the Father and Son, 'we have been inducted into the mystery (μυσταγωγούμενοι) by the divinely inspired words of Scripture', and Didymus as well said that 'the book of the all-wise Daniel inducts us into the mystery'.¹⁴⁷ Cyril, perhaps having picked up this notion from Gregory or Didymus, uses it in his own works. For example, while expounding upon Trinitarian themes in comment upon John 17:9-11, he declares 'in this way the divinely inspired writings have instructed us in the mysteries (μεμυσταγωγήκασι)'.¹⁴⁸ A similar statement is found in his commentary on the Pentateuch called the *Glaphyra*, and it is significant that here again he is in the midst of discussing the Trinitarian mystery. This time he is concerned with the implications of divine consubstantiality for the subject of the incarnation, and states, 'For it was not the Father nor the Holy Spirit who became man, but only the Son. Thus, the divine Scriptures have led us into the mysteries (μεμυσταγωγήκασι)'.¹⁴⁹ In these two passages Cyril might well have in mind the literal mystagogical instruction given to catechumens before they partook of the church's mysteries, since some sort of instruction in Trinitarian and Christological dogma was surely included in it. Regardless, these statements complete the sketch of Cyril's mystagogical language that I am drawing here. The Spirit was given to the disciples so that they could instruct the church in the divine mysteries. This mystical instruction was recorded in holy Scripture so that it might be preserved for future generations. As a result, those in the church now are able truly to say that the Scriptures have inducted them into the mysteries of the Trinity and the incarnation. The necessary condition for this entire process to function is the presence of the Spirit who was at work in the hearts and minds of those who authored Scripture. Therefore, in both a chronological and a theological sense, the ongoing awareness of the mystery of Christ within the church depends upon the impartation of the Spirit to the disciples in the upper room.

¹⁴⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *ref. Eun. conf.* 40 (GNO 2.328); Didymus, *Zach.* 1.309 (4:7) (SC 83.356).

¹⁴⁸ Cyril, *Jo.* 17:9-11 (Pusey, 2.691). τοῦτον γὰρ ἡμᾶς τὸν τρόπον αἱ θεόπνευστοι μεμυσταγωγήκασι γραφαί.

¹⁴⁹ Cyril, *glaph. Gen.* (PG 69.100): Οὕτως ἡμᾶς αἱ θεῖαι μεμυσταγωγήκασι Γραφαί. Cf. *dial. Trin.* VII (655b) (SC 246.212) where he says that 'we have been initiated into the mysteries by the holy Scriptures alone' (μόνοις δὲ τοῖς ἱεροῖς μυσταγωγούμενοι Γράμμασι). The context here again is a discussion of Trinitarian dogma, as in the other two passages noted above.

CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES WITH RESPECT TO INSPIRATION

The Redemptive-Historical Contours of the Spirit's Operation

Before concluding this chapter, it will be helpful to bring some clarity to a few issues that have been implicit thus far, and that might be taken as tensions or even inconsistencies in Cyril's thought. The redemptive-historical cast of Cyril's theology of the Spirit raises at least two questions about his understanding of prophetic indwelling. One question that I have already hinted at is whether the Spirit's work within the authors of the Old Testament differed from his work within those of the New Testament. The passages we have looked at above initially suggest that there is no such distinction. The prophets, as well as the apostles and evangelists, received the mystagogy of the Spirit so that they could speak about the mystery which is in Christ. However, on at least one occasion, he did distinguish between the Spirit's presence and operation among Israel of old and within the church. Indeed, he was forced to do so when he came upon John 7:39 in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, for here the evangelist says, 'The Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified'. As he begins his exposition of this text, Cyril notes that properly interpreting the 'depth of the mystery' in the passage requires 'great insight', since the evangelist here states that the Spirit had not yet come, even though the 'choir of prophets' of the Old Testament spoke 'in the Spirit'. He thus begins by ruling out the possibility that the prophets did not have the Spirit, since it is axiomatic that the 'mind of the saints' has the Spirit, and since the writings of the prophets prove that they were 'Spirit-bearers' (πνευματοφόροι).¹⁵⁰

Assuming that the presence of the Spirit in the prophets is beyond question, Cyril sets it as his task to explain how the Spirit 'had not been given' up to this point in redemptive history. In order to do so he gives a cursory overview of the Spirit's relationship to humanity since the creation of the world. The breath of life given to Adam in Genesis 2:7 was none other than the Spirit which preserved him in incorruption and virtue. However, when he turned aside to sin, Adam and his descendants suffered the loss of the Spirit and so became subject to corrup-

¹⁵⁰ Cyril, Jo. 7:39 (Pusey, 1.690).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

tion and all kinds of sins. Nevertheless, the prophets foretold that the Spirit would one day return to humanity (Joel 2:28), since there was no other way for humanity to recover the condition it had at the beginning.¹⁵¹ Thus, at his baptism in the Jordan, Christ, the incarnate Son of God, received the Spirit as the second Adam, the firstfruits of the recreated new humanity. The key difference between the first Adam and the second Adam is that the second Adam is none other than God the Word, 'who does not know change'.¹⁵² In other words, the immutability of the divine Word ensures his impeccability as well. Therefore, because the incarnate Word could never fall into sin as did Adam, he is in no danger of losing the Spirit, and the Spirit is thus permanently rooted in his humanity and in all those who believe in him who share in his divine gifts.

The implication of this distinction is that the prophets possessed merely 'a rich shining and torch (δαδουχίαν) of the Spirit' which led them to an apprehension of future events and hidden matters. However, those who have believed in Christ have not simply the torch from the Spirit (δαδουχίαν ἀπλῶς τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ Πνεύματος), but 'the Spirit himself' (αὐτὸ . . . τὸ Πνεῦμα) who 'indwells' them.¹⁵³ This is not to say that those who have been recreated in Christ do not also have the 'torch' (δαδουχία) of the Spirit, for, as we will see in chapter six, Cyril elsewhere insists that the apostles, and even he himself, possess this torch.¹⁵⁴ However, in

¹⁵¹ Cyril, *Jo. 7:39* (Pusey, 1.691-2). On the connection between the giving of the Spirit to Adam (Gen. 2:7) and the giving of the Spirit to the disciples in John 20, see Marie-Odile Boulnois, 'Le souffle et l'Esprit: Exégèses patristiques de l'insufflation originelle de Gn 2, 7 en lien avec celle de Jn 20, 22', *RechAug* 24 (1989): 3-37. On Cyril's understanding of Adam's original state and the effects of the Fall, see Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 24-45; Walter J. Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man: according to Cyril of Alexandria* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1957), 141-59; Frances M. Young, 'Theotokos: Mary and the Pattern of Fall and Redemption in the Theology of Cyril of Alexandria', in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria*, 55-74.

¹⁵² Cyril, *Jo. 7:39* (Pusey, 1.693). On Cyril's narrative of the Spirit's loss and return, see Mahé, 'La Sanctification'; L. Janssens, 'Notre filiation divine d'après Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *ETHL* 15 (1938): 254-65; Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man*, 115-7; Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, 9-30; Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 136-7; Bernard Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie: L'humanité, le salut et la question monophysite* (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1997), 71-7, 195-213; Daniel A. Keating, 'The Baptism of Jesus in Cyril of Alexandria: The Re-Creation of the Human Race', *ProEcl* 8 (1999): 201-22; Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church*, 64-9; Daley, 'Fullness of the Saving God', 136-41; Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 191-205; Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 140-3; Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology*, 81-194.

¹⁵³ Cyril, *Jo. 7:39* (Pusey, 1.696). The word that I have translated here as 'indwell' is ἐναυλιζομαι. It is relatively uncommon in earlier Christian literature, but is used frequently by Cyril to refer to Christ's indwelling of the saints through the Spirit. See, e.g., *dial. Trin. V; VII* (552d; 656b) (SC 237.282; SC 246.216); *ador. IX; X* (PG 68.597, 656); *Jo. 14:23; 17:20-21* (Pusey, 2.497, 737). In commenting on John 7:39, Cyril goes on to argue that it is by virtue of this indwelling Spirit that even the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets, since the kingdom of heaven is the gift of the Spirit (cf. Matt. 11:11; Luke 17:21). On the latter point, see also *fr. Lc. 48* (7:28) (Reuss, 76-7), where he again cites John 7:39.

¹⁵⁴ Throughout his works, Cyril often uses the word δαδουχία ('torch') in relation to the Spirit, and this

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

addition to this 'torch', they have the Spirit himself dwelling within. Therefore, when the evangelist says that the Spirit had not been given, he means that the time for the 'complete and perfect indwelling' (τὴν ὀλοσχερῆ καὶ ὀλόκληρον κατοίκησιν) of the Spirit had not yet arrived.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the key point Cyril makes is that the Spirit was at work in the history of Israel simply in order to make prophecy possible, while Christ and his followers possess the Spirit 'continuously' (ἀδιαστάτως) and with a greater degree of participation.¹⁵⁶ We might suppose that this distinction implies the apostles understood far more than did the prophets, but Cyril does not draw this implication in his discussion. The fact that he does not do so suggests that he views the inspiration of the apostles and evangelists as basically the same sort of inspiration

usage appears to be his own innovation. I can find only two possible instances prior to him in which the word was used for the Spirit. One is in *De occursu domini*, a homily attributed to Gregory of Nyssa, but of questionable authorship (PG 46.1157). The other is in *Contra theatra*, a work attributed to John Chrysostom, but also of uncertain authorship (PG 56.545). Probably the unknown authors of these two works were influenced by Cyril's description of the Spirit. As is evident in the passage discussed above, Cyril sometimes uses the term as a synonym for the Spirit himself (i.e., the δαδουχία that is the Spirit), and sometimes uses the term as though it were something received from the Spirit (i.e., the δαδουχία that is given by the Spirit).

Prior to Cyril's usage, the word already bore significant religious associations. According to Paul Foucart, *Les mystères d'Éleusis* (Paris: A. Picard, 1914), 196, a δαδουχος was one who carried a double torch in the Eleusinian mysteries (so also LSJ, s.v., δαδουχος). George E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 232, 318, says that the δαδουχος was the second most important priest of the Eleusinian cult. Mylonas points out that this person participated in the initiation of the worshipers, a notion somewhat parallel to Cyril's conception of the role played by the Spirit in the initiation of catechumens into the church through baptism (see below pp.188-194). Moreover, Cyril's preference for this term parallels his abundant usage of mystical language, another distinctive element of his terminology (see above pp.88-97). For earlier usage of δαδουχία, see, e.g., Lucian, *Alex.* 38; Plutarch, *quaes. conv.* 612c; and Eusebius, p.e. 3.12.4, where it refers to mystery initiations; and 2 Macc. 4:22 where it refers to a generic procession without any overtones of mystery religions. See also the discussions at de Durand, SC 246.258-9; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 435-6, n.488. De Durand (p.258) notes that it was Cyril who imported the word into Christian theology, and that his take over of the word was 'partie d'une politique plus large de naturalisation du vocabulaire mystérique'. Also, he suggests that Cyril could have picked up the word from Clement of Alexandria, who used δαδουχος (prot. 2.22.7), though not δαδουχία. Given that Cyril appears elsewhere to have drawn little from Clement, it seems to me unlikely, though not impossible, that Clement was his source.

¹⁵⁵ Cyril, *Jo.* 7:39 (Pusey, 1.698). On Cyril's exegesis of this verse in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, see Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 103-8; Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 40-3. Also in his two exegetical works on the Pentateuch, Cyril relied on John 7:39 to contrast the old dispensation with the new. See *ador.* VII; IX; XI (PG 68.520, 613, 772); *glaph. Gen.* (PG 69.133, 233). On his exegesis of the verse in *De adoratione*, see Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 241-6.

¹⁵⁶ Cyril, *Jo.* 7:39 (Pusey, 1.697). Writing in the third century, Novatian gives much the same explanation of the Spirit's work, asserting a basic continuity between old and new, and placing the distinction in the permanence of the Spirit's dwelling within the apostles (*Trin.* 29). Furthermore, although his concern is somewhat different than Cyril's, Gregory of Nazianzus similarly spoke of the Spirit's presence through 'operation' (ἐνεργεία) before Pentecost, in contrast to his 'substantial' (οὐσιωδῶς) presence after Pentecost (*or.* 41.11 (SC 358.340)). On the latter text, see especially Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, 'The Holy Spirit as Agent, Not Activity: Origen's Argument with Modalism and Its Afterlife in Didymus, Eunomius, and Gregory of Nazianzus', *VC* 65 (2011): 227-48.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

that was operative among the prophets of old, in keeping with the other passages I considered above which suggested greater continuity.¹⁵⁷

A second question raised by Cyril's understanding of redemptive history is the extent of the Spirit's inspiring work within the church. We have already seen that in his discussion of John 20 he describes the disciples as the 'firstfruits' of the redeemed humanity in Christ. In that context he points to the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (cf. Acts 2) as the central moment in redemptive history when the Spirit returned to humanity. The breathing of the Spirit upon the disciples was but a precursor to this full outpouring. A central text in this discussion is Joel 2:28-29, a passage quoted in Acts 2 and understood by Cyril as a prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit. However, an ambiguity arises due to the fact that the prophetic text predicts that on that day the Lord will pour out the Spirit 'on all flesh', such that everyone, sons, daughters, old men, young people, and slaves will possess the Spirit of God and will prophesy. Cyril is well aware of the universality of this promise, stating in his commentary on Joel that the prophet predicts the outpouring of the Spirit not discriminately, simply on 'one or perhaps two prophets', but rather 'indiscriminately' (ἀπλῶς), upon 'all those worthy to obtain it'.¹⁵⁸ He interprets the prophet's phrase 'all flesh' as indicating that not simply the Jews, but all those who have faith will receive the gift of the Spirit.¹⁵⁹

If Adam's possession of the Spirit caused him to prophesy, and if both the prophets of Israel and the disciples uttered divinely inspired words by virtue of their having the Spirit, then it seems to follow that all baptized Christians indwelt by the Spirit might also prophesy in the same way. Yet Cyril never expresses any such expectation, so this might appear to be an ambiguity in his thought. The passage that comes the closest to providing an answer for this dilemma is Cyril's commentary on 1 Corinthians 14. Here Paul speaks of the various gifts the Spirit distributes to different persons in the church, indicating that not everyone has the same gift. One of the gifts listed by the apostle is the gift of prophecy. Cyril, however, interprets the abil-

¹⁵⁷ Pace Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 134, who argues that Cyril thinks 'the knowledge of the apostles far surpassed that of the prophets'. Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, 87, describes Cyril's thought about the Spirit's operation in the Old Testament as 'not coherent and uniform'. However, Bermejo's primary question is whether or not the Spirit indwelt all the saints in the Old Testament in the same manner in which he indwells believers in Christ. Whether Cyril is inconsistent on this question is not directly relevant to my concern. What he is unquestionably clear about is that the Spirit worked in the prophets of old to inspire their words, and he implies that this operation was not fundamentally different from his operation of inspiring the evangelists and apostles.

¹⁵⁸ Cyril, *Joel. 2:28-29* (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.335).

¹⁵⁹ Cyril, *Joel. 2:28-29* (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.339).

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

ity to prophesy not as giving new prophecy, but as 'interpreting the prophecies', presumably meaning the Hebrew prophets, and he suggests that there is no need for new prophecies since the incarnation has come to pass.¹⁶⁰ Thus, even though all Christians have the Spirit, not all prophesy, since there is a diversity of spiritual gifts, and even those who do 'prophesy' are merely interpreting the prophecies already given from of old. This passage goes some way towards explaining why Cyril never expresses an expectation that all Christians should prophesy.

The Inspiration of the Church Fathers

The next issue I want to consider is whether Cyril regarded the Spirit's inspiration as an ongoing reality within the life of the church. As I noted earlier, he seems to reserve the term πνευματοφόρος for scriptural authors, which might be taken to indicate that he views the inspiration of Scripture as an inspiration *sui generis*. However, there are passages in his corpus which suggest otherwise. I will consider four relevant passages, of which the first three refer to the Council of Nicaea and the fourth refers to the Council of Ephesus. In the first passage, while arguing against Nestorius in his *Five Tomes*, Cyril first notes that the 'divinely inspired Scripture' (ἡ θεόπνευστος γραφή) supports his case that God has been born in the flesh for the salvation of all. However, since Nestorius drew upon the Nicene Creed to form his argument, Cyril considers it as well, using it as evidence for his own case. When he speaks of Nicaea, he says that the 'fathers' who were gathered there defined the symbol of the faith 'through the illumination of the Spirit' (διὰ τῆς τοῦ πνεύματος φωταγωγία).¹⁶¹ This statement suggests that the fathers at Nicaea were guided by the Spirit in some general way, but it does not explain the manner of the Spirit's guidance at Nicaea. However, the next two passages are more explicit on this point.

Second, in his famous *Letter 39*, sent to John of Antioch to announce the reunion of the churches following the divisions that occurred at Ephesus in the summer of 431, Cyril again references the Nicene fathers.¹⁶² He states that he allows not the slightest change of a word or

¹⁶⁰ Cyril, 1 Cor. 14:2 (Pusey, 291-3): οὐκοῦν τὸ προφητεύειν ἐν τούτοις εἴη ἂν ἕτερον οὐδὲν, πλὴν ὅτι καὶ μόνον τὸ διερμηνεύειν δύνασθαι προφητείας. Cf. 1 Cor. 12:7 (Pusey, 286-8) on the distribution of various gifts. On Cyril's understanding of the gifts of the Spirit, see Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 294-300.

¹⁶¹ Cyril, Nest. I.5 (ACO 1.1.6, 25).

¹⁶² For a survey of the events surrounding this letter, see Stefanos Alexopoulos, 'An Example of Ecclesial Reconciliation in the Early Church: Three Homilies by Paul of Emesa and Cyril of Alexandria', *SVTQ* 45 (2001):

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

syllable (λέξις . . . συλλαβήν) to the creed, since it was not the fathers who were speaking, 'but the Spirit of God the Father who proceeds from him'. The latter phrase is a clear allusion to Matthew 10:20 in which Christ speaks to his disciples, promising them the guidance of the Spirit. Immediately after this statement, Cyril says, 'in addition the words of the holy mystagogues confirm us in the faith', and he then appends two citations from the New Testament, both of which speak of the Spirit's guidance (Acts 16:7; Rom. 8:8-9). It is not entirely clear who are the 'mystagogues' to whom Cyril refers here, but it seems most likely that he is describing the Nicene fathers, since in the rest of the paragraph he is at pains to make clear that he holds to the 'doctrines of the holy fathers', and 'especially Athanasius'.¹⁶³ Therefore, in this passage he says again that the Nicene Fathers were guided by the Spirit, but now goes even further and extends this inspiration to their very words, since it was not they who were speaking, but the Spirit of the Father. As a result of this inspiration, not one syllable of the words of the creed can be changed. Moreover, since Cyril applies to the Nicene fathers two biblical passages that describe the Spirit's guidance of the apostles (Matt. 10:20; Acts 16:7), it is clear that he thinks the Spirit's guidance of the apostles persists to later fathers of the churches as well.¹⁶⁴

339-58; McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 107-25 .

¹⁶³ Cyril, ep. 39.10 (ACO 1.1.4, 19-20). Cf. ep. 40.3 (ACO 1.1.4, 21).

¹⁶⁴ He uses Matthew 10:20 with reference to the Nicene fathers also at Nest. I.7 (ACO 1.1.6, 27); ep. 1.5 (=ad monachos) (ACO 1.1.1, 12). At hom. div. 2 (ACO 1.1.2, 94), preached at Ephesus, he applies the verse to 'the saints', probably alluding to the fathers. The same biblical passage is probably also alluded to when he says in ep. 17.3 (=Third Letter to Nestorius) (ACO 1.1.1, 35) that the Spirit was speaking in the Nicene fathers. However, in ep. 55.23 (=de symbolo) (ACO 1.1.4, 58) he applies Matthew 10:20 to the authors of the New Testament.

The sufficiency of the Nicene Creed as a basis for ruling out all heresy became a question during the Nestorian controversy. Nicaea, Cyril says, is 'sufficient for all good knowledge', and 'it lacks nothing at all' (ep. 33.1 (ACO 1.1.7, 147)), and he declares that his teaching is completely in accord with both sacred Scripture and the symbol of faith from Nicaea (ep. 33.8; 37 (ACO 1.1.7, 150-1, 154)). Nevertheless, Cyril's extensive literary campaign from the years of the controversy demonstrates that Nicaea was not so perspicuous as not to require interpretation. In the aftermath of the failed council, both sides emphasized their adherence to Nicaea. Acacius of Beroea, charged by the emperor with helping to resolve the impasse, proposed that Cyril retract all his anathemas and agree to a union based on the symbol of Nicaea as interpreted by Athanasius' *Letter to Epictetus*, a condition that Cyril refused to fulfill (see John of Antioch, *propos.* (ACO 1.1.7, 146); Cyril, ep. 33.2; 40.3; 48.1-2 (ACO 1.1.7, 147-8; 1.1.4, 21, 31)). Even though the Orientals eventually dropped the requirement that Cyril retract his writings, in the Formula of Reunion, which officially drew the schism to a close, both parties agreed that they were not adding to Nicaea, but simply setting forth the faith from the Scriptures and tradition (John of Antioch, ep. Cyr. 2.2 (= Cyril, ep. 38.2) (ACO 1.1.4, 8); Cyril, ep. 39.4 (ACO 1.1.4, 17)). See also Cyril's exposition of the Nicene Creed in ep. 55 (ACO 1.1.4, 49-61). On Cyril's attitude to the fathers, see the bibliography on page 8, n.4. Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology*, 228-32, focuses especially on the role of the Spirit to guide church leaders.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

Third, in the passage noted at the beginning of this chapter, in which Cyril brings together 2 Timothy 3:16 with Matthew 10:20, implying that θεόπνευστος has to do with the Spirit's guidance, his reference is not simply to Scripture, but also to the 'writings of the holy fathers' (αἱ τῶν ἁγίων Πατέρων . . . συγγραφαί).¹⁶⁵ This section of his *Dialogues on the Trinity* is a preface to his quotation and discussion of the Nicene Creed, so it seems fairly clear that he has the fathers of Nicaea in mind, and he thus uses θεόπνευστος for the church fathers as well as for Scripture. The fourth and final passage, this one related to the Council of Ephesus, is the most striking one of the four I am considering here. It occurs in what is apparently the announcement of the council's decision to the populace of the imperial capital. The letter is addressed generically to the 'clergy and the people', and is sent simply 'from the council', and signed 'the genuine brethren with us'. Although Constantinople is not mentioned by name, it seems likely that such was its destination, since it exhorts the people and clergy to join the council in casting out those who hold the errors that have been condemned. Furthermore, although the letter is not signed by any specific person, its closing, which mentions 'the genuine brethren with us', suggests that one of the presidents of the council signed it. We know that Cyril wrote other letters to Constantinople (e.g., ep. 18, 19, 27, 28), so this one might be another example of his arguing his cause in the imperial capital. Moreover, there are definite linguistic similarities between this letter and Cyril's other anti-Nestorian writings, suggesting that it comes from Cyril himself, or perhaps was dictated by him to Peter the Alexandrian, the notary of the conciliar sessions.¹⁶⁶

The significance of this document for our purposes is that it too uses θεόπνευστος to refer to the decision of a council. After denouncing Nestorius' contumacy and audacity, the document announces that he 'has been judged by the just decree of the holy Trinity and their

¹⁶⁵ Cyril, *dial. Trin.* I (388b) (SC 231.138). See his quotation of the Nicene Creed at 389e-390a (SC 231.142).

¹⁶⁶ *Concilii epistula ad clerum et populum* (ACO 1.1.2, 70). The phrase τοὺς τῆς μιαρᾶς καὶ βεβήλου καινοφωνίας ἐργάτας suggests that the document comes from Cyril himself. Reference to the τὰς βεβήλους καινοφωνίας ('polluted novelties of speech') is relatively infrequent in ancient literature. It occurs in Gregory of Nyssa (*antirr.* (GNO 3.1, 144)), twice in a letter by Basil of Ancyra (Epiphanius, *pan.* 73.2.5; 73.11.3 (GCS 37.269, 283)), and once in Chrysostom (*hom. in 2 Tim.* 5.2 (PG 62.626)), but no other fifth-century writer uses it besides Cyril, and he does so only in the literature coming from the Nestorian controversy. See his *Nest.* I.5 (ACO 1.1.6, 25), composed prior to the council, and his letter to Acacius of Beroea following the council (ep. 33.2, 9 (ACO 1.1.7, 147, 150)). Each time he uses the term, it is in the midst of a discussion of the Nicene Creed and Nestorius' supposedly innovative speech. On Peter of Alexandria as the notary of the council, see McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 76.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

divinely inspired judgment' (ψήφωι δικαίαι τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος καὶ τῆς αὐτῶν θεοπνεύστου κρίσεως κατακέρκρται).¹⁶⁷ This statement goes further than the previous three we have considered, for here the judgment of the council is not stated as simply having been guided by the Spirit, but is directly identified with a decision of the Trinity. Furthermore, since the council's decision is understood as identical to the divine decision, the 'judgment' of the bishops is said to be 'divinely inspired'. Aside from these two passages, every other instance of θεόπνευστος in Cyril's corpus appears to be a description of Scripture, but these passages are clear enough evidence that he views the decision of a council of bishops as divinely inspired in a manner analogous to the inspired Scripture. Another peculiar feature of this document is its suggestion that an act of divine inspiration which results in an inspired text is not simply the act of the Spirit alone, but is an act of the entire Trinity. In other words, inspiration occurs in a Trinitarian fashion. In the following chapter I will consider this point at greater length.

These four passages suggest, with an increasing degree of clarity, that Cyril believed the Spirit's inspiration was not restricted to the authoring of Scripture, but was continuous with the spiritual guidance of the fathers of the church who assembled at Nicaea in 325 and at Ephesus in 431. Thus, he can describe their writings as being fixed and binding in the same way that Scripture is. As those who come 'after the apostles' (μετ' αὐτούς), they had Christ present with them at the council (σύνοδος) (Matt. 18:20), and, by laying out the Nicene symbol, they functioned as 'most skillful mystagogues', while the Spirit 'was teaching them the truth' (ἐνηχοῦντος αὐτοῖς τἀληθές τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος).¹⁶⁸ However, these four examples should not be allowed to overshadow the fact that in the hundreds of other instances in his writings where θεόπνευστος occurs, the word is used to refer to Scripture, and some of Cyril's language, such as 'Spirit-bearer', is more clearly reserved for prophets or scriptural authors. Moreover, we should note that Cyril suggests that Nicaea holds a derived authority, since it is true because the holy fathers who gathered there were 'following the evangelical preaching' of the 'divinely inspired Scripture' (θεόπνευστος γραφή).¹⁶⁹ The Spirit certainly guided the Nicene and Ephesian fathers as well, but as they formed their documents under the Spirit's guidance,

¹⁶⁷ Concilii epistula ad clerum et populum (ACO 1.1.2, 70).

¹⁶⁸ Cyril, ep. 55.4 (ACO 1.1.4, 50); ep. 1.5 (ACO 1.1.1, 12).

¹⁶⁹ Cyril, ep. 1.9 (ACO 1.1.1, 13). So also Nacke, *Das Zeugnis der Väter*, 126-7, who concludes that, for Cyril, the fathers have the role of authoritative interpreters of Scripture.

they were adhering to the mystagogical writings of the apostles that were originally inspired by the Spirit.

SCRIPTURE AS ONE BOOK SEALED BY THE SPIRIT

In concluding this chapter I want to consider one final passage that brings to the fore a significant implication of the Spirit's inspiration of Scripture. Because of the Spirit's work in inspiring Scripture, a theme we have seen Cyril develop throughout this chapter, the various books of Scripture are united into one spiritual whole. He develops this idea in his exegesis of Isaiah 29:11-12, a passage that uses an analogy of a book that is 'sealed', which therefore cannot be read even by those who are literate. When he comes upon this text in his *Commentary on Isaiah*, Cyril offers no historical interpretation of the passage, but instead goes straight for an interpretation relating to the New Testament. He has perhaps been prompted to do so by the fact that the very next verse in the chapter is quoted by Jesus in the gospels (Matt. 15:8-9; Mark 7:6-7). In keeping with the denunciatory nature of the passage as used in the gospels, he sees 29:11-12 as a condemnation of the Jews. They search the Scriptures and always talk about the commandment of Moses, but 'without searching for Christ'.¹⁷⁰ In other words, Cyril interprets the 'book that is sealed' as a reference to the Hebrew Scriptures. The Jews were right to take the law of Moses seriously, but, Cyril says, they approached the law in a manner that is fundamentally flawed, flawed because it does not take into account the one about whom the law spoke. Because they failed to view the law as a message about Christ and even killed the one about whom it spoke, they actually 'dishonored the tutor', that is the law (Gal. 3:24).¹⁷¹

As a result of this Jewish impiety, according to Cyril, the book of the Old Testament was 'sealed' in judgment upon them so that they could not understand it. His assumption seems to be that the Jews were unworthy of any further benefit from Scripture, since they had despised that which they already had. In explaining in what manner this judgment took place, Cyril writes, 'The inspired Scripture was sealed in a certain manner by God, as in a single

¹⁷⁰ Cyril, Is. 29:11-12 (PG 70.653).

¹⁷¹ Cyril, Is. 29:13 (PG 70.656-7). Blackburn Jr., *The Mystery of the Synagogue*, 261-2, argues that in his reading of the Pentateuch, Cyril is unique in highlighting the law's own inherent deficiency: 'with the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra* one encounters a *novum* in the history of Christian exegesis of the law: the attempt to adduce the law as a whole as a witness to its own failings and to the moral impurity of those who continue to valorize its letter at the expense of the beauty of the truth'.

book. For all of Scripture is one book, and has been spoken through the one Holy Spirit.'¹⁷² How this assertion of the Spirit's authorship relates to the immediate context about the judgment upon the Jews is not obvious. Possibly what Cyril has in view is that since the Spirit inspired all of Scripture, and since the Spirit always testifies to Christ, all of Scripture points to Christ. Thus, Jewish failure to see Christ in the Old Testament is contrary to the way Scripture itself intends to be read, and the book is subsequently a sealed one for them. Nevertheless, putting aside his point about the Jews, what is clear in this assertion is that the inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit theologically grounds the unity of Scripture, and this spiritual unity legitimates and even necessitates a Christological reading of Scripture. Although Cyril was well aware that the Scripture was a collection of dozens of texts from many different prophets, evangelists, and apostles, he held that overshadowing this diversity was the united witness of the Spirit who spoke through the prophets, apostles, and evangelists.

Cyril's exegesis of this passage can be directly traced back at least two centuries, through Jerome's *Commentary on Isaiah* to the fifth book of Origen's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. There the prior Alexandrian argues that the sacred writings are 'one book' (ἓν βιβλίον), in contrast to pagan literature that has no harmony and thus no unity. In his discussion, Origen brings in Revelation 5:1-5 and Isaiah 29:11-12 to make the point that Scripture is a sealed book, and, also points out that it is all of Scripture that is sealed, not merely the Psalms (cf. Ps. 39:8). In keeping with his broader principle that the Son is the ground for unity in the multiplicity of the created order, Origen roots the unity of the Scriptures as one book in the one divine Word who stands behind it.¹⁷³ Jerome apparently had this passage of Origen's Johannine commentary as his source when he commented upon Isaiah 29:11-12 in his commentary on

¹⁷² Cyril, Is. 29:11-12 (PG 70.656): κατεσφραγίσθη τρόπον τινὰ παρὰ Θεοῦ, καθάπερ βιβλίον ἐν ἡ θεόπνευστος Γραφή. Ἐν γὰρ ἡ πᾶσα ἐστι καὶ λελάηται δι' ἑνὸς τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος. This passage is mentioned by Pesch, *De inspiratione sacrae scripturae*, 73; Schökel, *The Inspired Word*, 83; Wilken, 'Cyril of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Old Testament', 14; David Kneip, 'The Holy Spirit in Cyril of Alexandria's *Commentary on Isaiah*', in *The Old Testament as Authoritative Scripture in the Early Churches of the East, Bible in the Christian Orthodox Tradition 1*, ed. Vahan S. Hovhannessian (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 49-50. J. David Cassel, 'Key Principles in Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis', *STPatr* 37 (2001): 413-5, highlights Cyril's sense of the Bible's overall unity as a key principle in his exegesis, but does not point out that this unity is grounded in the Spirit's inspiration.

¹⁷³ Origen, *Jo.* 5.5-7 (SC 120.380-8). Cf. Origen's use of Isaiah 29:11-12 in the following passages: *Jo.* 13.48.315; *hom.* in *Num.* 13.2; *comm.* in *Mt.* 11.11. See also the preface to Origen's lost *Commentary on the Psalms*, preserved in Epiphanius, *pan.* 64.6-7. For Origen Scripture is sealed by being composed in figures and types. Cf. Heine, *Origen*, 117. On the Son as the grounds for unity in a world of multiplicity, see Rowan Williams, 'Origen: Between Orthodoxy and Heresy', in *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg (Leuven: University Press, 1999), 4, 12. For a passage exemplifying Origen's concern about multiplicity, see *princ.* 2.1.1-5.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

the prophet. Like Origen, he says that Scripture is one book, that it is sealed according to Revelation 5:2, and that it is not only the Psalms that are sealed, 'as many think'. However, whereas Origen grounded the unity of the Scriptures in the one divine Word of God, Jerome grounds the unity of Scripture in the inspiration of the one Spirit. The Scriptures were 'written by one Holy Spirit, and therefore are called one book'.¹⁷⁴ Cyril, clearly drawing on Jerome, drops the reference to Revelation as well as the point about the Psalms being sealed, but essentially copies over this line word-for-word into his own commentary, albeit without giving any indication that he is doing so. Nevertheless, even if these words are not original to Cyril, the fact that he carried them over into his own commentary suggests that he thought they summarized well what he believed about the Spirit's inspiration of Scripture and the consequences of that inspiration for the Bible's unity and message. This notion of Scripture's unity in the Spirit's work of pointing towards Christ will reemerge in chapter six when I consider Cyril's practice of spiritual and Christological exegesis.¹⁷⁵

CONCLUSION

In his introduction to Cyril's *Dialogues on the Trinity*, de Durand asserts that in the treatise the archbishop fails to take a 'categorical' position on the 'special' role of the Spirit in inspiration.¹⁷⁶ While he may have been right that Cyril does not much discuss inspiration in the *Dialogues*, the same certainly cannot be said regarding the rest of his corpus. As I have shown in this chapter, he clearly articulates a view that prophecy comes to pass by the Spirit. He discusses this theme at greatest length in his commentaries on the Hebrew prophets, undoubtedly prompted to do so by the biblical texts upon which he was commenting, texts that speak un-

¹⁷⁴ Jerome, *Is. 29:9-12* (CCSL 73.373-4): *leo autem de tribu iuda dominus iesus christus est, qui soluit signacula libri, non proprie unius, ut multi putant, psalmorum dauid, sed omnium scripturarum, quae uno scriptae sunt spiritu sancto; et propterea unus liber appellantur.* Abel did not mention this parallel between Cyril and Jerome in his article outlining the similarities between the two authors. Eusebius does not mention the Spirit in his exposition of Isaiah 29:11-12 (*Is. 1.96*). See also Didymus' reference to this passage in his *comm. in Ps. 39:8* (codex page 286) (Gronewald, 4.290).

¹⁷⁵ On the importance of the unity of Scripture for patristic exegesis, see Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 9-45.

¹⁷⁶ 'Aussi, du moins dans les *Dialogues*, ne prend-il pas de position bien catégorique . . . sur celle d'une rôle éventuel spécial de l'Esprit-Saint dans les inspirations prophétiques' (SC 231.58-9). He suggests that Cyril might have hesitated to take a categorical position on this issue because he was leery of insisting on the 'activité personnelle' of the Spirit prior to the stable and permanent indwelling of the Spirit through Christ. However, as I have argued above, Cyril did clearly affirm the activity of the Spirit prior to the incarnation, although he carefully distinguished it from the manner of indwelling in believers.

3. 'One Book Spoken through One Holy Spirit': The Inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit

equivocally about the Spirit inspiring the prophets. Moreover, although he did not speculate at great length about the mode of the Spirit's inspiration, his comments on this topic suggest a duality in both the composition and ongoing function of Scripture. Regarding the composition of Scripture, Cyril asserts that the prophets, apostles, and evangelists retained control over their minds, even though it was the Spirit who brought to articulation the words that they should speak.¹⁷⁷ Regarding the ongoing function of Scripture, Cyril asserts that to hear the biblical text is to hear the voice of the Spirit, yet he also says that it is the apostles who continue to preach today through the witness that they have left behind in the sacred books. Therefore, Scripture is both many books, because it has many human authors, and it is one book, because it has one divine Spirit lying behind each word. Both sides of the equation are irreducible and must be maintained.

Furthermore, because it is the divine Spirit who works in the prophets, apostles, and evangelists, the humanly mediated words of Scripture address humanity as the very words of God. To follow the writings of mere men is to 'heap up a lifeless and useless mass of ideas', but because the authors of Scripture spoke 'from the mouth of the Lord', their truthfulness and usefulness is guaranteed.¹⁷⁸ As Cyril says, it is God himself who has worked in the prophets by the Spirit, and 'the voice of God is sufficient for faith'.¹⁷⁹ However, here again we reach a conundrum. I argued in the last chapter that Cyril maintains the primacy of the Son's agency as revealer, whereas in this chapter it is the Spirit who has taken center stage. We must now bring together the discussions from chapters two and three in order to reveal a greater complexity to this picture, and thereby give a denser account of Cyril's theology of inspiration.

¹⁷⁷ Against Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration*, 38, who speaks of 'the prevalence [among patristic authors] of a concept of divine authorship that could lead to a practical forgetting of the claims of human authorship'. Karl Barth makes a similar criticism of patristic theories of inspiration. See *Church Dogmatics*, trans. G. W. Bromiley, G. T. Thomson, and H. Knight (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), I/2, 517–9.

¹⁷⁸ Cyril, *dial. Trin. III* (477d-e) (SC 237.58). Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 58, says about this passage, 'L'inspiration de l'Écriture est garante de sa véracité'.

¹⁷⁹ Cyril, *Is. 43:10* (PG 70.896). Cf. Cyril, *Abd. 1:1* (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.548), where he says that, because the prophets were inspired by the Spirit, the people of Israel were to fully believe that their words would come to pass, since their words were not their own but were instead from God.

4

‘He Has Spoken to Us by His Son’: The Christological Mediation of Scripture

Therefore, the Only-begotten also spoke long ago to the ancients through the Holy Spirit. . . . [but] at the completion of the ages the Son himself has spoken to us through himself, not with a prophet and a voice of the saints standing between. Rather, the Only-begotten, having become like us, spoke words to us through himself. And we say that the Father spoke in the Son, not as if separately through some man placed between who would transmit to us, not his own words, but rather those from someone else. Rather, he spoke by his own voice which is by the body of the Son speaking to us.¹

The Trinitarian themes that I discussed in chapter two did not come into play significantly in the last chapter. In this chapter I continue the discussion of inspiration that began in the previous chapter, and now look at it in light of Cyril’s Trinitarian theology, especially his insistence that the Son is the agent of divine revelation who reveals the Father by the Spirit. In this chapter I advance two complementary arguments. In the first half I argue that Cyril regards inspiration as a process whereby the Son speaks through a human mediator by his Spirit who indwells the human agent, such that all of Scripture is Christologically mediated. Thus, he understands the event of inspiration in a Trinitarian fashion, albeit with a distinct Christological focus. Furthermore, in the second half of this chapter, I argue that this understanding of inspiration serves as the basis for a significant contrast that Cyril draws between mere prophetic indwelling and the incarnation. Because the incarnate Son in the four gospels speaks not through a prophet, but through his own humanity, the words spoken in his incarnate state, that is, the gospels, rise above the rest of Scripture as being especially inspired. Thus, the Christological focus that is apparent in Cyril’s theology of revelation and inspiration extends also to the canon

¹ Cyril, *Heb.* 1:1 (Pusey, 363-4).

itself, since the reader of Scripture is drawn toward the gospels as the focal point of the inspired word.

THE SON SPEAKS IN THE PROPHETS AND APOSTLES

The picture that I presented in the last chapter of Cyril's theology of inspiration is in one important sense incomplete. Even though in a great many passages he attributes inspiration to the agency of the Spirit, he also at times speaks of it as the work of the Son. For example, I began chapter two by noting that in commenting on Isaiah 43:9 Cyril says about the Son, 'All understanding comes from him and he is the fount of all knowledge . . . if someone is found to have knowledge even of future things, it appears that he has received the gift by revelation from him'.² Just a few lines later he explicitly connects this principle with the prophets, as he writes, speaking in the person of Christ, 'I have spoken through prophets, I proclaimed the future in advance at various times through holy men'.³ The Son, then, not merely the Spirit, is the one who has spoken in the prophets.

This theme also comes out remarkably clearly in his *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*. Since Hosea is the first of the twelve prophets, Cyril's initial comments on his prophecy are something of an introduction to his entire commentary. For this reason, it is not surprising that we find him developing a theory of how prophetic inspiration works in commenting on Hosea 1:2. The text states, 'The beginning of the word of the Lord in Hosea'. Cyril's commentary begins by attributing revelation of future events generically to 'the God of all' (ὁ τῶν ὅλων Θεός) who 'reveals' (ἀποκαλύπτει) to the saints, 'by imparting (ἐνιείζ) to their minds knowledge of future events'. He cites Psalm 84:9 (LXX), in which David refers to 'what the Lord God will say in me' (ἐν ἐμοί), as well as Zechariah 4:5, which mentions the 'angel' or 'messenger' who speaks 'within' the prophet (ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοί). The point of both of these passages is that they refer to a sort of inner dialogue between God and the prophet, which is how Cyril understands the 'revealing' that Hosea speaks of.

However, by this point in his exposition, it is clear that the agent of revelation is not simply 'the God of all', but specifically the 'Word of God'. To support this identification of the

² Cyril, Is. 43:9 (PG 70.893).

³ Cyril, Is. 43:9 (PG 70.893).

'angel' in Zechariah 4:5 with the Word, Cyril next cites Isaiah 9:6, which also speaks of the Messiah as the 'angel' or 'messenger' 'of great counsel'. Cyril's citation of the Isaianic text here is in keeping with what I argued in chapter two, in that he presents the 'messenger' as the Word of God and uses the text to emphasize the agency of the Son in bringing divine revelation. Finally, Cyril calls in one further witness to this principle, the Apostle Paul, who declared that Christ was speaking in him (2 Cor. 13:3). Therefore, reading Hosea in light of these cross-references, Cyril interprets the statement, 'the beginning of the Word of the Lord in Hosea', to mean that 'the Word of God came to be in Hosea' (τὸ ἐν Ἰσηὲ γενέσθαι τὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγον). It was not simply that Hosea received a revelation from the Word, but that the divine Word himself came to reside in the prophet to bring him knowledge of the future. As Cyril writes, 'There was a revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) in Hosea, and knowledge of future events flashed as a light, illuminating (καταλαμπρόντος) not the eyes of his body, but his mind and heart'.⁴ This internal revelation that occurred within the prophet was 'subtle and obscure', and did not occur in 'language and words like ours', but such was the manner in which divine revelation was given to him. Thus, in this passage Cyril highlights the Son's role as revealer, a tendency that I pointed out in chapter two, but in this case his point has a greater specificity and concreteness, since he is talking about the words given to the prophet, words that eventually became part of Scripture.

This emphasis on the Son's mediation of the inspired word comes out not only in connection with the prophets, but with the Mosaic Law as well. As Israel stood before God at the foot of a trembling and fire-enveloped Sinai, the Septuagint records that Moses 'spoke and God replied to him with a voice (φωνῆ)' (Ex. 19:19). In his early work on the Pentateuch, *De adoratione*, Cyril takes up this passage, which comes at the beginning of the account of God's giving the law to Israel, and interprets it as an indication that Christ was the mediator of the law. Moses 'asked for the law' as a 'mediator and servant of the divine oracles', and God replied 'by his own voice' (τῆ ἰδίᾳ φωνῆ), which is the Son, the Word of the Father. Thus, 'the law is from him [i.e., the Son], even if it was spoken through angels (cf. Gal. 2:19; Heb. 2:2)'. To support this reading of Exodus 19:19, Cyril cites two dominical sayings. In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus declared that 'the law and the prophets' shall not pass away 'until heaven and earth pass away', and in Matthew 24:35 he states, 'heaven and earth will pass away, but my

⁴ Cyril, *Os.* 1:2 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.13-4).

words will not pass away'. Reading these two texts together, Cyril concludes that Jesus 'calls the law his own words' (Λόγους . . . ἰδίους).⁵ Although there were some precedents for seeing the Son as involved in the Sinai theophany, Cyril's identification of the voice in Exodus 19:19 as 'the Father's own voice, the Son' appears to be unique to him.⁶ I suggest that he has been led to interpret the passage in this manner because of his theological conviction that the Son is the primary mediator of divine revelation. His use of the word ἴδιος to identify the divine voice as the Father's 'own' voice, is in keeping with the passages I discussed in chapter two where he describes the Son as the Father's own 'Word', 'Power', 'Wisdom', 'Tongue', and 'Pen'. Therefore, the Mosaic Law is Christologically mediated, just as we saw regarding the words of the prophets.

It is worth noting here that at some point after writing *De adoratione* Cyril retreated from this interpretation of the passage, though not necessarily from the theological conviction that was guiding him. In his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, he returns to Exodus 19:19 when commenting upon Christ's declaration to the Pharisees, 'You have never heard his voice, nor have you seen his form, and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent' (John 5:37-38). Cyril assumes that Christ is here reading the Pharisees' thoughts. They are probably thinking to themselves that they certainly have heard the voice of God and seen his form in the theophany of Sinai. Christ, however, counters their thinking, asserting that they in fact have never heard the voice of God nor have they seen his form. Cyril then must explain how it is that the Pharisees have not heard God's voice, when Exodus 19:19 says God spoke at Sinai. Although he concedes that at Sinai the divinity itself (τὸ θεῖον αὐτὸ) descended, he points out that the word φωνῆ in Exodus 19:19 lacks the definite article. As such it was certainly 'not by his own voice' (οὐκ ἰδίᾳ πάντως φωνῆ) that God spoke, but simply by 'a voice, which was constituted miraculously through the sound of more human-like words'.⁷ Thus, Cyril gives an interpretation that is directly opposite to that which he had previ-

⁵ Cyril, *ador.* VII (PG 68.489). So also Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 56, who writes, 'Cyrill vertraut sich einerseits bei seiner Exegese Christus an, in dem er den Geber und auch den eigentlichen Ausleger der Schrift erblickt'. Cf. Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 177-8.

⁶ Clement of Alexandria presents the voice heard at Sinai as 'the lordly voice, the Word' (str. 6.3.34.3 (GCS 15.448)). Gregory of Nyssa's reading of the Sinai event perhaps also implies that Christ was speaking there (*hom. in Cant.* 3 (GNO 6.71)). Justin also emphasizes that it was the Son, not the Father, who served as the agent of revelation to Israel, though he focuses on the revelation in the burning bush rather than that which occurred at Sinai (1 *apol.* 63).

⁷ Cyril, *Jo.* 5:37-38 (Pusey, 1.381). He also references Exodus 19:19 at *Mich.* 1:2 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*,

ously presented in *De adoratione*. Though she did not note his earlier exegesis of Exodus 19:19 in *De adoratione*, Boulnois has drawn attention to this passage in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, arguing that his exegesis has been influenced by his anti-Eunomian concerns.⁸ Other factors that seem to be influencing his interpretation are the Johannine text itself which says that the Jews have not heard the Father's voice, a voice that he takes to be the divine Son, and a concern for divine incorporeality which surfaces in the course of his comments on the passage.⁹

Despite the fact that Cyril here appears to have departed from his earlier interpretation of Exodus 19:19, this should not be taken to imply a fundamental change in his theology of revelation. Several of the key passages I relied on in chapter two to demonstrate Cyril's emphasis on the Son's revelatory role were taken from his Johannine commentary, so his affirmation of this fundamental principle did not waver. Rather, we should see Cyril here offering an alternate interpretation of Exodus 19:19 as a result of his different exegetical concerns in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John* compared with his earlier *De adoratione*. Nevertheless, the difference in these two passages does reveal an implicit tension between Cyril's Trinitarian theology of the Son as revealer, a principle that presumably holds true for all acts of revelation, and his understanding of the superiority of the revelation brought through the incarnate Son.¹⁰ One might suppose that he would want to deny the Christological mediation of the law in his effort to emphasize the superiority and distinctness of the revelation in the incarnate Son. However,

1.603-4), but it is not clear in this passage if he has the Word in mind as the 'voice' at Sinai. On Cyril's attention to grammatical issues such as the absence or presence of the definite article, see Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 61-5.

⁸ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 144-5. Cyril's exegesis derives from his anti-Eunomian polemic in that in this passage he interprets the 'voice' of Exodus 19:19 in the same way he interprets the 'voice' used by the Son in John 12:28, and his exegesis of the latter passage is clearly shaped by his anti-Eunomian concerns. Boulnois notes that Cyril deals with John 12:28 also at *thes.* XIX (PG 75.316-7) and *Jo.* 1:2 (Pusey, 1.60-4). In the former passage Eunomius is explicitly named as the source of a heretical interpretation of John 12:28. In the latter passage the same heretical interpretation is put forward in the midst of a chapter of the commentary devoted to refuting Eunomius' error. It is this anti-Eunomian understanding of the divine 'voice' that appears to be in the background as he interprets the 'voice' of Exodus 19:19 while commenting upon John 5:37-38, and which is absent in *De adoratione*.

⁹ When preaching upon John 5:37, Chrysostom also draws Exodus 19:19 into his discussion and emphasizes divine incorporeality (*hom. in Jo.* 40.3).

¹⁰ This tension is apparent even within *De adoratione* itself. In the same passage I have cited above, in which he exegetes Exodus 19:19, he also contrasts the law which went only to Israel with Christ's announcement that has gone to all the earth (*ador.* VII (PG 68.489)). Moreover, in *De adoratione* he at least twice cites John 5:37-38, the passage he will later interpret in his Johannine commentary, in order to demonstrate the inherent epistemic insufficiency of the law, suggesting that those Jews to whom Christ was speaking only thought that they had seen God the Father at Sinai (*ador.* II; IX (PG 68.236-7, 596)). On this point, cf. Blackburn Jr., *The Mystery of the Synagogue*, 167-76.

Cyril's pro-Nicene Trinitarianism will not allow such a move, because he holds that the Son is the mediator of all divine revelation as a consequence of the principle of inseparable operations. Despite this apparent tension, what is important for my argument is that Cyril holds that the Mosaic Law was Christologically mediated when it was given to Israel.

So far I have looked at the Christological mediation of the law and the prophets. All that remains is to see that Cyril applies this same principle to the revelation of the New Testament as well. 2 Corinthians 13:3 is the key text that he relies upon for this point. We have already seen him cite it above in his exposition of Hosea 1:2. In addition to this instance, on several occasions in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* he introduces a quotation from the Apostle Paul by describing him as the one in whom Christ speaks.¹¹ In a letter written in the aftermath of the Nestorian controversy, he even extends this principle to the Nicene fathers as well, quoting 2 Corinthians 13:3 and stating that 'the holy fathers' along with the apostles and evangelists had 'the incarnate Word himself speaking in them' (αὐτὸς γὰρ ἦν ὁ λαλῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁ ἐνανθρωπήσας λόγος).¹² In light of these passages we can conclude that Cyril regards the apostolic writings, along with the Mosaic Law and the Hebrew prophets, to be divine revelation mediated by the Son.

This conclusion might appear to stand at odds with my argument from the last chapter that Cyril emphasizes the Spirit's role in the inspiration of Scripture. However, if we recall the Trinitarian patterns of agency that I outlined in chapter two, it is clear that there is no contradiction here. A couple of brief references will illustrate this point. In his commentary on 2 Corinthians 1:1, Cyril describes the apostle as one 'speaking in the Spirit' and one who 'has Jesus dwelling within (ἐνηλισμένον) his own soul'. He legitimates the former description by citing 1 Corinthians 8:40 ('And I believe that I too have the Spirit of God'), and the latter by citing 2 Corinthians 13:3.¹³ The fact that Cyril can assert the agency of the Spirit and Son in the

¹¹ Cyril, Jo. 1:1; 1:9; 13:35; 14:2-3; 17:24 (Pusey, 1.38, 102; 2.390, 404; 3.6). However, he treats as heretical the notion that the Father dwelled in Christ in exactly the same way that Christ dwelled in Paul (Jo. 14:11 (Pusey, 2.437)). See also his citation of 2 Corinthians 13:3 in the following works, *dial. Trin.* V (562b) (SC 237.312); *resp. ad Tib.* 12 (Wickham, 168); *inc.* (691b) (SC 97.228); *quod Chr. un.* (767b) (SC 97.476); 1 Cor. 15:51 (Pusey, 315-6); Heb. 4:15-16 (Pusey, 431). A fragment from Cyril's *Commentary on 2 Corinthians* survives in which he comments on this passage, but he does not develop the Trinitarian or pneumatological implications of the verse as he does in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, focusing instead on the role it plays in the argument of Paul's letter (2 Cor. 13:3-4 (Pusey, 358-60)).

¹² Cyril, ep. 55.31 (=de symbolo) (ACO 1.1.4, 61).

¹³ Cyril, 2 Cor. 1:1 (Pusey, 320).

same passage suggests that he did not regard them as in conflict with one another. Far from illustrating lack of clarity in Cyril's thought, his insistence that both the Son and the Spirit reside within and speak through the apostle is merely a consequence of his Trinitarian theology. As he states in his commentary on John 14:21, Christ 'speaks in the saints through the Spirit those things which concern him'.¹⁴ In other words, the Trinitarian structure of divine revelation finds concrete expression in the composition of Scripture, whether in the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai, the revelation in the prophets of old, or in the evangelists and apostles of the New Testament. It has long been acknowledged that Cyril's understanding of divine indwelling is Trinitarian, insofar as he holds that to have the indwelling Spirit means that one also has the Father and Son indwelling the soul.¹⁵ What I have shown here is that he views the inspiration of Scripture as resulting from the same sort of Trinitarian indwelling, such that human authors are inspired when the Son dwells within them by the Spirit and thereby speaks to and through the human mediator.

CHRISTOLOGICAL MEDIATION AMONG EARLIER PRO-NICENES

In chapter three I suggested that the inspiration of Scripture by the Spirit was a long-standing patristic tradition by Cyril's time. The same is true for the notion that it was the Son who spoke in the prophets and apostles. The idea is at least implicit in the New Testament, as when the author of Hebrews presents Christ as speaking the words of several Old Testament passages (Heb. 2:11-13; 10:5-7), and when the Apostle Paul declares that Christ is speaking in him (2 Cor. 13:3). By Origen's day, it appears to have been a well established tradition, since, without any hint of novelty or controversy, he begins his *On First Principles* by asserting that Christ the Word was in Moses and the prophets so that they could prophesy, and he extends this principle to the apostles as well, citing 2 Corinthians 13:3 for support. Later, in his extend-

¹⁴ Cyril, Jo. 14:21 (Pusey, 2.493-4). See Cyril, fr. Lc. 107 (10:16) (Reuss, 108-9) where Cyril makes the same point, that Christ speaks in the apostles and evangelists by the consubstantial Spirit, basing it on 2 Corinthians 13:3, Matthew 10:20, and Luke 10:16.

¹⁵ On the issue of Cyril's theology of Trinitarian indwelling, see Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 186-95; Mahé, 'La sanctification', 478-9; B. Fraigneau-Julien, 'L'inhabitation de la sainte Trinité dans l'âme selon Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *RevSR* 30 (1956): 135-156; Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, 35-47. For an example of Cyril's understanding of divine indwelling, see *thes.* XXXIII (PG 75.572) where he argues that because the Son is the image of the Father, the person who has the Son also has the Father, and because the Spirit is the image of the Son, the one who has the Spirit also has the Son and the Father. See also Jo. 14:23 (Pusey, 2.497-8); *dial. Trin.* VII (640e-642d) (SC 246.170-4).

ed discussion of the inspiration of Scripture, he repeats this position, writing, 'The holy books are not the works of men, but were recorded and have come to us as a result of the inspiration (ἔξ ἐπιπνοίας) of the Holy Spirit by the will of the Father of the universe through Jesus Christ'¹⁶

Although he asserts the Son's mediatorial role in revelation in his *On First Principles*, Origen gives little explanation of how this mediation takes place. However, two sources chronologically closer to Cyril, Didymus and Jerome, both present a theology of revelation that in significant ways serves as a precursor to Cyril's more developed account. In a brief passage from his *Commentary on Zechariah*, Didymus interprets the 'angel' speaking within the prophet as either simply an angel, or the Son himself. In support of the latter position, he adduces Isaiah 9:6, 2 Corinthians 13:3, Psalm 84:9, and Habakkuk 2:1.¹⁷ We should recall that in his exegesis of Hosea 1:2 that I looked at above, Cyril also cites Zechariah's angel as evidence of the Son's presence in the prophet, as well as Isaiah 9:6, 2 Corinthians 13:3, and Psalm 84:9. This common exegetical argument for the Son's speaking in the prophet should be added to the list of parallels that I have noted thus far between Cyril and Didymus' *Commentary on Zechariah*. Both also use the term πνευματοφόρος to refer to scriptural authors, both use mystagogical language more frequently than other writers and in connection to Scriptural authors, and both are willing to concede a positive sense of the term 'ecstasy'. These parallels might be due to a common Alexandrian milieu that both authors inhabited, but their cumulative weight suggests Cyril's dependence upon Didymus. There is no evidence that in Cyril's day Didymus was under any cloud of suspicion as would be true sometime later, and Cyril states in the preface to his *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets* that he is aware of previous commentators who have taken up the prophets.¹⁸ Thus, given Didymus' location in Alexandria and high repute as an exegete, it would be surprising if Cyril had not made use of his exposition of Zechariah when he undertook the task of writing his own exposition.

¹⁶ Origen, *princ.* 1, prooem., 1; 4.4.2 (SC 252.76-8; SC 268.404).

¹⁷ Didymus, *Zach.* 1.31-4 (1:9) (SC 83.208). Cf. *Zach.* 1.111-6 (2:3-4); 1.271-6 (4:1-3) (SC 83.250-4, 334-6). However, in the *De Trinitate* of ps-Didymus, Zechariah's angel is interpreted as the Spirit rather than as the Word (PG 39.628). Athanasius explicitly rejects the interpretation that the angel in Zechariah was the Spirit, and says instead that it was merely an angel, presumably because his opponents, the *tropikoi*, interpreted the passage thus (*ep. Serap.* 1.11.2-4).

¹⁸ Cyril, *Os.*, praef. (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.1). On Cyril's attitude to his predecessors as displayed in the prefaces to his works, see Hannah Milner, 'Cyril of Alexandria's Treatment of His Sources in His *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*', *STPatr* (forthcoming).

Jerome was familiar with and drew upon Didymus' work on Zechariah, and he takes a similarly Didymean angle. When he comes upon the statement, 'The beginning of the word of the Lord in Hosea' (Hos. 1:2), he explains that the divine Word, which was in the beginning with the Father, came to be (*factum est*) in Hosea. Jerome makes a distinction between the Lord speaking 'in Hosea' (*in Osee*) and his speaking 'to Hosea' (*ad Osee*). When he spoke 'in Hosea', he was speaking not to Hosea himself, but 'through him to others'.¹⁹ Jerome's interpretation of Hosea 1:2 is strikingly similar to Cyril's take on the same verse. Since numerous parallels have been noted before between Cyril's *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets* and that of Jerome²⁰, it is likely that Jerome has influenced his interpretation in this case as well. However, the cross-references that Cyril cites in his exposition probably reveal the influence of Didymus, since Jerome does not make the same textual connections. Not all patristic authors shared this understanding of the 'word' that came to the Hebrew prophets. Theodore of Mopsuestia, for example, understood the 'word' that came to the prophet to be simply 'the operation (*ἐνέργειαν*) according to which [the prophet] seemed, by some kind of voice (*φωνῇ τινι*), to be instructed about what ought to be done'.²¹ Nevertheless, there was a clear precedent for this reading in Didymus and Jerome, so it is reasonable to suppose that Cyril has drawn upon such earlier sources.

Furthermore, there is clear pro-Nicene precedent for Cyril's explanation that the Son speaks in the prophets and apostles by the Spirit. Two good examples that illustrate his indebtedness to fourth-century authors are Athanasius' *Letters to Serapion* and Didymus' *On the Holy Spirit*. In writing to Serapion Athanasius argues that 'it was when the Word came to the prophets, that they used to prophesy in the Holy Spirit', giving several passages from the prophets and Acts to support this claim. After establishing that this is the case from Scriptural testimonies, he concludes 'whenever the Spirit is said to be in someone, it means that the Word is in him, giving the Spirit'.²² Among the passages Athanasius uses to prove this principle is 2 Corinthians

¹⁹ Jerome, *Os.* 1:1; 1:2 (CCSL 76.5-8). He makes the same point at *Zach.* 1:1 (CCSL 76A.750). Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *e. th.* 2.18 where he deals with Hosea 1:2 along with several similar passages from the prophets.

²⁰ So Abel, 'Parallélisme exégétique'; Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 307, 438-9.

²¹ Theodore, *Nah.* 1:1 (Sprenger, 240). Although see his comments at *Os.* 1:1 (Sprenger, 2-3) where he sees the 'word of the Lord' that came to Hosea as the 'divine operation' (*τὴν ἐνέργειαν . . . τὴν θεῖαν*) by which the Lord established the heavens (Ps. 32:6). As I noted on page 29, n.59, Psalm 32:6 was frequently taken by pro-Nicene authors as referring to the involvement of the Son and Spirit in the act of creating. However, it is unclear whether Theodore has the Son in view when he speaks of the 'divine operation' here.

²² Athanasius, *ep. Serap.* 1.31.5-12 (AW I/1, 527-31).

13:3 which we have seen Cyril use above. Moreover, Athanasius presents this understanding of divine inspiration as a consequence of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. After arguing that inspiration is given by Son through the Spirit, he anchors his argument in the principle of inseparable operations. 'The spiritual gifts are given in the Trinity. . . . The Father himself through the Word in the Spirit works and gives all things'.²³ Didymus affirms the same principle in his *On the Holy Spirit*, stating that the Spirit 'is possessed inseparably (*inseparabiliter*) with the Only-begotten Son of God'.²⁴ He too argues that when the prophets were said to possess the Spirit, it was by virtue of the Word who had come to them, and he extends this principle to include the apostles as well, also using 2 Corinthians 13:3 as a proof-text.²⁵

Given Cyril's Alexandrian context, it is possible that he could have drawn upon either Athanasius' *Letters to Serapion* or Didymus' *On the Holy Spirit*, or perhaps even both of them, for his understanding of prophetic Trinitarian indwelling. Whatever the case, he clearly had pro-Nicene precedent for his understanding of Trinitarian inspiration. I hope by this point that the connection between the theology of revelation I looked at in chapter two and the theology of inspiration I looked at in chapter three has become apparent. When Cyril speaks about revelation, he does so according to the pattern from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. When he talks about the inspiration of Scripture, he sometimes speaks only about the Spirit, and sometimes only about the Son, but at other times puts these two together into more robustly theological statements about the manner of inspiration, and when he does so, it is clear that his theology of inspiration follows the contours of his theology of revelation. He does not typically talk about the Father's agency in relation to divine inspiration, but his theology of revelation and inspiration nevertheless demonstrates the same pattern that is evident in his overall understanding of Trinitarian operations. However, in order to capture the contours of Cyril's understanding of divine inspiration, it is necessary to consider one final distinction.

²³ Athanasius, *ep. Serap.* 2.14.2-4 (AW I/1, 558-9). Cf. Athanasius, *ep. Serap.* 3.3.1-2.

²⁴ Didymus, *Spir.* 9 (SC 386.150).

²⁵ Didymus, *Spir.* 125-9 (SC 386.260-4). At *Spir.* 8 he asserts that the same Spirit was at work in the prophets and apostles, and at *Spir.* 107 he uses 2 Corinthians 13:3. Another text that is somewhat relevant to this discussion is ps-Athanasius, *dial. Trin.* III (PG 28.1236), where the author argues that Scripture's designation as 'divinely breathed' (*θεόπνευστος*) means that it is spoken by the Father, Son, and Spirit. On the basis of this description he argues that the Spirit is divine, and in the course of his argument he cites Isaiah 54:13, Matthew 10:20, and 2 Corinthians 13:3, three texts that are also significant for Cyril.

THE SON SPEAKS THROUGH HIMSELF

In the second half of this chapter I want to argue that Cyril has given his own stamp to the pro-Nicene legacy he inherited, by asserting that the Son's revelation of the Father is twofold, a distinction that, as far as I can tell, does not occur in prior authors. The Son reveals the Father through his teaching as the incarnate man during his earthly life, and he reveals the Father through his Spirit filling the prophets and apostles so that they can instruct the church and author Scripture. The twofold nature of this revelation is evident in the passage with which I opened and concluded chapter two:

The Word, who is in the Father and from the Father, transmits the truly extraordinary, lofty, and great counsel of the one who begot him. He does so, on the one hand, through the utterance of words, as a man, when he became like us, and, on the other hand, through spiritual knowledge and illumination after his ascension into heaven. For he reveals to those who are worthy the mysteries concerning himself, as Paul also testifies, saying, 'If you seek proof of Christ who speaks in me'.²⁶

The distinction between these two modes of revelation is all important for Cyril's Christology, as well as his understanding of the scriptural canon, and its significance becomes increasingly clear in his later works. As the Nestorian controversy progressed, he contrasted ever more the distinction between prophetic indwelling and the incarnation, and this principle exerted growing pressure upon his theology of Scripture, such that he eventually came to see the gospels as central to all the Scriptures, and even as, in some sense, 'especially' inspired. His theological argument for the centrality of the gospels thus rests upon his pro-Nicene assumption that Christ is God and the Son of God, and upon his conviction, displayed most fully in the Nestorian controversy, that Christ is no mere inspired man, but is the incarnate Word of God, the Son of God existing as a man. To demonstrate the way he develops this distinction I want to look initially at two statements from his Lukan homilies before then turning to consider in more detail his exegesis of Isaiah 54:13 and Hebrews 1:1-2.

On two occasions in his *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, composed sometime during or after the Nestorian controversy, Cyril addresses this same distinction in such a way that the gospels

²⁶ Cyril, *Jo.* 17:6-8 (Pusey, 2.685).

come to the forefront as the center of Scripture. As he begins his twenty-ninth homily, he prefaces his exegesis of the gospel text by exhorting his congregation to

receive those things that will lead you to eternal life. For it is written, 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that goes forth from the mouth of God' (Deut. 8:3). All Scripture, indeed, goes forth from God, but this is especially (ⲁⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲁ) so in the gospel proclamations (ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲛⲓⲛⲁⲛⲓⲛⲁⲛⲓⲛⲁ). For the same one who formerly, by the ministry of Moses, delivered to the people of Israel the law in types and shadows, has, after having become man, spoken to us, as the wise Paul testified, writing, 'God, who long ago in many ways spoke to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken with us by his Son' (Heb. 1:1-2). And 'we are taught of God' (1 Thess. 4:9), for Christ is in truth God and the Son of God. Let us therefore fix our careful attention upon what he says, and scrupulously examine the depth of his meaning.²⁷

Cyril opens this homily by pointing to the vivifying effect of the inspired word, recalling a passage from Deuteronomy that is also cited in the gospels of Matthew and Luke (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4). After affirming that all Scripture proceeds from God, he qualifies this statement by saying that the 'gospel proclamations' 'especially' proceed from God. As justification for this principle, Cyril contrasts the mode of revelation in the Old Testament with that in the New, basing his argument on a citation from Hebrews 1:1-2. The difference in the two consists in the medium through which divine revelation is conveyed to the people. Even though the revelation of the law and prophets was inspired by God, and, as we saw above, even came from the Son, it was still spoken through the medium of a human person. However, in 'the last days' God has spoken, not by a mere prophet, but by his very own Son. As a result of the revelation through the Son, all believers can now truly be said to be 'taught by God', because Christ himself is indeed the divine Son. On the basis of this contrast and the greater prominence given to the gospel sayings, Cyril calls on his congregation to pay careful attention as he unfolds the meaning of the gospel narrative.

The second passage is very similar to the first and opens Cyril's Homily 52. Here as well he quotes Hebrews 1:1-2 to contrast the revelation of the Old Testament with that in the gospels. Moreover, he also again affirms the divine origin of all Scripture, but immediately nuances it by highlighting the Gospels as supremely important. Cyril writes, 'All Scripture is inspired by God (ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲛⲓⲛⲁⲛⲓⲛⲁⲛⲓⲛⲁ) and profitable, but above all the rest this is especially the case

²⁷ Cyril, hom. Lc. XXIX (CSCO 70.41-2). Cyril's citation of Hebrews 1:1-2 here leaves out the clause 'at many times'. He usually includes it when he quotes the verses.

with the holy Gospels (ἁγία εὐαγγέλια).²⁸ Whereas in the first passage Cyril did not explicitly make reference to inspiration and said simply that the gospels 'especially' go forth from the mouth of God, in the second passage he unambiguously cites 2 Timothy 3:16 regarding the inspiration of Scripture. Even though all of Scripture is indeed inspired by the Spirit, there is a sense in which, for Cyril, the gospels stand in a unique category. What he means by asserting the centrality of the gospels becomes clearer if we look at his exegesis of Isaiah 54:13 and Hebrews 1:1-2, two biblical texts that he often joined together.

When he came upon Isaiah 54:11-13 in his *Commentary on Isaiah*, Cyril took the passage as a description of the church and its glories. Using the metaphor of a city, the passage speaks of Christ who is the foundation of the church, and the apostles who are the foundations after him, as well as the mystagogues who act as the gates to the city.²⁹ After expounding on the leaders of the church, Cyril moves on to discuss those who inhabit the city, that is, those who are in the church. All those in the church, he says, are 'taught by God' (διδασκτοὺς Θεοῦ), in contrast to the former instruction (πεπαιδευμένη) that came through Moses and the prophets. Here he once again quotes Hebrews 1:1-2 to substantiate his point. Cyril's intention in uniting Isaiah 54:13 with Hebrews 1:1-2 is to draw attention to the identity of the church's instructor. It is not a 'teacher' (καθηγητήν) or 'mediating prophet' (προφήτην τινὰ μεσιτεύοντα) who instructs the church, but 'the Word himself who was begotten from God the Father, who came to be in a form like us, and who has appeared in the flesh'.³⁰ In addition to this exposition in his Isaianic commentary, Cyril turns to Isaiah 54:13 on a number of occasions throughout his corpus, and, although he occasionally uses the passage to refer to the teaching accomplished by the indwelling Spirit, he typically refers it to the divine teaching that occurred through the ministry of the incarnate Christ, even calling Christ a 'mystagogue' for those who have believed from the nations.³¹ For example, he argues that the Son's famous

²⁸ Cyril, *hom. Lc.* LII (CSCO 70.182). The word that I have here translated as 'Gospels' is the adjectival form of the Syriac transliteration of εὐαγγέλιον. In the absence of a noun for the adjective to modify, it seems best to take it as functioning substantively to refer to the four gospels.

²⁹ Cyril, *Is.* 54:11-13 (PG 70.1209-12). On Cyril's ecclesiology, see Hubert Du Manoir, 'L'église, corps du Christ, chez S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Gr* 19 (1938): 573-603, *Gr* 20 (1939): 83-100, 161-88, 481-506; *ibid.*, *Dogme et spiritualité*, 287-366; Russell, 'The Church in the Commentaries of St Cyril of Alexandria'; Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology*, 195-252.

³⁰ Cyril, *Is.* 54:11-13 (PG 70.1212).

³¹ Cyril, *hom. Lc.* LIV; LIIX; LXXIV; LXXXIII; CXXXIII (CSCO 70.193, 214, 295; Payne Smith, 203, 373); *Jo.* 1:40; 6:45; 15:8 (Pusey, 1.194, 507; 2.567); *Is.* 26:10; 54:11-13 (PG 70.576, 1208-12); *Ps.* 22:1 (PG

4. 'He Has Spoken to Us by His Son': The Christological Mediation of Scripture

prayer to the Father in John 17 is given as a pattern of prayer for Christians, and it is through the Son acting in this manner that 'we are called and are truly taught by God'.³² His concern in these passages is not simply to use the passage as evidence that Jesus is divine in the fullest sense of the term. Rather, his concern is to emphasize the immediacy of experience with the divine that believers have through the incarnate Son.

This passage had not received much attention by patristic authors prior to Cyril. Eusebius spends little time in his Isaianic commentary developing the meaning of 'taught by God'.³³ In the pseudo-Didymus *De Trinitate*, the passage is applied to the teaching of the Spirit, while Gregory of Nazianzus uses it of the teaching offered by the bishops of the church.³⁴ In Jerome's commentary on Isaiah 54:13 he does not develop the passage with the same emphasis that Cyril has upon the teaching of the incarnate Christ, though he does note that it was quoted by Christ in the Gospel of John.³⁵ None of these prior usages are very similar to Cyril's. The only two authors whose usage comes close to Cyril's are Athanasius and Chrysostom. In his *Orations against the Arians*, Athanasius cites the passage as a part of his argument that the Son is distinct from all the prophets and holy men who had gone before him.³⁶ Similarly, Chrysostom, in a homily on John 6:45, contrasted the revelation of God to the ancients which came 'through men' with the revelation that has now come 'through the Only-begotten Son of God'.³⁷ There is no question that Cyril had read Athanasius' *Orations*, and he knew at least some

69.840); *thes.* XX (PG 75.352); *Heb.* 1:3 (Pusey, 368). In the following chapter I will consider his exegesis of Psalm 22:1. See the following passages where he uses Isaiah 54:13 to refer to the inner teaching accomplished by the Spirit: *Os.* 2:15 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.65); *Is.* 51:4 (PG 70.1109); *thes.* XXXIV (PG 75.613). In *fr. Lc.* 72 (9:18-22) (Reuss, 90) there is a possible allusion to the passage in reference to the Father's revealing to Peter the identity of Jesus.

³² Cyril, *Jo.* 17:1 (Pusey, 2.659).

³³ Eusebius, *Is.* 2.43 (Ziegler, 343).

³⁴ Ps-Didymus, *Trin.* II (PG 39.644); Gregory Nazianzus, *or.* 2.8. Cf. ps-Athanasius, *Maced. dial.* I (PG 28.1320) where the passage is quoted as a part of the author's argument for the divinity of the Spirit.

³⁵ Jerome, *Is.* 54:11-14 (CCSL 73A.613). See also the references to the verse at Origen, *Jo.* 10.42.293; *Cels.* 8.19; Eusebius, *h.e.* 10.4.62; ps-Basil, *Eun.* V (PG 29.773).

³⁶ Athanasius, *Ar.* 1.59.6 (AW I/2, 170).

³⁷ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Jo.* 46.1 (PG 59.258). Cf. John Chrysostom, *hom. in Mt.* 1.1, where he applies the passage to the inner teaching of the Spirit, and *hom. in 2 Cor.* 2.5 where he applies it to the instruction given to catechumens.

of Chrysostom's works, so he might well have picked up this exegesis from either of them.³⁸ Nevertheless, even if he did draw upon these prior authors, Cyril uses the text much more frequently than anyone prior to him had, and he sharpens the contrast implied in the verse.

In both the above passages from the *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, as well as in his commentary on Isaiah 54:13, Cyril cites Hebrews 1:1-2. In fact, it was in his *Commentary on Hebrews* that Cyril develops this theme most fully. The commentary survives only in the catena tradition, but there is one extended passage that deals with 1:1-2 that is relevant to this discussion. He opens his comments on the passage by saying that God has spoken to the ancients 'through the mouth of the saints and through the voice of the prophets'. The issue of Trinitarian agency quickly comes to the fore, as Cyril quotes Zechariah 1:5-6 to posit that the Spirit was at work in the prophets, but then adds, 'if the gift of prophecy was in the Spirit among the ancients, it was not without the Word of God who is from the Father'. Eager to rule out an incorrect inference from this interpretation, Cyril further reveals his pro-Nicene cards. Someone might assume that the Spirit acts as an intermediary between God and the prophets, himself receiving the knowledge of God's will from the divine Word, and then communicating that will to the prophets so that they can make it known. The archbishop objects to such a notion because it makes the Spirit no different than the prophets themselves who have to receive revelation from God, and he instead suggests that the Spirit 'knows all things that are in him [i.e., the Word]', and so is said to receive from him and to proclaim it to the saints (cf. John 16:15). Thus, summing up his theology of revelation according to the principle of inseparable operations, Cyril writes that 'the Only-begotten spoke long ago to the ancients through the Holy Spirit', adducing Hosea 12:10 and Isaiah 52:6-7 to support his claim.

Cyril's principle here is in keeping with what we saw in the first half of this chapter. It was the Son himself who spoke by the Spirit through the prophets. However, the point of Hebrews 1:1-2 is to contrast the revelation to the Jews with the revelation in Christ. How then does the Son's revelation in the gospels differ from his revelation through the prophets? Cyril answers the question by saying that now, 'at the end of the ages, the Son himself (αὐτὸς) has spoken to us through himself (δι' ἑαυτοῦ), no longer through a mediating prophet or a voice of the saints. Rather, the Only-begotten, having become like us, spoke to us through himself (δι' ἑαυτοῦ)'. For Cyril, the difference between the prophets and the gospels is that in the

³⁸ See, for example, Cyril's citation from the *Orations at ep. 1.4 (=ad monachos)* (ACO 1.1.1, 12).

gospels the Son speaks not through a human intermediary, but through himself, an exegesis that is only possible in light of his unitive Christology. At this point in his exposition Cyril turns to a theme that I noted at the conclusion of chapter two.

And we say that the Father spoke in the Son, not as if through some man placed between and separately (ἰδικῶς διὰ μέσου), and transmitting to us, not his own words, but rather words from another. Rather, the Father spoke by his own voice (ἰδίᾳ φωνῇ), which is by the body (σώματος) of the Son speaking to us. For it was the flesh of his Only-begotten and not of some other person.

For Cyril, even the words the Son spoke as the incarnate one cannot simply be regarded as the Son's. Rather, they are the words of the Father, since the Son is the 'voice of the Father'. In concluding his exegesis of Hebrews 1:1-2, he cites Isaiah 9:6 and 54:13, two passages that I have already argued are significant for this theology of revelation.³⁹ Thus, in this commentary on this Hebrews text, Cyril insists that the Son is the mediator of divine revelation in both the Hebrew prophets as well as in the gospels. The contrast in the text is therefore not simply one between the revelation given by the Son and the revelation given by the prophets since the Son is also responsible for the revelation given by the prophets. Rather, in Cyril's estimation the contrast in Hebrews 1:1-2 is between mediated and unmediated divine revelation.

In addition to the citations to Hebrews 1:1-2 that I have looked at so far, there are a number of other references to the passage throughout his corpus, and they all demonstrate the same basic interpretation, although they present something of a trajectory of development as he draws out more and more emphatically the contrast that the text presents. In what may have been his earliest work, the *Thesaurus*, he uses the verse on one occasion as evidence that the Son

³⁹ Cyril, *Heb. 1:1* (Pusey, 363-4). Pusey's Greek fragment includes only the citation of Isaiah 9:6 and not that of Isaiah 54:13. However, an Armenian fragment of the same passage preserves a few lines that have apparently been omitted by the catenist who excerpted Pusey's fragment, and in these missing lines, Isaiah 54:13 is quoted, followed shortly after by Isaiah 9:6. For the Armenian fragment, see J. Lebon, 'Fragments arméniens du commentaire sur l'épître aux Hébreux de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Mus* 44 (1931): 69-114. The Armenian text is on page 72 and Lebon's Latin translation is on pages 89-90. Lebon's Latin translation of the missing lines reads: *Nam sua natura est liber et liberator et Dominus omnium, per quem merito dicimur docti a Deo; et haec bonitas superabundantiae servata est nobis a Deo Patre in Christo; et quia humiliavit semetipsum propter amorem erga nos, Filius factus est homo, non autem decedit a divinitate sua, sed mansit quod erat.*

On the Christological interpretation of Hebrews among fourth- and fifth-century authors, see Frances M. Young, 'Christological Ideas in the Greek Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews', *JTS* 20 (1969): 150-163; Rowan A. Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation: A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Hebrews*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese* 15 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1973). Greer refers to Cyril's interpretation of Hebrews 1:1-2 on pages 321-2. His summary of Cyril's interpretation of the epistle is in keeping with my reading: 'For Cyril, the emphasis of the epistle is upon the fact that it was the Word, the brightness of the Father's glory, who emptied Himself to become like the children who share in flesh and blood, so that He might sanctify all men and make them divine' (p.354).

is begotten from the Father, rather than made by him, and on another occasion to show that the Son is the image and likeness of the Father.⁴⁰ However, elsewhere in the work he cites the passage and says that in it Paul is wishing to show the superiority of the 'ministry of Christ' to the 'mission of the prophets', and that the apostle does so by 'comparing' the two on the basis of 'the worth of the persons' (ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν προσώπων ἀξίας).⁴¹ It is this usage of the passage that becomes increasingly significant throughout Cyril's career, as he depends upon it more and more to support his growing emphasis on the unity of Christ's person.

In his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* and *Commentary on Isaiah*, he uses Hebrews 1:1-2 not to argue for the Son's deity, but rather as a proof-text for the immediacy of the divine presence made available through the incarnation, especially when joined to other passages like Isaiah 54:13. For example, in his commentary on John 8:31, Cyril asserts that, even though Christ spoke through the prophets of old, the 'gospel preaching' (εὐαγγελικὸν . . . κήρυγμα) is 'properly' (κυρίως) called 'his word', since it came not through someone else, but 'through himself'.⁴² By the time he preached his *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke* and composed his *Commentary on Hebrews*, both of which come either during or after the Nestorian controversy, his exegesis of Hebrews 1:1-2 is in its maturest form. His exegesis at this stage is focused on a heightened contrast between the mediated presence of the Son through the prophets and the immediate presence of the Son in the incarnation, and, corresponding to this distinction, he asserts that the gospels are somehow 'especially' inspired and useful—an idea that, as far as I can tell, does not appear in his earlier works.⁴³ This development in his exegesis of the verse should not be

⁴⁰ Cyril, *thes.* XXXV (PG 75.617-20, 629).

⁴¹ Cyril, *thes.* (PG 75.340). Cf. *thes.* XXXII (PG 75.492): Κρείττονα τῆς διὰ Μωσέως Διαθήκης καὶ τῶν προφητικῶν κηρυγμάτων τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν ἀποδεικνύων παιδείουσιν, ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν προσώπων διαφορᾶς ποιεῖται τὴν διάκρισιν. See also the early usages of the verse in *glaph. Gen.; Dt.* (PG 69.173, 644). In the former passage he uses the passage to argue that Christ spoke to the ancients.

⁴² Cyril, *Jo.* 8:31 (Pusey, 2.57-8). Cf. *Jo.* 15:8 (Pusey, 2.567); *Is.* 52:6-7; 54:11-13; 54:14 (PG 70.1153, 1212, 1213). See the similar usage at *hom. pasch.* 13.2 (SC 434.90), which was sent out in the year 426. On the use of *κυρίως* as a grammatical term, see page 15 above.

⁴³ Cyril, *hom. Lc.* XXIX; LII; LIIX; XC (CSCO 70.41-2, 182, 214; Payne Smith, 230); *Heb.* 1:1 (Pusey, 3.363-4). Each of these uses of the passage in the Lukan series comes in the preface to a homily, and thus was not preserved in the Greek catena tradition. The paragraph from *Homily 90* in which he quotes the passage was excerpted by the catenist, but he cut out the quotation of Hebrews 1:1-2 (cf. *fr. Lc.* 171 (12:22) (Reuss, 140)). See also the usage of the passage at *hom. pasch.* 27.4 (PG 77.936) which was written in the year 439, and which contains an anti-Nestorian angle. Hebrews 1:1-2 surprisingly shows up infrequently in Cyril's writings composed during the heated years of the controversy. However, see his exegesis of the text at *or. ad dom.* 175 (ACO 1.1.5, 107) where he uses it to demonstrate the unity of Christ's person, the 'same one God and man together'.

understood as a change in his earlier views, but instead a following of the trajectory implicit in his earlier usages of the passage in the *Thesaurus*.⁴⁴

There was some precedent in the prior tradition for seeing the gospels as unique among all the scriptural books. At the beginning of his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Origen states that the gospel is the 'firstfruits' of all the Scriptures, since in them 'the perfect Word (ὁ τέλειος . . . λόγος) has grown up after all the fruits of the prophets'. Because of this distinction, even the apostolic writings that came after the gospels, though they are 'wise and trustworthy and very profitable', are nevertheless not on par with 'Thus says the Lord almighty'.⁴⁵ Therefore, Origen affirms the superiority of the gospel revelation above both the Hebrew prophets and the apostolic witnesses. For both Origen and Cyril the centrality of the gospels is grounded in Christology.⁴⁶ However, for Origen this principle derives from the unity of the eternal Word who serves as the uniting principle of created multiplicity, whereas for Cyril this principle derives from his unitive understanding of Word's incarnation.⁴⁷ In order to grasp the full force of Cyril's argument, we need to see how the distinction between the incarnation and prophetic indwelling developed between the mid-third century and the early fifth century.

PROPHETIC INDWELLING IN THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES

Cyril's argument for the centrality of the gospels stands out more sharply when seen against the backdrop of the Christological controversies extending back into the third century. This debate goes back at least to the controversy surrounding Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch from 260, who was condemned for heresy by a council in 268. Evidence for Paul's own Christology is sketchy and sorting out what he actually held and what later authors attributed to him is notoriously difficult. Nevertheless, one position that his opponents at least under-

⁴⁴ My reading of Cyril's exegesis of Hebrews 1:1-2 over the course of his career is in keeping with the summary statement of Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation*, 356: 'the development that takes place during the Nestorian controversy marks no such shift in interpretation [of Hebrews], but it does represent the application of two traditions of exegesis to new theological issues'.

⁴⁵ Origen, *Jo.* 1.2.13-3.16 (SC 120.64-6). See Heine, *Origen*, 77-8.

⁴⁶ Origen and Cyril also both affirm that the Gospel of John is preeminent among the four. See Origen, *Jo.* 1.4.21; Cyril, *Jo.*, book 1, praef. (Pusey, 1.12-3).

⁴⁷ On Origen's concern regarding unity and multiplicity, see above page 107, n.173.

stood him to hold was that Jesus Christ was a mere man like any other. Eusebius of Caesarea records that the council condemned Paul for teaching that Christ was 'an ordinary man' (κοινοῦ . . . ἀνθρώπου).⁴⁸ Similarly, a fifth-century source which purports to record Paul's actual words has him stating that 'Wisdom' (i.e., the Son), 'was in the prophets, especially in Moses, and in many lords, and especially in Christ as in a temple'.⁴⁹ This statement was taken by Paul's opponents to mean that he viewed the presence of the Word in Jesus Christ as no different than the presence of the Word in the prophets. In other words, the incarnation becomes little more than the divine indwelling of a mere man.

By the fourth century it is doubtful that any theologian actually asserted that Christ was a 'mere' man or prophet, but this did not prevent authors from leveling the charge against theological opponents. At the outset of the century, Pamphilus defended Origen against the accusation that he agreed with Paul in claiming that Christ was 'simply human' (*purum hominem*).⁵⁰ Only a few decades later, Eusebius of Caesarea was accusing Marcellus of Ancyra of holding to the same position that Christ was a 'mere' man.⁵¹ Among pro-Nicene authors of the later fourth century one often finds denials of this position associated with Paul's name, usually accompanied by a contrast between the incarnation and prophetic indwelling. For example, in his *Tome to the Antiochenes* from 362, Athanasius states that both parties in Antioch have agreed that 'it was not as "the Word of the Lord came" (cf. Jer. 1:4, 11) into the prophets that he came to dwell in a holy man "at the consummation of the ages" (cf. Heb. 9:26). Rather, "the Word himself became flesh" (John 1:14), and "being in the form of God took the form of a

⁴⁸ Eusebius, *h.e.* 7.27.2 (SC 41.211).

⁴⁹ Eusebius of Dorylaeum, *cont.* (ACO 1.1.1, 101): Παῦλος· ἵνα μήτε ὁ ἐκ Δαυὶδ χρισθεὶς ἀλλότριος ᾗ τῆς σοφίας μήτε ἡ σοφία ἐν ἄλλωι οὕτως οἰκῆι. καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς προφήταις ᾗν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐν Μωσῆϊ, καὶ ἐν πολλοῖς κυρίοις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐν Χριστῶι ὡς ἐν ναῶι. καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ λέγει ἄλλον εἶναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ ἄλλον τὸν λόγον. See this fragment also in Henri de Riedmatten, *Les actes du procès de Paul de Samosate: Étude sur la christologie du IIIe au IVe siècle*, *Paradosis: Etudes de littérature et de théologie ancienne* 6 (Fribourg en Suisse: Éditions St-Paul, 1952), 137. On Paul's Christology, see de Riedmatten, *Les actes du procès*, 49-67; Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. J. S. Bowden (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1965), 177-82; Robert L. Sample, *The Messiah as Prophet: The Christology of Paul of Samosata* (diss., Northwestern University, 1977). Sample writes, 'Paul's Christ was no doubt conceived as the prophet, the "greatest" prophet, who proclaims and fulfills the divine command' (p.104). Cf. Jugie, *Nestorius et la controverse nestorienne*, 213-7; McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 28-31, 63.

⁵⁰ Pamphilus, *ap. pro Or.* (PG 17.578-9).

⁵¹ See Eusebius of Caesarea, *e. th.* 1.20.37-46 (GNO 14.87-8), on which see Joseph T. Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum: Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 123-6. As Lienhard points out, both Eusebius and Marcellus accuse each other of psilanthropism. For Marcellus' accusation of Eusebius, see *fr.* 126-8 (Vinzent, 116-20).

servant" (Phil. 2:6-7).⁵² In his Letter to Epictetus from 372, in which he attacked the Apollinarians, Athanasius repeats this position, relying once again on John 1:14, and calling it 'madness' to suppose that the Word came to the man Jesus in the same way that he came to one of the prophets.⁵³

Another important document from the fourth-century Christological controversy is Gregory of Nazianzus' Letter 101 to Cledonius. Presumably with Diodore in view, Gregory rejects the view that the Son 'operated by grace as in a prophet' (ὡς ἐν προφήτῃ . . . κατὰ χάριν ἐνηργηκέναι), and instead suggests that the incarnate Son 'was and is united according to substance (κατ' οὐσίαν)'.⁵⁴ Apollinarius himself seemingly agreed with Athanasius and Gregory on this point. In his *Kata meros pistis*, he states his confession that 'the Word was enfleshed and made manifest by a fleshly birth of the virgin, not that he came to work within a man' (τὸν λόγον καὶ φανερωθέντα ἐν σαρκικῇ γεννήσει τῇ ἐκ παρθένου, οὐκ ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ ἐνεργήσαντα). Similarly, in his *De unione* he says that the Son did not sanctify his humanity 'in the prophetic or apostolic fashion, as the Spirit does the prophets and apostles' (οὐ κατὰ τὸν προφητικὸν οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸν ἀποστολικὸν τρόπον . . . καθάπερ τὸ πνεῦμα τοὺς προφήτας καὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους).⁵⁵ Diodore of Tarsus, who engaged in dispute with Apollinarius, seems to have been forced to defend himself against the accusation that he taught the incarnation was nothing more than prophetic indwelling. He denied this charge and distinguished the two on the basis of the fact that Jesus was filled with the glory and wisdom of the Word permanently and fully, in contrast to the prophets who enjoyed the Spirit only on occasion and to a measured degree.⁵⁶ Thus, the end of the fourth century witnessed a dispute within the pro-

⁵² Athanasius, tom. 7.1 (AW II/8, 346): οὐχ ὡς εἰς τοὺς προφήτας «ἐγένετο ὁ λόγος κυρίου», οὕτω καὶ εἰς ἄγιον ἄνθρωπον ἐνεδήμησεν «ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων», ἀλλ' αὐτὸς «ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο» καὶ «ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων ἔλαβε δούλου μορφὴν». On Athanasius' Christology, see Grillmeier, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, 193-219; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 446-58; Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*, Routledge Early Church Monographs (New York: Routledge, 1998).

⁵³ Athanasius, ep. Epict. 11 (PG 26.1068). περὶ δὲ τοῦ φαντάζεσθαι τινὰς καὶ λέγειν, ὅτι, ὡς περ ἐφ' ἕκαστον τῶν προφητῶν ἐγένετο, οὕτω καὶ ἐφ' ἓνα τινὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐκ Μαρίας ἦλθεν ὁ λόγος, περιττόν ἐστι γυμνάζειν φανερὰν ἐχούσης τῆς ἀνοίας αὐτῶν τὴν κατάγνωσιν.

⁵⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus, ep. 101.22 (SC 208.46). On Gregory's Christology, see Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 115-52.

⁵⁵ Apollinarius, *fid. sec. pt.* 34 (Lietzmann, 180); *unio.* 10 (Lietzmann, 189). Cf. *anac.* 1; 8; 15 (Lietzmann, 242-4).

⁵⁶ Rudolf Abramowski, 'Der theologische Nachlaß des Diodor von Tarsus', ZNW 42 (1949): 19-69. See also the similar fragment at fr. SD 4 (Behr, 236-9).

Nicene camp over how to understand the incarnation, with Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Apollinarius stressing that the incarnation is distinct from prophetic or apostolic indwelling and Diodore being implicitly accused of equating the two.

It is at this point that Hebrews 1:1-2 enters the picture, for Apollinarius employs the passage in his case for a strongly unitive Christology. Gregory of Nyssa preserves a fragment of Apollinarius' exegesis of the text in which the Laodicean says that the passage means 'the very man who spoke to us the words of the Father is God'.⁵⁷ In other words, Apollinarius used the passage as evidence that the subject in the incarnation is the divine Son. When Theodore of Mopsuestia, Diodore's student, took up his mentor's mantle, he also used the text from Hebrews, presumably in conscious opposition to Apollinarius' Christology. In a fragment, purportedly from Theodore's own *Commentary on Hebrews*, the Mopsuestian states that when Paul says God spoke 'through a son', it is clear that he is referring to 'the man who was assumed' (*de adsumpto homine*). Theodore bases this claim on his assumption that 'son' is a title that refers to the man who became a son at the incarnation by participation (*per hoc participationem filiationis*), rather than the eternal divine Son. Thus, Hebrews 1:1-2 'has nothing whatsoever to do with God the Word' (*omnino uero aperte nullam habens ad Deum Verbum communionem*).⁵⁸ Theodore's interpre-

⁵⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *απιτη*. (GNO 3.1, 155): "Ἔστι δὲ ἐν τούτοις καταφανές, ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ λαλήσας ἡμῖν τὰ τοῦ πατρὸς θεὸς ἔστι, ποιητὴς τῶν αἰώνων, ἀπαύγασμα δόξης, χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, ἅτε δὴ τῷ ἰδίῳ πνεύματι θεὸς ὢν καὶ οὐ θεὸν ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἕτερον παρ' αὐτό, αὐτὸς ὁ δι' ἑαυτοῦ, τουτέστι διὰ τῆς σαρκός, καθάρισας κόσμον ἀμαρτιῶν. The fragment can also be found at fr. 38 (Lietzmann, 213). On Apollinarius' Christology, see Grillmeier, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, 220-33; Kelly McCarthy Spoerl, *A Study of the Κατὰ Μέρος Πίστις by Apollinarius of Laodicea* (diss., University of Toronto, 1991); *ibid.*, 'Apollinarius and the Response to Early Arian Christology', *STPatr* 26 (1993): 421-7; *ibid.*, 'Apollinarian Christology and the Anti-Marcellan Tradition', *JTS* 45 (1994): 545-68; Lewis Ayres, "'Shine, Jesus, Shine": On Locating Apollinarianism', *STPatr* 40 (2006): 143-57; Christopher A. Beeley, 'The Early Christological Controversy: Apollinarius, Diodore, and Gregory Nazianzen', *VC* 65 (2011): 376-407.

Prior to the latter half of the fourth century, little extended attention had been given to Hebrews 1:1-2. Origen had presented an interpretation that bears several similarities to Cyril's. He cites the passage in a fragment from his *Commentary on Lamentations*, and states that the Father, Christ, and the Spirit all spoke in the prophets, albeit without explaining how all three spoke (fr. in *Lam.* 116 (GCS 6.276-7)). Athanasius cites the passage as evidence that the Word of the Father is none other than his Son by whom he spoke (*decr.* 17; cf. *Ar.* 1.55; v. *Anton.* 81). Cyril of Jerusalem also quotes Hebrews 1:1-2 at the outset of one of his catechetical lectures, and contrasts Jesus who is the 'true Christ' with the prophets who were only improperly so called (*cat.* 11.1). Gregory of Nyssa brings together Hebrews 1:1-2 with the cry of the bride for the voice of her beloved (*Cant.* 2:8-17), and states that the voice of the bridegroom, that is, Christ, spoke through the prophets (*hom.* in *Cant.* 5 (GNO 6.140, 142)). The earliest surviving extended treatment of the text comes from the homilies of John Chrysostom upon Hebrews. Chrysostom picks up the implied contrast between the prophets of old and the revelation through the Son, and he also cross-references Hosea 12:10, a citation that Cyril uses in his commentary on the text. Chrysostom is clear regarding the identity of the 'son' in the passage. It is not merely a prophet, but 'the Only-begotten Son himself' through whom God has spoken, the Son who had actually seen the Father, unlike any of the prophets of old (*hom.* in *Heb.* 1.1).

⁵⁸ This fragment of Theodore was quoted by Cyril at *Thdr. Mops.*, book 2 (Pusey, 534-5), and was subse-

tation of Hebrews 1:1-2 stands directly at odds with that of Apollinarius, and its defensive tone suggests that he has his opponent in view. Whereas for Apollinarius, the text suggests a strongly unitive Christology since the 'son' in the passage is the eternal, divine Son, for Theodore the text speaks merely of a man who acts as the mediator of divine revelation and becomes a 'son' by participation in the divine Son. Thus, in Theodore's theology of revelation, the intermediary of the 'assumed man' stands between God and man even in the incarnation.

Since Nestorius stood in the same Christological trajectory that included Theodore, it is surprising to note that he departs from his predecessor's exegesis of Hebrews 1:1-2. He does not frequently refer to the passage in his extant fragments, but in the one place where he does so, he presents a different interpretation than Theodore. After citing the passage, he asserts that 'son' in the text is a term that can refer both to the humanity and the deity in Christ. Just a little further on in the sermon, he cites the passage again and states that the 'Son' in the passage 'clearly refers to the deity of the Son', since the author of Hebrews goes on to say that this Son was he through whom the Father created the worlds.⁵⁹ Nestorius' interpretation is a notable departure from that of Theodore in that he interprets the 'son' as the divine Son rather than the 'assumed man'. However, we should not for this reason assume that his theology of revelation was fundamentally different from Theodore's. In fact, a passage from his *Liber Heraclidis*, although not including any reference to Hebrews 1:1-2, makes clear that Nestorius would have objected to Cyril's interpretation of the verse. In the passage Nestorius takes issue with the idea

quently read out and recorded in the acts of fifth session of the Council of Constantinople in 553. In addition to Pusey's edition of the fragment, see the more recent one in fr. C5T5 (Behr, 428), who notes that Sachau attributes this fragment to Theodore's lost *Commentary on Hebrews*. See also fr. LT 13 (Behr, 295) from Theodore's *On the Incarnation* where he seems to say that 'a son' in Hebrews 1:2 could indicate both the divine Son and the man who is a son by participation. However, in fr. LT 17 (Behr, 297), from *On the Incarnation*, he states that when God spoke 'in a son', it means 'in a man'. Theodore makes the same point—that God spoke by the assumed man—at Jo. 5:22 (CSCO 115.115; 116.82). On Theodore's Christology, see Francis A. Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, *Analecta Gregoriana* 82 (Rome: Gregorian University, 1956); Rowan A. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia, Exegete and Theologian* (London: Faith Press, 1961); Richard A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); Grillmeier, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, 338-60; Luise Abramowski, 'The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia', in *Formula and Context: Studies in Early Christian Thought*; Behr, *Diodore and Theodore*, 28-47, 66-82. Greer summarizes Theodore's interpretation of Hebrews 1:1-2 thus: 'the immediate agent of God's speaking to us is the Man. He is the object of the Word's gracious indwelling, and the means whereby that grace is extended to us' (p.261).

⁵⁹ Nestorius, *serm.* 10, Τὰς <μὲν εἰς ἑμὲ> (Loofs, 268-9). The former passage was quoted by Cyril at Nest. I.3 (ACO 1.1.6, 21). The latter passage was quoted and condemned by the Council of Ephesus as a part of the synodical deposition of Nestorius (ACO 1.1.2, 51). In the *Liber Heraclidis*, Nestorius quoted this passage from his sermon and objected to the council's condemnation of it (2.1 (Bedjan, 355-63)). For the *Liber I* am following the section numbering in F. Nau, *Nestorius: Le livre d'Héraclide de Damas* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1910) and page numbers of the critical text in Bedjan.

that in the incarnation God 'spoke to us in our nature' and 'without a mediator' (دَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ). He then argues instead that the Son himself could not have been a mediator between man and God, since he is himself God and could not be a mediator for himself.⁶⁰ If the *Liber* was written after Ephesus, it is possible that this passage might have been Nestorius' actual response to Cyril's exegesis of Hebrews 1:1-2.⁶¹ Even if this was not the case, it is clear that the theology of revelation presented by Nestorius stands opposed to Cyril's theological exegesis of Hebrews.

Thus we see that the Christological debate that began in the third century with Paul of Samosata was concerned with, among other things, how to distinguish between the presence of the Word in the prophets and the presence of the Word in the incarnation. As this centuries-old debate heated up in the late fourth century with the controversy surrounding Apollinarius, Hebrews 1:1-2 was drawn into the discussion, as authors sought to do justice to the contrast implied in the text between the prophets and the 'son' by whom the Father spoke. Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Apollinarius all stress the difference between the two episodes of the Word's presence in human history. In contrast, Diodore and Theodore suggest a greater continuity between prophetic indwelling and incarnation, and seem to have had difficulty finding a satisfactory way to distinguish the two. Theodore and Nestorius each explicitly reject the idea that in the incarnation the divine Word speaks without a mediator, and instead insist that this too must be mediated divine revelation.

⁶⁰ Nestorius, *Lib. Her.* 1.1.23-4 (Bedjan, 28-9). The twentieth century witnessed several attempts to rehabilitate Nestorius. Cf. J. F. Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius and His Teaching: A Fresh Examination of the Evidence, with Special Reference to the Newly Recovered Apology of Nestorius (The Bazaar of Heraclides)* (Cambridge: University Press, 1908); Friedrich Loofs, *Nestorius and His Place in the History of Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914); E. Amann, 'L'affaire Nestorius vue de Rome', *RevSR* 23 (1949): 5-37, 207-44, *RevSR* 24 (1950): 28-52, 235-65; Aloys Grillmeier, 'Das Scandalum Oecumenicum des Nestorius in kirchlich-dogmatischer und theologiegeschichtlicher Sicht', *Scholastik* 36 (1961): 321-56; M. V. Anastos, 'Nestorius Was Orthodox', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1962): 117-140; Carl E. Braaten, 'Modern Interpretation of Nestorius', *ChH* 32 (1963): 251-67; Luise Abramowski, *Untersuchungen zum Liber Heraclidis des Nestorius*, CSCO 242 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1963); Grillmeier, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, 363-88; L. I. Scipioni, *Nestorio e il concilio di Efeso: storia, dogma, critica* (Milan: Pubblicazioni della Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1974). However, see the cogent responses to these attempts in H. E. W. Turner, 'Nestorius Reconsidered', *STPatr* 13 (1975): 306-21; Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church*; McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 126-74; Gavriluyk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God*, 135-71.

⁶¹ Abramowski, *Untersuchungen zum Liber Heraclidis des Nestorius*, argued that the dialogue that opens the *Liber Heraclidis* (Bedjan, 10-125), including the passage I cite above, is a later addition to the work by another author. However, Scipioni, *Nestorio e il Concilio di Efeso*, disagreed and argued on behalf of Nestorian authorship of the dialogue. For a clear summary of the arguments for and against its authenticity, see Roberta C. Chesnut, 'The Two Prosopa in Nestorius' Bazaar of Heracleides', *JTS* 29 (1978): 392-409, who concludes that the dialogue is genuine, and consists of Nestorius' response to a letter written to him by a 'skeptical but not unfriendly inquirer'. The parts of the dialogue attributed to Sophronius she takes to be fragments from the letter that Nestorius has excerpted and to which he has appended his responses. I find Chesnut's arguments compelling, though broad consensus on this question has not yet been reached.

THE SOTERIOLOGICAL IMMEDIACY OF THE DIVINE WORD

It is against the backdrop of this previous debate that we must place Cyril's interpretation of Hebrews 1:1-2. In formulating his exegesis of the text in his *Commentary on Hebrews*, these previous controversies, as well as the live controversy in his own day, were feeding into his interpretation. Cyril's familiarity with Athanasius' *Letter to Epictetus* and Gregory's *Letter 101 to Cledonius*, two letters that I noted above, is clear in his citation of them in the florilegium at Ephesus in 431, and he quite possibly had interacted with these texts long before then.⁶² In addition, he shows some awareness of the Apollinarian tradition that stood on the side of Athanasius and Gregory regarding the distinction between incarnation and prophetic indwelling. Thinking that it belonged to Julius of Rome, he cites in the florilegium from Ephesus an Apollinarian letter, in which the author contrasts the incarnation with a mere prophetic indwelling.⁶³ Moreover, Cyril's writings even before Ephesus in 431 had already staked out a po-

⁶² See the quotation from the *Letter to Epictetus 2* at *Gesta Ephesena* (ACO 1.1.2, 40). In the section of the letter quoted in the acta, Athanasius disputes the idea that the Word came into a man 'like one of the prophets'. Cyril later quotes the same passage in his *apol. orient.* 15 (ACO 1.1.7, 37). After the council, the Orientals stipulated that Cyril and his party accept Athanasius' *Letter to Epictetus* as the proper interpretation of the Nicene faith, presumably because it was read as an anti-Apollinarian treatise and Cyril was suspected of Apollinarianism (John of Antioch, *propos.*; *ep. Cyr.* 3.3 (ACO 1.1.7, 146, 151)). Cyril replied that he affirmed the letter, but upon comparing the copy sent to him by John with the copy in the Alexandrian archives, he discovered that John's version was corrupted (*ep.* 40.21; 45.11 (ACO 1.1.4, 30; 1.1.6, 156)). Thus, in his letter of reunion with John, Cyril stated that he was sending a corrected copy to him (*ep.* 39.11 (ACO 1.1.4, 20)). On the role of Athanasius' letter in the conflict see McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 86, 111, 179, 379-89. The letter had previously been quoted at length by Epiphanius, *pan.* 77.3.1-13.6 (GCS 37.417-27).

For Gregory's *Letter 101 to Cledonius*, see the citation at *Gesta Ephesena* (ACO 1.1.2, 43-4). The section cited includes the passage I referred to above that contains Gregory's polemic against the idea of incarnation as prophetic indwelling. On Cyril's indebtedness to Gregory, see Christopher A. Beeley, 'Cyril of Alexandria and Gregory Nazianzen: Tradition and Complexity in Patristic Christology', *J ECS* 17 (2009): 381-419. Beeley is certainly right to argue for Gregory's influence on Cyril. However, in my estimation, he downplays other influences such as the Apollinarian corpus. Moreover, his argument that Cyril turns from a 'Gregorian' perspective to a more 'Athanasian' heading in order to achieve a union with the Orientals seems to me too simplistic a scheme to capture Cyril's intellectual debts to his predecessors and the theological development that he underwent in the course of his career. For example, Beeley's thesis should be compared with van Loon's *The Dyophysite Christology*, which appeared the same year, since one of van Loon's central arguments is that Cyril's works from the period before Ephesus (i.e., pre-431) already present a dyophysite Christology, and that therefore Cyril cannot be charged with fundamentally changing his Christology in order to achieve union with the Orientals in 433. Perhaps the most insightful part of van Loon's work is his observation that the phrase 'one nature of God the Word incarnate' is actually quite rare in Cyril's corpus, even though nearly all secondary literature presents it as his favorite Christological formula. However, van Loon restricts his focus, for the most part, to Cyril's works from the years 429-430. What is still needed is a study tracing the continuities and discontinuities within Cyril's Christology over the course of his entire career.

⁶³ *Gesta Ephesena* (ACO 1.1.2, 41). The florilegium states that the passage comes from a letter of Julius to

sition on this question. In his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, for example, he stresses the fundamental difference between prophetic indwelling and the incarnation.⁶⁴ Furthermore, in the earliest of his anti-Nestorian writings, the *Letter to the Monks of Egypt* written in 429, Cyril turns repeatedly to the argument that the divine presence in Jesus Christ must be not just quantitatively, but qualitatively different from the divine presence in the prophets.⁶⁵ This argument stems from Nestorius' contention that *Christotokos* was a better term for the virgin Mary than *Theotokos*. In response, Cyril asserts that everyone who has been anointed with the Spirit, including the prophets and all Christians, are rightly called 'christs'.⁶⁶ Assuming this definition of 'Christ', Cyril understands Nestorius' model of the incarnation as little more than a heightened form of the divine indwelling experienced by the prophets, and in response he argues that the incarnation must be a union of a wholly different order than the union between God and the prophets, since in the incarnation the Word united himself to human reality 'hypostatically' (καθ' ὑπόστασιν).⁶⁷ Only such a conception of incarnation, he argues, can do justice to the biblical assertion that the Word 'became flesh' (John 1:14).⁶⁸

Furthermore, as P. M. Parvis has demonstrated, by the time he composed his *Commentary on Hebrews*, Cyril was already interacting with the works of Theodore and perhaps Diodore as well.⁶⁹ Moreover, the *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke* are also to be dated sometime during or after

Prosdocius. The same passage is found in Lietzmann, 284.

⁶⁴ Cyril, Jo. 3:33 (Pusey, 1.248-51).

⁶⁵ Cyril, ep. 1.21 (ACO 1.1.1, 20).

⁶⁶ Cyril, ep. 1.10 (ACO 1.1.1, 14). Cf. Cyril, hom. pasch. 17.2 (SC 434.270).

⁶⁷ Cyril, ep. 4.4 (=Second Letter to Nestorius) (Wickham, 6), which received official synodal affirmation at Ephesus. This letter is the first time that Cyril uses the word ὑπόστασις to describe the union of the incarnate Son, and he likely picked it up from reading of its Christological usage during the Apollinarian controversy. So van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology*, 508-9, who concludes that in the second year of the Nestorian controversy, 'union according to hypostasis' was Cyril's favorite Christological expression. He further suggests that for Cyril hypostasis does not mean 'person', but rather 'an individual being, without any reference to its essence', such that 'the Word and his flesh come together in a real union', and 'this union results in one separate reality'. Van Loon is following the earlier work of Marcel Richard, 'L'introduction du mot 'hypostase' dans la theologie de l'incarnation', *MSR* 2 (1945): 5-32, 243-270. See also Cyril's defense of the word in response to Theodoret's criticism at *apol. Thdt.* 2 (ACO 1.1.6, 115). For a discussion of the latter passage, see van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology*, 515-6. Cf. P. Galtier, 'L' "unio secundum hypostasim" chez Saint Cyrille', *Gr* 33 (1952): 351-98.

⁶⁸ Cyril, ep. 4.7 (Wickham, 8).

⁶⁹ P. M. Parvis, 'The *Commentary on Hebrews* and the *Contra Theodorum* of Cyril of Alexandria', *JTS* 26 (1975): 415-19, argues that in his *Commentary on Hebrews*, written sometime between 428 and 432, Cyril is opposing not simply Nestorius, but already has Theodore in view, since in the commentary he quotes and refutes a passage from the Mopsuestian. For a reconstruction of the complicated series of events and letters involved in the cam-

the Nestorian controversy. Thus, it is possible that he composed his exegesis of Hebrews 1:1-2 in conscious, though tacit, opposition to the interpretation of the passage by Theodore that I considered above. His controversy with Diodore, Theodore, and Nestorius led Cyril to stress more and more emphatically the distinction between prophetic indwelling and incarnation, and, as he did so, he took a step that thus far had not yet been taken in the tradition. He applied this Christological principle to his theology of Scripture.⁷⁰ Because in the incarnation the Father speaks through his Word not by prophetic mediation, but immediately, the gospels rise above the rest of Scripture as a more direct revelation, and thus can even be said to be 'especially' inspired and useful. The gospels therefore stand as the clearest revelation, and the focal point towards which all else points, since in the gospels the Son himself speaks to humanity, revealing the words of the Father in the Spirit.⁷¹

paign against Diodore and Theodore in the years after the Formula of Reunion (433), see Luise Abramowski, 'Der Streit um Diodor und Theodor zwischen den beiden ephesinischen Konzilien', *ZKG* 67 (1955): 252-287 (translated in Luise Abramowski, 'The Controversy Over Diodore and Theodore in the Interim Between the Two Councils of Ephesus', in *Formula and Context: Studies in Early Christian Thought* (Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1992)), who quite helpfully summarizes and evaluates the previous narratives of Eduard Schwartz, *Konzilstudien*, Schriften der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft in Strassburg (Strassburg: K.J. Trübner, 1914), part 2, pages 18ff, and Robert Devreesse, *Essai sur Theodore de Mopsueste*, ST 141 (Citta del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1948), 125-61. Abramowski, in keeping with the earlier work of M. Richard, thinks that Cyril received a florilegium of Diodorean and Theodorean extracts from a hostile Apollinarian circle around 438 (pp.32-3). For an argument that this florilegium was put together by Cyril himself, see John Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore: Texts and their Contexts*, OECT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 133-58, who builds upon Parvis' work. As Behr and Parvis point out, Cyril was already concerned with opposing Theodore, albeit not by name, up to a decade earlier than when he supposedly received this hostile anti-Theodorean florilegium.

⁷⁰ Cf. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 175: 'The christology of St. Cyril is the driving force of his entire theological vision'. Cyril's Christology is quite rightly the most studied aspect of his thought, so there is not room here to give a comprehensive bibliography. See especially Liébaert, *La doctrine christologique*; Robert L. Wilken, 'Exegesis and the History of Theology: Reflections on the Adam-Christ Typology in Cyril of Alexandria', *ChH* 34 (1965): 123-145, *ChH* 35 (1966): 139-156; J. Liébaert, 'L'évolution de la christologie de S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie à partir de la controverse nestorienne. La lettre paschale XVII et la lettre aux Moines (428-9)', *MSR* 27 (1970): 27-48; Norris, 'Christological Models in Cyril of Alexandria'; Siddals, 'Logic and Christology'; Meunier, *Le Christ*; John J. O'Keefe, 'Impassible Suffering? Divine Passion and Fifth-Century Christology', *TS* 58 (1997): 39-60; McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ*; Smith, 'Suffering Impassibly'; Thomas G. Weinandy, 'Cyril and the Mystery of the Incarnation', in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria*; Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church*; Paul L. Gavrilyuk, 'Theopatheia: Nestorius's Main Charge Against Cyril of Alexandria', *SJTh* 56 (2003): 190-207; *ibid.*, *The Suffering of the Impassible God*; McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*; Daniel Keating, 'Christology in Cyril and Leo: Unnoticed Parallels and Ironies', *STPatr* 48 (2010): 59-64. An up-to-date bibliography on Cyril's Christology can be found at van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology*, 588-603.

⁷¹ See *hom. pasch.* 27.4 (PG 77.937) where Cyril quotes Hebrews 1:1-2 and then says that Christ has brought the types and shadows of Moses 'towards greater clarity' (πρὸς τὸ ἐναργέστερον). Also relevant is the passage at *Ps.* 44:2 (PG 69.1029), which I dealt with in chapter two (pp.16-22), in which Cyril contrasts the old and new revelations on the basis of their relative clarity.

The vision that impels Cyril to pursue this theological trajectory is his overriding concern for the soteriological immediacy of the divine Son. John McGuckin, in writing about Cyril's opposition to and appropriation of devotion to the Isis Cult, has drawn attention to the archbishop's concern for 'the concrete immediacy of God's soteriological involvement' in the incarnation.⁷² Along with McGuckin, others in recent years, including an important 2003 monograph by Donald Fairbairn, have argued that much of the controversy between Cyril and Nestorius had to do with the reality of God's presence in the world to save.⁷³ What I want to suggest here is that this principle of soteriological immediacy carried over into Cyril's theology of Scripture, such that the gospels are of paramount importance, since they provide an immediate revelation of the Triune God. In other words, Cyril is concerned to uphold the soteriological immediacy of the divine Word in the written word.⁷⁴ In fact, what we see in Cyril's commentary on Hebrews 1:1-2 is the application of his Trinitarianism and Christology to a

⁷² John A. McGuckin, 'The Influence of the Isis Cult on St. Cyril of Alexandria's Christology', *STPatr* 24 (1992): 291-9. Cf. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 188, where he defines Cyril's understanding of the Christological 'mystery' as 'Christ's redeeming presence in the church, as transcendent Lord of time, and following from that, his presence as Risen Lord in the church's timeless liturgy'.

⁷³ See the survey of scholarship in Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church*, 9-11. Especially helpful is the analysis of O'Keefe in 'Impassible Suffering', 39-60, especially 58-9. Similarly, de Durand defines Cyril's 'conviction fondamentale' in both his anti-Arian and anti-Nestorian writings as his insistence that 'Dieu même, en toute la plénitude de sa réalité, doit intervenir pour diviniser l'homme' (SC 231.78-9). So also Daley, 'Fullness of the Saving God', 129: 'It was this emphasis on the immediacy of God which was to set Cyril on a theological collision-course with the Antiochene school, and which would lie at the heart of his quarrel with Nestorius'. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 504-5, comes close to the same idea, writing 'Ce n'est sans doute pas un hasard si Cyrille, qui insiste tant sur l'unité du Christ, à la fois Dieu et homme, préserve aussi, avec une attention toute particulière, l'unité de la théologie et de l'économie. Sans doute est-ce parce qu'il tient si fortement à sauvegarder l'unité entre Dieu tel qu'il est en soi et Dieu tel qu'il se révèle aux hommes dans sa création et son incarnation, entre le Fils unique du Père et le Christ incarné, qu'il se montre si virulent d'abord contre la division eunomienne entre un Dieu inengendré, qui ne crée pas directement, et un Fils créé pour être le démiurge du monde, puis contre le dualisme christologique de Nestorius qui sépare le Verbe engendré par le Père de l'homme né de Marie'. Cf. G. Jouassard, 'Une intuition fondamentale de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie en christologie dans les premières années de son épiscopat', *REByz* 11 (1953): 175-86.

Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 305, asserts that 'pro-Nicenes treat the Word present in Christ as the ultimate agent in the process of redemption'. If his reading of pro-Nicenes is correct on this point, there might then be grounds for claiming that Nestorius is out of step with pro-Nicene theology. On the other hand, Nestorius, who certainly thought of himself as an adherent of Nicaea, might be evidence for greater diversity in the pro-Nicene tradition than is implied by Ayres' claim. Further research on diversity and unity among pro-Nicene Christologies is needed here.

⁷⁴ At this point there is, however, an implicit inconsistency, or at least tension in Cyril's theology. He is certainly aware of the fact that the gospels are themselves mediated through human authors, as evidenced in my argument in the last chapter. The agency of the evangelists as human mediators of divine revelation seemingly undermines Cyril's statement that the Son speaks 'through himself' in the gospels. A possible way for him to resolve this issue would be to insist that the dominical words in the gospels are the *ipsissima verba* of the divine Son rather than merely his *ipsissima vox*. Presumably Cyril assumed as much.

theology of Scripture. He says the words that the Father speaks in the Son, which are recorded in the gospels, are not spoken by a man 'separately' (ἰδικῶς), but rather are spoken 'by the Father's own voice (ἰδίᾳ φωνῇ), which is through the body of the Son speaking to us'.⁷⁵ Andrew Louth, among others, has drawn attention to the importance of the word ἴδιος for Cyril's theology. Louth notes Cyril's three usages of the term to indicate that 'we have to do with what is unequivocally divine in the Son, in the Incarnation, in the Eucharist: and this contact with the divine is our salvation'.⁷⁶ As Louth points out, in his choice of this term Cyril has likely been influenced by Athanasius, even while he is undoubtedly drawing out further the trajectory of his predecessor's thought, especially with respect to the Eucharist. I suggest that a parallel sort of trajectory can be seen with respect to Cyril's theology of Scripture. To say that in the gospels the Father speaks 'by his own Son', and to say that in the gospels the Son speaks 'through himself', is tantamount to saying that the evangelical oracles are the Son's 'own' words, even as the Eucharist is the Son's 'own' flesh.⁷⁷ This theology of revelation is pro-Nicene, in that it relies upon the Son's identity of nature with the Father, and it is Christological, in that it assumes the Son's union with his humanity. Moreover, the impulse driving this development is Cyril's concern to emphasize the reality of the Son's salvific presence, as seen in the archbishop's exhortation to his hearers to pay especially close attention to the life-giving gospel words that 'especially' go forth from the mouth of God. The parallel that I have suggested here between the role of the Eucharist and of Scripture bears further comment. It is time now that we turn to consider the role of Scripture in the divine economy to give a fuller explication of this theme.

⁷⁵ Cyril, *Heb.* 1:1 (Pusey, 364).

⁷⁶ Louth, 'The Use of the Term ἴδιος in Alexandrian Theology', 201. Louth further points out that later Byzantine theology dropped Cyril's and Athanasius' Trinitarian use of the word, and instead went with the Cappadocian usage of it to refer to what belongs to the individual hypostases. On Cyril's usage see also Siddals, 'Logic and Christology', 355-8; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 313-31; Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church*, 83-90, 121-4; Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 152-4; van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology*, 517-8. Schurig (p.153) suggests that Cyril's usage of ἴδιος might have grown out of his reading of Hebrews 9:11-12 where the word is used by the biblical author to refer to Christ's 'own' blood. Louth (p.199) suggests the same was true for Athanasius. A good example of Cyril's Christological usage of the term is Nest. III.6 (ACO 1.1.6, 73): 'When, as you say, the hypostases (ὑποστάσεων) have been divided in two and are understood as existing apart and separately (ἰδικῶς), how would there be a coming together into one person (πρόσωπον ἓν), unless one is said to be proper (ἴδιον) to another'. Cf. ep. 17.4 (ACO 1.1.1, 36).

⁷⁷ I should note that in this passage from the *Commentary on Hebrews*, Cyril stops short of explicitly using the term ἴδιος to describe the Son's words in the gospels, though he does call the Son the Father's 'own' voice, signaling the Trinitarian usage of the word. Nevertheless, it seems to me that his exegesis of the text is aimed at making the same point about Scripture as is implied through his usage of ἴδιος elsewhere for the Eucharist.

5

‘The Evergreen Oracles of God’: The Role of Scripture in the Divine Economy

For the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world, who else could it be besides Christ, the Savior of the universe? And in imitation of him the blessed disciples have also been called loaves. For having become partakers in the one who nourishes us unto eternal life, they themselves also, through their own writings, nourish ‘those who hunger and thirst for righteousness’.¹

With this chapter the focus of my argument shifts to the topic that will occupy our attention in the remainder of the thesis. Thus far I have been attempting to trace Cyril’s account of the origination of Scripture as a revelatory event of the Triune God taking place in and through the Son. Therefore, up to this point I have looked at Scripture from the angle of the divine movement towards humanity in revelation. In this chapter and the next I come at his theology of Scripture from the opposite perspective by looking at how he theologically interprets humanity’s encounter with the inspired word as governed by the action of the Triune God. The topic under consideration in this chapter is how Cyril understands the divinely intended role of Scripture within humanity’s relation to the divine. Specifically, what did he regard as the location of Scripture within the divine economy of salvation? Answering this question will establish the larger theological context within which biblical interpretation takes place, and will thereby set the stage for looking more specifically at exegesis in the following chapter.

It has long been acknowledged that for Cyril there are two modes of salvifically participating in the divine life—through the Spirit given in baptism and through the Eucharist. The former is a ‘spiritual’ participation, while the latter is a ‘corporeal’ one, and this twofold

¹ Cyril, *fr. Lc.* 76 (6:13-16) (Reuss, 257).

scheme corresponds to the twofold nature of humanity composed of body and soul.² This aspect of Cyril's thought has been adeptly handled most recently by the 2004 treatment of Daniel A. Keating.³ In this chapter I take a suggestive, but undeveloped, remark made by Keating and expand upon it. In concluding his presentation of Cyril's twofold scheme of divine indwelling, he notes in passing that 'for Cyril, the modality of the spoken word approaches the status of a means of divine life, but he stops short of simply according it this rank. He typically describes the power of the spoken word . . . as an instrument either of Christ or of the Spirit, and as a means by which either Christ or the Spirit acts upon or within the human heart'.⁴ What I will argue in this chapter is that, even though Keating is correct that Cyril never explicitly presents some sort of 'threefold' scheme of divine participation consisting of Scripture, the Eucharist, and the Spirit, he nevertheless grants to the inspired word a role that is clearly analogous to these other 'means of divine life', insofar as he views Scripture as necessary for the nourishment of the church, since Scripture mediates Christ to believers. In other words, Keating's statement is headed in the right direction, but I want to argue for an even more significant role for Scripture than his account might suggest.

One obvious way to substantiate my claim will be to look at several passages in which Cyril asserts the salvific effect of Scripture upon believers. That is straightforward enough, but

² For discussions of Cyril's anthropology, see Liébaert, *La doctrine christologique*, 170-86; G. Jouassard, 'Un problème d'anthropologie et de christologie chez Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *RSR* 43 (1955): 361-78; *ibid.*, "'Impassibilité" du Logos et "Impassibilité" de l'âme humaine chez Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *RSR* 45 (1957): 209-224; Burghardt, *The Image of God*; Herman M. Diepen, *Aux origines de l'anthropologie de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Bruges: Desclée, de Brouwer, 1957); McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ*, 172-3; Marie-Odile Boulnois, 'Cyrille est-il un témoin de la controverse origéniste sur l'identité du corps mortel et du corps ressuscité?', in *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition*, vol. 2, ed. L. Perrone, P. Bernardino, and D. Marchini (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 843-59; Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 78-80; McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 198-201; John J. O'Keefe, 'The Persistence of Decay: Bodily Disintegration and Cyrillian Christology', in *In the Shadow of the Incarnation: Essays on Jesus Christ in the Early Church in Honor of Brian E. Daley, S.J.*, ed. Peter W. Martens (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 228-45; van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology*, 157-71; Siddals, 'Logic and Christology', 361-4.

³ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 54-104, who writes in summary, 'We receive Christ into ourselves, participating in him and his life, and thus in the divine nature, through a twofold means: through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, normally related to baptism, and through partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ in the Eucharist' (p.89). He argues convincingly that Cyril's language about the two means is rather fluid, but may yet be distinguished. As he notes, 'the agency of the life-giving power is one (that is, the agency of the Incarnate Christ), and the results in us are identical, but the manner of indwelling and the manner of reception is twofold' (p.95). On this aspect of Cyrilline theology, see also Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 140-202; Janssens, 'Notre filiation divine d'après Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', 246-53; Ezra Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing: An Inquiry Into the Eucharistic Doctrine of Cyril of Alexandria* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1977); Meunier, *Le Christ*, 163-209.

⁴ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 89, n.37.

such basic statements tell us little about how we should understand Scripture's role as distinct from or similar to the function of the more common twofold means of participation. For this reason it will be necessary to observe a consistent pattern in these passages that more forcefully substantiates my claim. Repeatedly when he speaks of the saving benefit that Scripture confers upon the church, Cyril presents this notion according to the notion that Scripture is given to the church by Christ.⁵ I suggest that his statements follow this pattern because he holds that Christ is the source of the church's spiritual life, and, since Scripture is indispensable to the renewed existence of believers, Scripture too must come from him and lead to participation in him, in a manner analogous to the Spirit and the Eucharist. More so than in the previous chapters, my approach in this chapter will be to look at extended passages from Cyril's corpus that illustrate this point. I trust that doing so will give readers a fuller taste of the twists and turns of Cyril's own exegesis, as well as demonstrate that, despite the individual differences between the passages I will survey below, the basic pattern holds true that Christ gives Scripture to the church as a means of spiritual life. The passages that will concern us in this chapter are Cyril's exegesis of Psalm 22 (LXX), his interpretation of Zechariah 11, and his treatment of the feeding of the 5,000 in the gospels.

'THE LORD SHEPHERDS ME' (PSALM 22)

Psalm 22 in the Prior Exegetical Tradition

Before considering Cyril's interpretation of Psalm 22, it will be useful to look briefly at how the prior commentary tradition had handled this text. Doing so puts Cyril's interpretation in sharp relief, for it shows him largely breaking with the tradition and offering his own creative treatment of the text. Origen, the first to offer an extended discussion of the psalm, takes it as describing the journey of the soul, and by so doing, sets the path to be followed by several later exegetes.⁶ Attentive to the literary flow of the psalm, he points out that the pastoral im-

⁵ Du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité*, 301-4, briefly notes Cyril's usage of pastoral imagery for the church, but does not greatly develop this idea.

⁶ Eusebius of Caesarea reports that while still in Alexandria Origen had composed a commentary on the first twenty-five psalms (h.e. 6.24.2). Later in Caesarea he wrote a subsequent commentary on the psalter. See Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier*, 1.44-63; Heine, *Origen*, 115-22, 189. The remains of his exegesis of the psalter are fragmentary and incomplete, but among those fragments that are extant are several dealing with Psalm 22. The collection of psalter fragments found in PG undoubtedly contains some fragments not properly attributed to Origen, which belong instead to other authors such as Evagrius Ponticus (so Hermann J. Vogt, 'Ori-

agery is only used in the beginning of the passage, and is apparently dropped in the latter half in favor of more the human description of sitting at a table. The pastoral metaphor of the first half refers to the 'first education' (*prima . . . institutio*) that is merely the 'beginning' stages of the life of virtue, while the latter half of the psalm refers to 'progress and perfection' (*profectibus et perfectione*).⁷ The goal is that one would 'pass from this state of being like a sheep under a shepherd, and be transferred to rational and higher things (*rationabilia et celsiora*)'.⁸ As a sheep the individual is given 'a certain grassy spiritual food' which is suitable for 'more unreasonable souls'.⁹ The hinge that marks the shift in status is verse three where the psalmist says 'he converted (ἐπέστρεψεν) my soul'.¹⁰ Once a person is on this journey, he no longer partakes of the preparatory foods of verses one and two, but instead enjoys the 'rational foods and mystical secrets' (*rationabiles cibos et mystica secreta*) represented by the 'table' of verse five.¹¹ Furthermore, Origen regards the enemies of the psalm, against whom the table is set, as those who seek to persecute Christians. The food offered by the Lord strengthens believers to 'resist nobly' against the persecutors as they undertake their pursuit of virtue.¹² Origen even sees the narrative movement of the psalm from the pastoral to the human reflected in the fact that both a 'rod' and a 'staff' are mentioned in verse four. The 'rod' is for 'sinful sheep' while the 'staff' is for a 'sinful person'.¹³ Movement or progress is thus the basic theme of his interpretation.

gen of Alexandria', in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 541-2). Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs*, 11-2, lists those fragments that he regards as authentic. I am here following his listing, and including supplements from Origen's treatment of Psalm 22 in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* and his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Karen J. Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Structure in Origen's Exegesis*, PTS 38 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), 70-107, argues that the journey of the soul is the central principle of Origen's homilies. See also Karen J. Torjesen, 'Origen's Interpretation of the Psalms', *STPatr* 17/2 (1982): 944-58.

⁷ Origen, *Cant.* 2.4.23 (SC 375.342). Cf. also *Cant.* 2.4.6 (SC 375.332), where Origen outlines four levels of love that souls have for the Bridegroom: 'queens', 'concubines', 'maidens', and 'sheep'.

⁸ Origen, *Cant.* 2.4.19 (SC 375.340).

⁹ Origen, *Jo.* 13.33.211-12 (SC 222.146). The same point is made in a fragment on Psalm 22:5 in *sel. in Ps.* 22:5 (PG 12.1261), though this fragment, according to the work of Devreesse, remains of uncertain status.

¹⁰ Origen, *Cant.* 2.4.19 (SC 375.340). Origen's reading of this verb as referring to conversion possibly owes something to the Apostle Paul's usage of the same word in 2 Corinthians 3:16.

¹¹ Origen, *Cant.* 2.4.22 (SC 375.342). The same point is made in a fragment in *sel. in Ps.* 22:5 (PG 12.1261-4). Devreesse says that it is not easy to determine whether the latter half of this fragment (Ἐν ἀρχαῖς δὲ ἐφάσκομεν τὸν ἐκ προκοπῆς . . .) belongs to Origen or Didymus, but he opts for Didymus. Either way, the same exegesis is certainly found in Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*.

¹² Origen, *sel. in Ps.* 22:5 (PG 12.1261).

¹³ Origen, *sel. in Ps.* 22:4 (PG 12.1261).

Eusebius of Caesarea also addresses this psalm in his own now fragmentary *Commentary on the Psalms*, and he largely follows the lead of Origen, in that he too views it as referring to progress in virtue, although his interpretation is more clearly ecclesial than Origen's.¹⁴ In commenting on the opening lines of the psalm, he too plays with the fact that the pastoral metaphor is only used in the opening verses and then seems to be abandoned.¹⁵ Using this observation he sets up a hierarchy of persons, with the 'sheep' being catechumens.¹⁶ For Eusebius, the 'verdant place' of Psalm 22:2 represents the holy gospels which serve as 'spiritual food' for catechumens, while the 'water of rest', stands for the waters of baptism (cf. John 7:37; 7:39; 4:13). The person who has cast aside the burden of sin through baptism can truly say with the psalmist, 'You have converted my soul' (Ps. 22:3), and by advancing thus to what is perfect, the catechumens can go from being 'sheep' to 'men'.¹⁷ Eusebius' interpretation of the latter half of psalm assumes that the person singing it has been converted and is a part of the church. Such persons who have believed in the Son of God have assurance of eternal life, and can therefore say that they do not fear 'the shadow of death' (Ps. 22:4), which is merely the 'release of the soul from the body'.¹⁸

The Tura papyri from Egypt that were discovered in 1941 included a previously unknown transcription of the lectures on the psalter by Didymus the Blind. The papyri do not contain lectures on all the psalms, but we are fortunate to have his comments on Psalm 22.¹⁹

¹⁴ On the usage of Psalm 22 to refer to Christian initiation, see J. Daniélou, 'Le Psaume XXII et l'initiation chrétienne', *La Maison-Dieu* 23 (1950): 54-69.

¹⁵ Eusebius's large *Commentary on the Psalms* was one of his last works. The Greek original did not survive in its entirety, but extensive sections have been preserved, allowing for some reconstruction of the text. It was twice translated into Latin, once by Hilary and once by Eusebius of Vercelli, though neither has survived to the present day. Work is currently underway to produce a new critical edition of the surviving fragments, since those collections that currently exist, such as in PG, are of mixed value. I am here following the listing of authentic fragments in Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs*, 101. See also Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier*, 1.64-75. On the tone of Eusebius' exegesis in his psalter commentary in comparison with his psalter exegesis in his other works, see Cordula Bandt, 'Some Remarks on the Tone of Eusebius's *Commentary on the Psalms*', *STPatr* (forthcoming).

¹⁶ Eusebius, Ps. 22:1-2 (PG 23.216). At the top are those who are on the path of advance (προκοπή) in virtue, who are like people in the image of God, while on the bottom are those who 'wallow in the depths of evil', and who are accordingly compared to reptiles and savage beasts (e.g., vipers, swine, dogs, foxes). In the middle of these two extremes stand those who are like sheep, who have made a turn to a better state (κατάστασις), and who therefore are in 'the doorway of the knowledge of God'.

¹⁷ Eusebius, Ps. 22:1-2 (PG 23.217). For Eusebius' exegesis of 'water' imagery in Scripture, see D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Eusebius of Caesarea* (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1960), 88-9.

¹⁸ Eusebius, Ps. 22:4 (PG 23.217).

¹⁹ On Didymus' exegesis, see Layton, *Didymus the Blind*, 158, who calls his instruction 'scholastic Origenism' (p.158). There are also extant fragments of psalter exegesis attributed to Didymus drawn from the cate-

Didymus' comments are much longer than what has survived from Origen or Eusebius, and they offer another point of comparison for Cyril's exegesis by showing how the psalm continued to be interpreted in the Origenist tradition, up to within only a few decades of Cyril's own writing. As it was for Origen and Eusebius, the 'advance of the soul' (προκοπή τῆς ψυχῆς) is the controlling idea in Didymus' exegesis of the entire psalm.²⁰ The soul advances by pursuing the 'practical and contemplative life' which consists of growth in virtue. The sheep is the starting place in this progress, and the food appropriate to the sheep is foliage, rather than meat or bread²¹, but once one experiences Christ converting the soul (Ps. 22:3), he is no longer a sheep and can enter the way of virtue.²²

To this basic theme that earlier authors had already explored Didymus adds at least two new features. First, picking up an insight expressed in Origen's *Homilies on Numbers*, he distinguishes between the 'sojourning' (κατασκηνόω) spoken of in Psalm 22:2 and the 'permanent dwelling' (κατοικίζω) implied in 22:6.²³ The former speaks of a moveable tent that the soul uses as it progresses, but the goal is finally to dwell permanently in the house of God.²⁴ This insight further adds to the theme of progress. The second feature is that Didymus emphasizes and develops more the role of instruction or teaching in his exegesis. The converted soul is able to benefit from the divine teaching, represented in the psalm by the 'rod and staff' (Ps. 22:4).²⁵ Furthermore, the 'table' of 22:5 represents, not the milk of beginners which has been left behind, but the 'solid food' which is the 'wisdom of God'.²⁶ Didymus interprets the 'cup' of 22:5 in light of Wisdom's cup of wine in Proverbs 9, and he suggests that there are differ-

nae. These are much shorter than the lecture transcript, but present a similar interpretation. See *fr. Ps. 201-209* (PTS 15.236-9). On the surviving remains of Didymus' psalter exegesis, see Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier*, 1.116-21.

²⁰ Didymus, *comm. in Ps. 22:1-2* (codex page 57) (Gronewald, 2.2). So also Layton, *Didymus the Blind*, 39-43.

²¹ Didymus, *comm. in Ps. 22:1-2* (codex page 57) (Gronewald, 2.2-4).

²² Didymus, *comm. in Ps. 22:2-3* (codex page 58-9) (Gronewald, 2.8-10).

²³ See Origen, *hom. in Num. 17.4.2* (SC 442.286), on which see Heine, *Origen*, 187. Origen, in Rufinus' Latin translation, speaks of *differentiam domorum et tabernaculorum*.

²⁴ Didymus, *comm. in Ps. 22:1-2* (codex page 58) (Gronewald, 2.6).

²⁵ Didymus, *comm. in Ps. 22:4* (codex page 62) (Gronewald, 2.24). See the similar theme developed at *comm. in Ps. 35:7* (codex page 236-7) (Gronewald, 4.40-42).

²⁶ Didymus, *comm. in Ps. 22:5* (codex page 62) (Gronewald, 2.24).

ent levels of the wine of instruction. Wisdom knows what each person can handle and mixes the wine appropriate to each.²⁷ Those who drink such wine are led to a 'sober drunkenness' which brings cheer to the soul.²⁸ Didymus' interpretation appears as a more theologically dense and developed account of the same basic theme that stretched back to Origen and was also present in Eusebius. For all three authors the advancing of the soul in virtue stands in the foreground.

The Evergreen Oracles of God

Psalm 22 served Cyril as a key text in which he could develop his theological understanding of Scripture's role as a means of life given to the church by Christ.²⁹ In interpreting the psalm in this manner, he largely departed from the psychological interpretation of the passage that had marked the exegesis of Origen, Eusebius, and Didymus. Moreover, he also differs entirely from the exegesis of Diodore and Theodore of Mopsuestia who both interpret the psalm as referring exclusively to the history of Israel.³⁰ In brief, Cyril presents Christ as the shepherd of Psalm 22, not a surprising move that was anticipated in earlier Christian writers and perhaps even in the New Testament itself.³¹ Moreover, he provides a more extensive spiritual interpretation that is beyond this simple prophetic announcement of Christ the Shepherd by outlining the various gifts that have been given by Christ to those who have believed in

²⁷ Didymus, *comm. in Ps. 22:5* (codex page 63) (Gronewald, 2.26-8). Though this point does not occur in the extant fragments of Origen's exegesis of Psalm 22, it is an idea that is presented clearly enough by Origen elsewhere. See *comm. in Mt. 12.36*, on which see Daniel Shin, 'Some Light From Origen: Scripture as Sacrament', *Worship* 73 (1999): 399-425. I will return to this point in the conclusion of this chapter.

²⁸ Didymus, *comm. in Ps. 22:5* (codex page 64-5) (Gronewald, 2.32-4). Gregory of Nyssa also made use of the idea of a 'sober drunkenness' in commenting upon Psalm 22:5. See *hom. in Cant. 12* (GNO 6.364). See also his treatment of Song of Songs 1:7 in which he quotes Psalm 22 (*hom. in Cant. 2* (GNO 6.61)).

²⁹ Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs*, 224-33, did not address any of the supposedly Cyrilline fragments on Psalm 22. Elsewhere I have assessed the authenticity of these fragments, and concluded that six of the seven fragments on Psalm 22 are genuinely Cyrilline. See Matthew R. Crawford, 'Assessing the Authenticity of the Greek Fragments on Psalm 22 (LXX) Attributed to Cyril of Alexandria', *STPatr* (forthcoming). In what follows I therefore consider only the six fragments that I regard as authentic.

³⁰ See Diodore, *Ps. 22* (CCSG 6.137-9); Theodore, *Ps. 22* (Devreesse, 122-3).

³¹ Psalm 22 might well be lingering behind the identification of Christ as the shepherd in John 10. Furthermore, it is possible that the author of the fourth gospel intended that the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6 should be read against the backdrop of Psalm 22. The first patristic usage of Psalm 22 that I can find is Justin, *dial.* 86.5. See also Irenaeus, *haer.* 5.31.2. Both Justin and Irenaeus see the psalm as prophetic of Christ.

him. In what follows I will demonstrate the basic contours of his interpretation, and highlight the central role that Scripture has in it.

In the first fragment of Cyril's exegesis of Psalm 22 he makes two points that set the stage for all that follows. First, he identifies the speaker of the psalm as 'those who have believed from the nations'. Thus, the psalm refers to the church. Second, he identifies the person to whom the believers are singing the psalm. He is their 'Shepherd', recognized by the church as 'the provider of the saving food' (τὸν τῆς σωτηρίου τροφῆς χορηγόν).³² Therefore, the psalm speaks of the relationship between Christ and the church. Moreover, in this opening fragment Cyril also adds greater density to this basic identification of persons. Those who have believed are also those who are 'taught by God' (διδασκτοὶ Θεοῦ γεγονότες,) in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah 54:13, a passage that I argued in the previous chapter was central to Cyril's understanding of Scripture. In keeping with what we saw him do previously, in this context his usage of the passage emphasizes the immediacy of the church's relationship to the divine Son. However, it is not clear in this fragment whether he intends to refer specifically to the Son's teaching in the gospels. Rather he here generically defines 'taught by God' as 'eating and being filled spiritually' (φαγόντες καὶ ἐμπλησθέντες πνευματικῶς). Those who have so eaten from the hand of their Shepherd, according to Cyril, say that 'they are one on account of the faith and are perfected as one flock' (ἐν ὄντες διὰ τὴν πίστιν καὶ εἰς μίαν τελοῦντες ἀγέλην).³³ Though there is no explicit citation or reference in this fragment to Jesus' discourse in John 6, such a link is implicit insofar as Cyril here cites Isaiah 54:13 which is also quoted by Jesus in the Johannine passage (John 6:45). This implicit connection will become explicit when we look at Cyril's exegesis of John 6 below. At present it is important to note that the first fragment of Cyril's exegesis of Psalm 22 emphasizes the identity of the Son as the Shep-

³² The ability to recognize Christ as the divine Son is a recurrent theme in Cyril's works, especially in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Most frequently he faults the Jews for failing to recognize the divine Son, in contrast to those from the nations who do believe. See, for example, these twin themes developed in Jo. 9:38-39. Though there is no mention of the Jews in the surviving fragment here on Psalm 22:1, it is reasonable to suppose that the mention of the nations and of recognizing the Shepherd have the same polemical edge that is found elsewhere in his writings. Unlike the Jews, those who have believed from the nations (and presumably believing Jews as well) realize that Christ is their Shepherd and so gladly receive his teaching. Although Cyril is sometimes portrayed as being violently anti-Semitic, Daniel Keating concludes, from a reading of Cyril's *Commentary on Isaiah*, 'there is not a hint of ethnic or racial animus in Cyril—the single dividing issue is a matter of faith and obedience to Christ, and the door is open for all' ('Supersessionism in Cyril of Alexandria', *STPatr* (forthcoming)).

³³ Cyril, Ps. 22:1 (PG 69.840).

herd of the church who has spiritually nourished the flock and brought them together into unity.

As Cyril continues his exegesis in the second surviving fragment, focusing upon the opening cry of the psalm ('The Lord shepherds me, and I lack nothing'), he emphasizes the divine identity of Christ, and uses this identification as the basis for a contrast with Israel's prophets in order to highlight the blessings given to the church. Those who sing the psalm, who have been 'enclosed through Christ in the divine enclosures', 'exult' (Μέγα φρονοῦσιν) in the fact that they do not have 'merely one of the saints for a teacher (καθηγητήν), as Israel received Moses, but the Chief Shepherd of the shepherds (cf. 1 Pet. 5:4)'. The key difference is that in Christ 'are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col. 2:3). As a consequence of his divine nature, Christ, unlike all merely human teachers, is able to 'make abundant the supply of his own gifts (τὴν χορηγίαν τῶν ἑαυτοῦ χαρισμάτων) to those who recognize his coming', that is, to those who believe. In this fragment we also see hints of Cyril's pro-Nicene theology that I considered in chapter two. He says that the Son gives 'from his own fullness', as the 'source and provider of everything good' (ἀγαθοῦ παντός καὶ πηγὴ καὶ πρῶτανις), but in his giving the Son is providing blessings 'from the Father'.³⁴ Though there is no mention here of the Spirit, the pattern that Cyril gives recalls his Trinitarian axiom that all things come from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. Thus, the gifts that come to the saints, which Cyril will shortly describe, are given by the Son to the church, but the gifts given by the Son are none other than the gifts of the Father himself. Having received such wonderful gifts from Christ himself, the source of truth, those in Christ's flock can indeed cry out with the psalmist 'I lack nothing' (Ps. 22:1).

As he comments on the next line of the psalm ('In a place full of fresh grass, there he caused me to dwell. By water of rest he nourished me.'), Cyril gives greater specificity to the gifts given by the Shepherd to his flock. He notes that the metaphor (ἡ τοῦ λόγου τροπή) used in the previous line continues, since those who are shepherded by Christ describe the good things that they receive from him in terms fitting the imagery. From Christ's 'pastoral skill' (ἐκ τῆς ποιμενικῆς εὐτεχνίας), believers enjoy 'grass' and 'water'. Cyril writes that the 'place full of fresh grass' refers to the 'evergreen oracles of God, the holy and divinely inspired Scripture' (τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀειθαλῆ λόγια, ἡ ἁγία καὶ θεόπνευστος Γραφή), and the 'living and life-giving

³⁴ Cyril, Ps. 22:1 (PG 69.840).

water' is the 'gift of the Holy Spirit' (ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος χορηγία).³⁵ Thus, in his interpretation of Psalm 22, Cyril first presents Scripture and the Spirit as the two gifts that Christ the Shepherd gives to his flock which correspond to the 'grass' and 'water' of the psalm. Both of these gifts work together to lead the Christian to 'spiritual courage' (πρὸς εὐανδρίαν πνευματικὴν).³⁶ Furthermore, as Cyril has just said, although Christ is the one who gives these gifts to the church, the gifts given by Christ, such as Scripture and the Spirit, come ultimately from the Father.

Cyril was not the first to identify the 'place of fresh grass' in Psalm 22:2 with Scripture. We have already seen Eusebius offer an interpretation of this sort, although he restricts the reference to the gospels in order to suit his interpretation of the verse as referring to food for catechumens. Similarly, in his catechetical lectures, Cyril of Jerusalem, citing Psalm 22, exhorts the catechumens to nourish their souls with 'divine readings', since the Lord has 'prepared a spiritual table' for them.³⁷ Moreover, Gregory Nazianzus makes this connection on at least two occasions. In describing his task as a bishop, he says that through his ministry his congregation will 'dwell in a place of fresh grass and feed on water of refreshment', and he later makes the same point when describing the pastoral duties of another individual. It is important to note that on the latter occasion he not only identifies the 'green pastures' as 'the evergreen words of God', but also interprets the 'water of rest' as the Spirit, thus offering the same interpretation of the grass and water that Cyril does.³⁸ Moreover, Gregory's description of Scripture as τοῖς ἀειθαλέσι τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγοις ('evergreen words of God') is strikingly similar to Cyril's mention of the τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀειθαλῆ λόγια ('evergreen oracles of God'), close enough possibly to suggest some dependency of Cyril upon Gregory. Similarly, Theophilus of Alexandria, Cyril's uncle and predecessor on the throne of St. Mark, identifies the 'water of rest' as 'the divine preaching' (τοῦ θεοῦ κηρύγματος), which nourishes the souls of those who attend to it.³⁹ A

³⁵ Cyril, Ps. 22:2 (PG 69.841). See the similar statement from Theodoret in comment upon Psalm 1: Ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ, φησὶν, ὑπὸ τῶν θείων λογίων ἀρδόμενοι, ἀειθαλεῖς τέ εἰσι ('For those, he says, are watered by the divine oracles and are evergreen') (Ps. 1.9 (PG 80.872)).

³⁶ Cyril, Ps. 22:2 (PG 69.841).

³⁷ Cyril of Jerusalem, *cat.* 1.6 (PG 33.377).

³⁸ Gregory Nazianzus, *or.* 1.7 (SC 247.80); *or.* 6.9 (SC 405.144). Cf. *or.* 33.16.

³⁹ Theophilus of Alexandria, *myst. cen.* (PG 77.1016). This sermon came down under Cyril's name, but is now regarded as a discourse by Theophilus against Origenist monks delivered in March 400. See M. Richard, 'Une homélie de Théophile d'Alexandrie sur l'institution de l'eucharistie', *RHE* 33 (1937): 46-56.

sermon attributed to Augustine also says that the pastures of the good Shepherd are the 'words of God and his commandments' (*eloquia Dei et mandata*).⁴⁰ Shortly after Cyril, Theodoret, perhaps following the lead of the Alexandrian, interprets the grass as 'the sacred teaching of the divine sayings'.⁴¹ In light of these texts, we can conclude that there was definite precedent across the tradition for interpreting Psalm 22:2 with reference to Scripture. Nevertheless, as we will see, Cyril continues to develop this theme in his exegesis of the remainder of the psalm, an approach that appears to be unique to him.

The catena tradition contains a second fragment attributed to Cyril that offers a parallel interpretation of the grass and water in Psalm 22. Relying on John 3:5 as a supporting text, he says that, in a 'more precise' (*κυριώτερον*)⁴² sense, the place full of fresh grass might also be understood as paradise, from which humankind fell in the beginning, and into which Christ himself draws believers through the waters of rest, that is, the waters of baptism.⁴³ The confluence of themes from the previous fragment and this one should not be missed. A close association exists in Cyril's mind between the 'water' of baptism that grants access to the 'grass' of eternal paradise, just as a close association exists between the 'water' of the Spirit who works in and through the 'grass' of inspired Scripture. As baptism opens up paradise to the believer, so the Spirit opens Scripture. The linkage between the 'grass' and 'water' in each case is subtle, but significant. Furthermore, there are other associations between the two interpretations. On the one hand, as we will see again in the next chapter, the Spirit and baptism, both of which are identified as 'water' by Cyril, are inseparably linked in his theology, since it is at baptism that the Christian receives the indwelling Spirit.⁴⁴ On the other hand, Scripture and paradise, both of which are regarded as 'grass', are parallel in that they are the sites at which the Christian accesses the Trinitarian life of God. In at least one other passage Cyril describes Scripture as

⁴⁰ Augustine, *serm.* 366.3 (PL 39.1648). The authenticity of this psalm is disputed.

⁴¹ Theodoret, *Ps.* 22:2 (PG 80.1025).

⁴² On the use of *κύριος* as a grammatical term, see above page 15.

⁴³ Cyril, *Ps.* 22:2 (PG 69.841). Cf. Cyril's exegesis at *Jn.* 3:5 where, although he does not explicitly mention it, baptism seems to be in view. As noted above, Eusebius had previously interpreted Psalm 22:2 as a reference to baptism. Theodoret will do the same (*Ps.* 22:5 (PG 80.1025)).

⁴⁴ On this point, see Keating, 'The Baptism of Jesus in Cyril of Alexandria'; *ibid.*, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 54-64; Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology*, 136-46.

a 'paradise', so it does not seem like too much of a stretch to view such an identification as implicit in his exegesis of Psalm 22.⁴⁵

The Evangelical Table and Its Enemies

The discussion of Scripture picks up again in Cyril's interpretation of verse five of the psalm, and again his comments suggest that Scripture comes from Christ to the church for the church's nourishment. Here the psalmist declares, 'You have prepared a table before me over against those who afflict me'. As before, Cyril understands the verse as being spoken by 'those from the nations who have believed'. They are those who have tasted the 'evangelical table' (τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς τραπέζης), and can speak the words of the psalm to Christ.⁴⁶ Cyril directly identifies the table spoken of by the psalmist with Scripture, and, given the antagonistic nature of the verse, he initially contrasts the church's text with pagan learning. The enemies mentioned in the psalm are the 'wise ones among the Greeks' (Οἱ παρ' Ἑλλησι σοφοὶ).⁴⁷ For Cyril, this was certainly no mere theoretical discussion, for Alexandria was still home to pagans, and paganism might still have had the potential for drawing Christians away from the church.⁴⁸ Cyril himself notes that pagan sacrifices were still being offered in his day.⁴⁹ His episcopal predecessor and uncle, Theophilus, had clashed with the pagan intelligentsia of Alexandria in the take over of the Serapeum in 391 or 392⁵⁰, and during Cyril's tenure this tense situation boiled over again resulting in the murder of Hypatia, a renowned pagan philosopher. History has concealed whether or to what degree Cyril was responsible for this event, but even if we do not know his exact role in it, we can be sure that he carried out his duties as archbish-

⁴⁵ Cyril, *Jo.*, praef. (Pusey, 1.2). This imagery goes back at least to Irenaeus, *haer.* 5.20.2.

⁴⁶ The phrase ἡ εὐαγγελικὴ τράπεζα is not common. The only parallel I can find is in Gregory of Nyssa's *beat.* 4 (PG 44.1236).

⁴⁷ Cyril, *Ps.* 22:5 (PG 69.841).

⁴⁸ On the presence of pagans in Alexandria during late antiquity, see Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 128-72.

⁴⁹ Cyril, *Jul.* 4 (PG 76.700).

⁵⁰ For discussions of the event, see Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 113-4; Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 159-69.

op in an environment that was charged with competing claims to truth and power by Christians and pagans.⁵¹

This historical context suggests that, for Cyril, the opposition of Christian truth to pagan philosophy was a pressing ecclesiological and pastoral concern.⁵² Another passage that highlights this issue is his exegesis of Amos 6:2. When the Lord declared through the prophet that the people of Israel should 'go to Hamath Raba and to Gath of the Philistines, and see whether their territories are greater than your territories' (Am. 6:2), Cyril says this should be taken as referring to those who, after coming to faith in Christ, still marvel at 'the wisdom of the Greeks' (τὴν Ἑλλήνων σοφίαν), and even suppose that pagan wisdom is better than Christian truth.⁵³ It is possible to hear behind this statement the very real possibility that some in Cyril's church were being carried away from the church's teaching by what he regarded as an overzealous interest in Greek literature and teaching, for he says that these persons 'are inclined

⁵¹ Unsympathetic historians have heaped scorn on Cyril for his supposed involvement in the death of Hypatia since Socrates, who had little love for the patriarch, first reported the event (*h.e.* 7.15). Edward Gibbon is especially noted for his negative portrayal of Cyril in this respect. Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 115-6, rightly places the event in the context of the struggle for power between Christians and pagans in late antique Alexandria, but still lays blame for it at the feet of Cyril. A more balanced discussion can be found in Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 295-316, who notes that 'history has consigned to oblivion any evidence that would directly link Cyril to the murder of Hypatia' (p.313), and who also argues that the infamous parabalani were not responsible for the murder as is often assumed. This event is also discussed by Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 46-57, who notes that neither Cyril nor the parabalani were ever officially implicated in Hypatia's death. See also J. Rougé, 'La politique de Cyrille d'Alexandrie et le meurtre d'Hypatie', *CrSt* 11 (1990): 485-504; M. Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, trans. F. Lyra (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

⁵² Cyril would develop the contrast between Christianity and paganism at great length in his *Contra Julianum*, begun in the late 420s and not finished until 439-41. For an introduction to the text, see Robert L. Wilken, 'Cyril of Alexandria's *Contra Julianum*', in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 42-55, who describes it as one of the least studied of all patristic texts. See especially Cyril's contrast between Scripture and pagan books in *Juln. VII* (PG 76.856-7). Further studies of the work include Meijering, 'Cyril of Alexandria on the Platonists and the Trinity'; Moreschini, 'Una definizione della Trinità nel *Contra Julianum* di Cirillo di Alessandria'; Marie-Odile Boulnois, 'Platon entre Moïse et Arius selon le *Contre Julien* de Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *STPatr* 32 (1997): 264-271; *ibid.*, 'Le Dieu supreme peut-il entrer en contact avec le monde? Un debat entre paiens et chretiens sur la transcendance divine a partir du *Contre Julien* de Cyrille d'Alexandrie', in *La transcendance dans la philosophie grecque tardive et dans la pensée chretienne*, ed. Evangelos A. Moutsopoulos and Georgios Lekkas (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2006), 177-96; *ibid.*, 'Dieu peut-il être jaloux? Un débat sur les attributs divins entre l'empereur Julien et Cyrille d'Alexandrie', in *Culture classique et christianisme: Melanges offerts à Jean Bouffartigue*, ed. Danièle Auger and Etienne Wolff (Paris: Picard, 2008), 13-25.

⁵³ Cyril, *Am. 6:1-2* (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.481). The only prior interpreters whom I know of who commented upon this verse are Theodore of Mopsuestia, who interprets it strictly within the history of Israel (*Am. 6:1-2*), and Jerome. Cyril might be following Jerome here, who uses the text as an opportunity to comment upon heretics and Scripture (*Am. 6:2-6* (CCSL 76.304)). After condemning pagan learning, Cyril too turns to condemn the teaching of the heretics.

to seek to adhere to people who distort the truth'. It is certainly possible that some Christians at this time were still attending the classes of the pagans, as had Synesius of Cyrene who was one of Hypatia's students in the late fourth century before becoming a bishop. Are we hearing here Cyril's attempt to discredit the authority of such teachers of Hellenistic wisdom? Without more precise knowledge of the context and dating of Cyril's writings it is impossible to know for sure. However, despite not knowing against whom he has directed his polemic, his point is clear. Against those who think much of such secular learning, he asserts that 'the inspired Scripture is broader than the quibbles of the pagans, proclaiming the light of truth, introducing the knowledge of beneficial dogmas, and bringing up the mind of believers to everything praiseworthy'.⁵⁴ The centuries of pagan learning might present an alluring attraction that competed with the church for the hearts and minds of the city's inhabitants, but according to Cyril Scripture alone contains the truth and can lead to moral transformation.

Such seems to be the background to Cyril's exegesis of Psalm 22:5. In this historical context in which paganism was still a threat, Cyril attempts to highlight the superiority of the new Christian classic, the divine Scriptures, over against 'the wise ones of the Greeks'. The identification of the pagan philosophers as the 'enemies' of the psalm, coupled with the imagery of eating present in the verse, allows him to draw a sharp contrast between the effects of pagan and Christian learning. The Greeks teach 'nothing of what is important' (οὐδὲν τῶν ἀναγκαίων). Instead, as Psalm 22:5 suggests, they actually 'oppress and afflict us' by their inability to provide anything like useful instruction. In fact, the 'table' of the Greeks is 'destructive and unhealthy' (τὴν φθοροποιὸν καὶ ἄτροφον). In contrast, the 'divine and holy table, the divinely inspired Scripture' (Ἡ δὲ θεία τε καὶ ἱερὰ τράπεζα, ἡ θεόπνευστος Γραφή) is 'rich and costly', and has 'a great variety and provision of prepared dishes, or rather foods'.⁵⁵ Cyril's language here is a further expansion of the food metaphor employed in the psalm, but it might also have something to do with the grammatical and rhetorical conventions of antiquity. The word I have translated as 'variety' is ποικιλία, a term related to ποικίλος, which Plutarch used to describe a written work that possessed the appropriate degree of complexity

⁵⁴ Cyril, *Am.* 6:1-2 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.481). εὐρυτέρα γὰρ τῆς Ἑλλήνων στενολεσχίας ἡ θεόπνευστος γραφή, τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καταγγέλλουσα φῶς καὶ δογμάτων ἐπωφελῶν εἰσφέρουσα γνώσιν, καὶ πρὸς πᾶν ὀτιοῦν τῶν ἐπαινουμένων τὸν τῶν πιστευόντων ἀναβιβάζουσα νοῦν.

⁵⁵ Cyril, *Ps.* 22:5 (PG 69.841).

and variegation.⁵⁶ Cyril's choice of the term could simply have to do with the table imagery, but since he is here talking about the book of Scripture, Plutarch's sense of the term might be implicit as well. If so, then Cyril is claiming for Scripture the kind of stylistic conventions that were applied to the pagan classics.

Regardless of whether he intends the word in this sense, the contrast in his exegesis is clear enough. Unlike pagan teaching, Scripture contains 'many saving admonitions' (Νουθεσίαι . . . πλεῖσται καὶ σωτηριώδεις) that 'indicate the true well-being' (τῆς ἀληθοῦς εὐζωΐας) and lead to spiritual vigor' (εὐεξίαν πνευματικῆν). Nourished by Scripture, believers are able to 'resist' unclean spirits and heretical teachers.⁵⁷ The contrast with pagan literature here is stark. The wise men of the Greeks teach nothing that is important, and so their 'wisdom' cannot lead to spiritual life, while the inspired Scripture contains true instruction that leads to spiritual health and renewal. Though Cyril does not state the reason why this is so, we may infer it from what he has said in the previous fragment. If indeed Christ is the source of all wisdom, knowledge, and life, then only the book of Scripture spoken by him can lead to the truth and to spiritual well-being. As Cyril continues his exegesis of the verse he moves from simply contrasting the effects of pagan wisdom and Scripture to turning Scripture itself against paganism. The inspired word is the 'spiritual nourishment' (Ἡ πνευματικὴ εὐτροφία) necessary for strengthening the soul, so that the believer can withstand those enemies spoken of in the psalm, presumably pagan teachers. In addition, Cyril identifies 'unclean spirits' and 'teachers in error', probably meaning heretics, as those with whom the believing soul must contend. Thus, the inspired word is central to Cyril's understanding of the spiritual life, as the believer's source for resisting paganism, heresy, and demonic forces.⁵⁸

The fragment I have been looking at that deals with Psalm 22:5 has a final closing comment that is relevant to my argument in this chapter. After expounding at length on Scripture as the 'evangelical table', Cyril next turns to the Eucharist, the 'mystical table, the flesh of the Lord' (ἡ μυστικὴ τράπεζα, ἡ σὰρξ τοῦ Κυρίου).⁵⁹ That he would bring in the Eucharist at this

⁵⁶ Plutarch, *aud. poet.* 25d (LCL 197.132), on which see Eden, *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition*, 35, and the literature she cites in n.30.

⁵⁷ Cyril, Ps. 22:5 (PG 69.841).

⁵⁸ The opposite principle is also true for Cyril. Lack of heavenly food causes one to fall under the sway of Satan. See *ador.* I (PG 68.152).

⁵⁹ Cyril, Ps. 22:5 (PG 69.841). The closest thing to a technical term that Cyril has for the Eucharist is εὐλογία, but as Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 66-7, notes, he can use this term fluidly for the Eucharist, for

point is not surprising, since the passage had frequently been used for this purpose by prior interpreters. Among the many who interpreted the 'table' as the Eucharist, the most relevant background for Cyril is his uncle Theophilus who took the passage in this manner in his *Sermon on the Mystical Supper*.⁶⁰ In fact, in light of the dominant eucharistic interpretation of the passage in the prior tradition, what is striking is that Cyril interprets the passage largely in terms of Scripture before turning to the sacrament. Furthermore, we should note that he speaks of the Eucharist in this passage as performing a function parallel to that of Scripture. It too 'makes one strong' against 'passions (κατὰ παθῶν) and demons.' In fact, 'Satan fears those who partake of the mysteries with piety' (φοβεῖται γὰρ ὁ Σατανᾶς τοὺς μετ' εὐλαβείας τῶν μυστηρίων μεταλαμβάνοντας). That Cyril interprets Psalm 22:5 as referring both to Scripture and to the Eucharist implies that he sees both realities as nurturing the spiritual life of the church so that it might oppose the forces that seek to do it harm, whether pagan teachers, heretics, or demonic forces.

Finally, in the last verse of the psalm, the psalmist declares, 'Your mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life, and my residing in the Lord's house is for length of days' (22:6). In commenting on this verse, Cyril highlights the permanence of the gifts that come to believers from Christ, one of the hallmarks of the new dispensation in contrast to the old. According to the Alexandrian, the verse means that those who have been 'sanctified in Christ' and 'made worthy of his gifts' become 'rich partakers of joy without ceasing' (τὸ ἐν μεθέξει πλουσίᾳ γενέσθαι διηνεκοῦς εὐθυμίας). In other words, 'the hope of the saints is steadfast and unshak- en'. To illustrate this principle he adduces a 'type' from the Old Testament that hints at the

the gift of the Spirit, and for Christ himself. Cyril's eucharistic theology has received a fair amount of attention. See E. Michaud, 'Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie et l'eucharistie', *RITH* 10 (1902): 599-614, 675-692; Weigl, *Die Heil- lehre*, 203-220; J. Mahé, 'L'eucharistie selon St. Cyrille', *RHE* 8 (1907): 677-696; A. Struckmann, *Die Eucharistielehre des heiligen Cyrill von Alexandrien* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1910); Du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité*, 184-218; Henry Chad- wick, 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy', *JTS* 2 (1951): 145-164; Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*; Lawrence J. Welch, *Christology and Eucharist in the Early Thought of Cyril of Alexandria* (San Francisco: International Scholars Press, 1994); Meunier, *Le Christ*, 179-93; Marie-Odile Boulnois, 'L'eucharistie, mystere d'union chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Les modeles d'union trinitaire et christologique', *RevSR* 74 (2000): 147-72; Keating, *The Ap- propriation of Divine Life*, 64-74; Theresia Hainthaler, 'Perspectives on the Eucharist in the Nestorian Controversy, in *The Eucharist in Theology and Philosophy*, ed. István Perczel, Réka Forrai, and György Geréby, *Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* 35 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 3-21; Patrick T. R. Gray, 'From Eucharist to Christology: The Life-giving Body of Christ in Cyril of Alexandria, Eutyches and Julian of Halicarnassus', in *The Eucharist in Theol- ogy and Philosophy*, 23-35; Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology*, 136-46; Ellen Concannon, 'The Eucharist as the Source of St. Cyril of Alexandria's Christology', *ProEccl* 18 (2009): 318-36.

⁶⁰ Theophilus, *myst. cen.* (PG 77.1021). See also Eusebius, *d.e.* 1.10.39; Cyril of Jerusalem, *cat. myst.* 4.7; Ambrose, *sacr.* 5.3.13; Theodoret, *Ps.* 22:5.

'immutability of the hope of the saints' (τὸ ἀμετάστατον τῆς τῶν ἁγίων ἐλπίδος).⁶¹ On the Sabbath no one was to leave his tent, and instead was to stay within it and enjoy what had been provided for sustenance from the previous day (cf. Ex. 16:28-29). Similarly, the saints remain in their heavenly dwellings continually, enjoying the absence of all pain and grief and groaning. Those who have this hope can truly declare that the mercy of Christ pursues them all the days of their life. Thus, Psalm 22:6, the last verse of the psalm, presents the culmination of the shepherd motif begun earlier. Because Christ has nourished believers with Scripture, the Spirit, and the Eucharist, their hope is immutable and their future is certain.⁶²

Cyril's interpretation of Psalm 22 is similar in some respects to earlier interpretations in the tradition, but is still distinctly his own.⁶³ Completely absent from these extant fragments on the psalm is any sense of the 'progress of the soul' that was so central in the exegesis of Origen, Eusebius, and Didymus. Moreover, though others had seen a reference to Scripture in the grass of Psalm 22:2, Cyril is unique in carrying the theme of Scripture forward through his exegesis of verse five. Finally, and particularly important for my argument, Cyril's interpretation is unique in the way that he construes the relationship of Scripture to Christ and the church. Christ gives Scripture to the church, along with the Spirit, and Scripture functions analogously to the Eucharist as spiritual nourishment for the flock.

THE SHEPHERD'S TWO RODS (ZECHARIAH 11)

The extant fragments on Psalm 22 do not contain a fragment from Cyril dealing with Psalm 22:4 which speaks of the shepherd's 'rod' and 'staff'. However, there is another text to which we can turn in order to see how he might have handled it. The image of God as a Shep-

⁶¹ Cyril, Ps. 22:6 (PG 69.841-4). See also Cyril, Jo. 7:24 (Pusey, 1.626-7), where he presents the same typological interpretation offered here. Both there and in his interpretation of Psalm 22:6 he quotes Romans 11:29 as a proof-text for his exegesis.

⁶² The fragment on verse six ends with Cyril providing one final, alternate interpretation. Some commentators, he says, assert that the 'mercy of God' which pursues the saints is Christ himself who pursues and seizes humanity 'through his incarnation' (διὰ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως αὐτοῦ). He allows this alternative interpretation to stand as a legitimate meaning of the verse as well, since 'it is not from works that we are justified, but from the grace and mercy of God' (Ps. 22:6 (PG 69.844)). It might be Origen whom Cyril has in view here. If the fragment bearing his name is authentic, he identifies the 'mercy' of the psalm with Christ who 'became for you wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption' (sel. in Ps. 22:5 (PG 12.1264)). Didymus offers an interpretation similar to Origen, so he might also be in view. See fr. Ps. 208 (22:6a) (PTS 15.239).

⁶³ In fact, the patristic interpretation of Psalm 22 that is the most like Cyril's is the sixth-century account of Cassiodorus, who in his exegesis outlines a list of gifts given to the church. See exp. Ps. 22 (CCSL 97.209-14).

herd recurs again in Zechariah 11. On this occasion, the prophet chastises the leaders of Israel as unfaithful shepherds, and promises that in their place the Lord himself will tend the sheep, taking with him two rods called 'Beauty' and 'Portion'. When Cyril comments upon this text in his *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*, he turns to the same image of Christ as the Shepherd that we have already seen in his exegesis of Psalm 22.⁶⁴ Moreover, once more he brings Scripture into the metaphor as he interprets the text. Looking at his treatment of this passage will serve as further evidence that Scripture is an essential part of Christ's 'shepherding' role in Cyril's theology, since Scripture comes to the church through Christ as spiritual food.

Cyril begins his interpretation by identifying the Lord who is speaking in the passage as Christ, the Chief Shepherd of all (cf. 1 Pet. 5:4), the same identification he made in his exegesis of Psalm 22.⁶⁵ Relying upon Christ's self-identification as the Good Shepherd in John 10, he states that the Shepherd in the passage laid down his life for the sheep, giving his life as a substitute for the life of all.⁶⁶ In keeping with the identification of Christ as the Shepherd, he applies the prophetic text directly to the Jews who lived during the time of Christ. The 'shepherds' of the Jews were the priests, judges, and experts in the law.⁶⁷ Cyril states that they, along with the rest of the Jewish people, murdered Christ, the good Shepherd and thus incurred the judgment that was proclaimed by the prophet Zechariah, and that was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, an event described by the Jewish historian Josephus. As a result, Christ now shepherds his flock in the land of the 'Canaanites' (Zech. 11:7), representing the nations who have believed in place of Israel of old.⁶⁸ Thus the good Shepherd has collected into one flock both the people from Israel and those from the nations who have been justified through faith and sanctified in the Spirit.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ This passage is mentioned briefly in Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 179; Manlio Simonetti, 'Note sul commento di Cirillo d'Alessandria ai Profeti Minori', *VetC* 14 (1977): 327.

⁶⁵ Cyril, *Zach.* 11:6-7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.453).

⁶⁶ Cyril, *Zach.* 11:6-7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.453-4).

⁶⁷ Cyril, *Zach.* 11:8-9 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.460).

⁶⁸ Cyril, *Zach.* 11:6-7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.455). The term Cyril uses for 'to shepherd' in this context is *καταποιμαίνω*, a rare term that occurs only in his writings. See, e.g., *glaph. Gen.* (PG 69.228, 229, 232); *Ps.* 15:4 (PG 69.809). I take it simply as an intensive form of *ποιμαίνω*.

⁶⁹ Cyril, *Zach.* 11:7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.456-7).

In order to shepherd this one, united flock, Christ uses the two rods spoken of by the prophet. To interpret the rather obscure mention of two rods, Cyril goes through a sort of concordance, noting the various ways that 'rod' is used in Scripture. It can refer to a kingdom (cf. Ps. 44:7) or to strength (cf. Ps. 109:2), but when, as here in Zechariah, it is a 'pastoral' rod (τὴν ποιμαντικήν), it refers 'to instruction and understanding' (εἰς παιδείαν καὶ ἐπιστήμην).⁷⁰ After citing Micah 8:14 ('Shepherd your people with the rod of your tribe, the sheep of your inheritance'), Cyril finds great significance in the fact that Zechariah says the Shepherd possesses two rods. These represent a 'twofold type of instruction' (διπτὸν παιδεύσεως εἶδος), consisting of the Old and New Testaments. Before the incarnation, Christ, who is God and the lawgiver (νομοθέτης), fed the flock of Israel with only one rod, which was 'the instruction according to the law' (τῆ κατὰ νόμον παιδείᾳ). To support the notion that it was Christ who shepherded Israel, Cyril next cites Hosea 13:5, which reads 'I was shepherding you in the wilderness'.

However, now that Christ has become man, he 'takes two rods' and 'feeds' his flock with both the 'legal and evangelical oracles' (νομικοῖς τε ἅμα καὶ εὐαγγελικοῖς θεσπίσμασιν). Lest someone think that Cyril might imply that the church still observes the ritualistic sacrifices prescribed by the Mosaic Law, he quickly adds that the church offers worship 'in the Spirit', in the manner of a bloodless sacrifice, since the 'shadow is transferred to the truth'.⁷¹ He also finds significance in the names that the prophet gives to each of the rods. One is called 'Beauty' (Κάλλος) because it corresponds to the beautiful new covenant (cf. Ps. 44:3), while the other is 'Portion' (Σχοίνισμα) because it corresponds to the law and Israel, which is described as the Lord's 'portion' in the Pentateuch (Deut. 32:9).⁷² Despite the distinction between the two rods, Christ sets both before the church, 'providing some sort of spiritual grass for participation' (οἷά τινα πόαν πνευματικὴν χορηγῶν εἰς μέθεξιν), and thus 'richly fattening the souls of the saints'. The result of this divine feeding is the 'evangelical way of life' which is in Christ

⁷⁰ Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 278, lists this an example of Cyril using Scripture to interpret Scripture's own terminology.

⁷¹ Cyril, *Zach.* 11:7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.456).

⁷² The word *σχοίνισμα* first appears in Greek literature in the LXX, and fairly frequently in patristic literature, often in comment upon Deuteronomy 32:9. See, e.g., Justin Martyr, *dial.* 131.1 (PTS 47.296); Origen, *Cels.* 4.8 (SC 136.204); Eusebius, *d.e.* 2.3.35 (GCS 23.66); Cyril, *Jo.* 1:11 (Pusey, 1.131-2). Deuteronomy 32:8-9 was an important text in Origen's understanding of Israel's history in his treatment of Romans 11:12 (*comm.* in Rom. 8.9.6). Cf. Heine, *Origen*, 201-2. See also Origen, *Cant.* 2.4.13.

(εἰς ἀστειότητα πολιτείας τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ τε καὶ εὐαγγελικῆς).⁷³ The mention of 'participation' in this passage is a bit unclear. We might read it as Cyril suggesting that through feeding on Scripture the church participates in the Shepherd, but the remark is allusive, so it is not clear what to make of it. Still, in at least two passages, which I will look at at the end of this chapter, he does speak of participating in Christ through Scripture, so this might be what he has in mind here as well. Regardless, what is strikingly clear is that in Cyril's exegesis of Zechariah 11 the same elements of the Shepherd motif appear as in his exegesis of Psalm 22. Furthermore, although there is no mention in this passage of the Eucharist as there was in his exegesis of Psalm 22, Scripture functions here in much the same way that we saw previously, leading the church to spiritual well-being.

Few commentators had previously dealt with Zechariah 11. Eusebius reports that Origen composed a commentary on Zechariah, but nothing of it remains, and there are no relevant citations of Zechariah 11 in Origen's other works that would allow us to see how he interpreted the shepherd's two rods.⁷⁴ However, both Didymus and Jerome had previously commented on the passage, and Cyril's interpretation presents definite parallels with them both. Didymus applies the passage directly to the church, stating that it speaks of the 'rational flock' (τὴν λογικὴν ἀγέλην) under the pastoral care of church leaders who serve under Christ, the Chief Shepherd.⁷⁵ The two rods are symbols of kingly power, representing the two nations of the Jews and those from the nations which are brought together into one flock under one Shepherd.⁷⁶ Didymus holds that, on the one hand, the rod called 'Beauty' represents 'the church from the nations that have faith in Christ', while the casting aside of this rod refers to the end of the previous covenant with the nations that was administered by angels (Deut. 32:8) and the receiving of these nations as an inheritance by the Son.⁷⁷ On the other hand, the rod called 'Portion' represents Israel, and the casting aside of this rod refers to the division of

⁷³ Cyril, *Zach.* 11:7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.457). On the significance of the term πολιτεία for Cyril, see Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 75; O'Keefe, *Interpreting the Angel*, 49-57.

⁷⁴ Eusebius, *h.e.* 6.36.2. See Origen, *Cels.* 7.11, where he refers to his work on the twelve prophets. Theodore of Mopsuestia, as usual, limits the scope of the passage's meaning to the history of Israel, especially the Maccabean period, and identifies the rods as the monarchy and priesthood (*Zach.* 11:7).

⁷⁵ Didymus, *Zach.* 4.49 (11:4-5) (SC 85.826).

⁷⁶ Didymus, *Zach.* 4.71-6 (11:7-9) (SC 85.840-2).

⁷⁷ Didymus, *Zach.* 4.107-12 (11:10-11) (SC 85.854-6).

the once united kingdoms of Israel and Judah.⁷⁸ This interpretation thus far has to do with the 'history' (τὴν ἱστορίαν) referred to in the passage. However, understood 'in an exalted sense' (ἀνηγμμένως), Didymus says that the passage refers to the union of these two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, in the Spirit under the rule of the Son.⁷⁹

At several points Didymus' exegesis appears similar to that of Cyril. Like Cyril, and also like Eusebius in the early fourth century, Didymus uses Deuteronomy 32:9 to explain the significance of the name of the second rod.⁸⁰ We should note as well that Didymus also links Psalm 22 with Zechariah 11 by citing the words of the psalmist in his exposition of the prophet, though he does not develop the shepherd theme in quite the same way that the archbishop does.⁸¹ Similarly, Cyril's exegesis of Zechariah 11 implies a connection with Psalm 22 insofar as he interprets both passages through the lens of his Christ-as-Shepherd motif. Besides the textual resonances, there are thematic parallels as well. First, Didymus' identification of the two rods as the nation of Israel and the Church is only one step removed from Cyril identifying the rods with the Old and New Testaments. Second, in the course of his exposition Didymus also mentions those appointed to 'instruct' (παιδεύειν) the flock, and he identifies these persons as apostles, prophets, teachers, and evangelists.⁸² Cyril's exposition is more concerned with the teaching offered by Christ rather than that of church leaders, but the theme of instruction is at least common to both. These parallels might suggest some dependency of Cyril upon his predecessor's interpretation of the prophet.⁸³

Jerome also presents parallels with Cyril's exposition, and, as is often the case, he appears to be Cyril's source for his historical interpretation of Zechariah 11. In interpreting Zechariah 11, Jerome, like Cyril, says that the passage was fulfilled in the destruction of

⁷⁸ Didymus, *Zach.* 4.130-40 (11:14) (SC 85.866-72).

⁷⁹ Didymus, *Zach.* 4.141-3 (11:9) (SC 85.872-4).

⁸⁰ Didymus, *Zach.* 4.131 (11:14) (SC 85.866). In his *Demonstratio evangelica*, Eusebius takes the first rod as referring to Jerusalem and the Mosaic Law and worship, while he takes the second as the Jewish nation. Furthermore, he sees the 'Canaanites' of the passage as the Gentiles who replaced Israel (*d.e.* 10.4.17-21; cf. 2.3.35).

⁸¹ Didymus, *Zach.* 4.99 (11:9) (SC 85.852).

⁸² Didymus, *Zach.* 4.49-50 (11:4-5) (SC 85.826).

⁸³ Simonetti, 'Note sul commento', 327-8, also finds 'qualche consonanza' between the interpretations of Zechariah given by Didymus and Cyril, but also 'molte differenze', such that Cyril operated with 'una grande libertà' with respect to his predecessor. He only compares the two commentaries up to chapter four, and so does not consider chapter eleven that concerns my argument here.

Jerusalem by the Romans, pointing to Josephus as proof for the claim.⁸⁴ Moreover, both Jerome and Cyril cite in their exposition Matthew 27:25 in which the Jews declare that the blood of Christ is upon their hands and the hands of their children.⁸⁵ Jerome also points to John 10 in which Christ is described as the Good Shepherd, and develops the imagery of the two rods in a way that approaches what Cyril does with the text. According to Jerome, the beautiful rod represents the calling of the Gentiles, while the rod called 'Portion' or 'Cord' is Israel, based once more on Deuteronomy 32:8-9. We should note as well that Jerome almost certainly had access to Didymus' *Commentary on Zechariah*, since he cites an unnamed author who has presented a twofold interpretation of the three shepherds mentioned by the prophet, and then goes on to disagree with both of these interpretations so that he can offer his own.⁸⁶ The two meanings of this unnamed commentator correspond exactly to what Didymus presents, so there is good reason to suppose that Jerome is here disagreeing with the interpretation of the blind Alexandrian teacher, although Origen's now lost commentary cannot be ruled out as a common source for them both. Nevertheless, despite this his apparent departure from Didymus in this respect, Jerome's interpretation of the two rods as the Jews and Gentiles is very similar to the blind Alexandrian's, and both therefore serve as precursors for Cyril's exegesis.

Cyril thus seems to have drawn something unique from each interpreter. He gleaned the historical sense of the text, with its reference to the fall of Jerusalem at the hand of the Romans, from Jerome. However, being unsatisfied with merely offering a historical sense, he went on to offer his theological account of Christ the Shepherd with the two rods of Scripture. The theological meaning that Cyril finds in the text, that the church is composed of Jews and those from the nations united in a single flock, bears the most similarities with Didymus. Thus, we see the Alexandrian archbishop drawing upon two very different sources, even two sources which explicitly disagree with one another, in order to interpret the text. The most original

⁸⁴ Jerome, *Zach.* 11:6-7 (CCSL 76A.852). Abel did not discuss the parallels between Jerome and Cyril that I am highlighting in this chapter. However, Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 309, pointed out that both Jerome and Cyril refer to Josephus here. Jerome also notes that the phrase in the LXX εἰς τὴν Χαναάν, which Cyril reads as a reference to Canaan and therefore to the Gentiles, is not in the Hebrew (*Zach.* 11:6-7). If Cyril is indeed dependent upon Jerome, as seems to be the case, then he ignores this comment and goes ahead with the LXX reading.

⁸⁵ Cyril, *Zach.* 11:6-7 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 2.454); Jerome, *Zach.* 11:8-9 (CCSL 76A.853).

⁸⁶ Jerome, *Zach.* 11:8-9 (CCSL 76A.853-5). Didymus' first interpretation is that the three shepherds are the prophets, priests, and kings of Israel, and his second interpretation is that the shepherds are those heretics who blaspheme one or all of the Trinity (*Zach.* 4.79-89 (11:7-9)). Rejecting both suggestions, Jerome says that prophet has Moses, Aaron, and Miriam in view.

feature that Cyril adds to this prior interpretive tradition is his identification of the two rods with the Old and New Testaments, and his emphasis that the rods are used for feeding and nourishing the flock. His identification of the rods in this manner is all the more striking given that 'rods' as a metaphor might lend itself more readily to notions of authority or discipline, yet what Cyril chooses to focus upon is the nourishment that is to be had from Scripture.

CHRIST THE SHEPHERD FEEDING THE 5,000

A final passage that demonstrates Cyril's concern for the motif of Christ as Shepherd feeding the sheep is his treatment of the feeding the 5,000 in the gospels.⁸⁷ This episode is recorded in the Johannine gospel as well as in the Synoptics, so Cyril had a chance to address it in his exposition of the three gospels he commented on, Matthew, Luke, and John. In what follows I will consider his exegesis of this episode in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* and his *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*. The few fragments of relevant exegesis that have survived from his *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* add little to the picture we see in these other two more extensive treatments, so it is not worth spending much time looking at them.⁸⁸ The point I want us to see here is that in these passages Cyril again deploys the Shepherd motif, and once again presents Scripture as food for the church. However, before looking at his exegesis, it will be useful to see what the prior tradition had done with this event in the gospels.

The Feeding of the 5,000 in the Prior Tradition

The *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria preserves one of the earliest discussions of the feeding of the 5,000. He interprets the five loaves which were broken by Christ to feed the multitude as 'mystically' (μυστικώτατα) analogous to the five senses of the body which were unable to lead one to a knowledge of God, until the Son clothed himself with flesh.⁸⁹ Origen, to some degree, carries forward this line of interpretation in his *Commentary on Matthew*, in that he argues that the bread, equal in number to the five senses, represents the 'sensible words of

⁸⁷ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 65, n.9, has pointed out that Cyril 'consistently interprets the multiplication of the loaves and fishes in terms of the spiritual food of Scripture, Old and New Testament'.

⁸⁸ See Cyril, fr. Mt. 174-179 (Reuss, 209-11). Fr. Mt. 175 and 177 are nearly identical to fr. Lc. 70 (Reuss, 88-9).

⁸⁹ Clement, str. 5.6.33.4-34.2 (GCS 15.348).

the Scriptures' (τοὺς αἰσθητοὺς τῶν γραφῶν λόγους). Furthermore, in Origen's view, that there were 5,000 people who were fed is in keeping with the fact that those who have eaten have first attained sensible nourishment. The two fish, on the other hand, are the 'uttered and inward word' (τὸν προφορικὸν καὶ τὸν ἐνδιάθετον λόγον).⁹⁰ Thus, Origen interprets the passage as being not simply about literal, physical bread given to the crowds, but about the 'spiritual nourishment' (λογικὴν τροφήν) offered by Jesus through the disciples.⁹¹ Because they have received 'power' (δύναμιν) from Jesus, the disciples are able to nourish others.⁹² The twelve baskets gathered by the disciples after the miraculous feeding are analogous to the twelve tribes of Israel, and signify that there are twelve baskets full of the pieces of the living bread that will remain until the end of the age with the disciples, but which the multitudes cannot eat, presumably because they are not yet spiritually prepared to do so.⁹³ The detail that the crowd sat upon the 'grass' also does not go unnoticed by Origen. He connects the description of the setting with Isaiah 40:6 ('All flesh is grass') in order to make the point that only those who have dominated the flesh and subdued their pride can have a share in the bread that Jesus has blessed.⁹⁴ As is so often the case, in several respects this interpretation of Origen blazes a trail that others will later follow.

Hilary, like Origen, also interprets the feeding of the 5,000 as having to do with feeding on Scripture. For him, the five loaves are the five books of Moses in which there is life, and the two fish are the prophets and John the Baptist who revive hope like the power of water. Thus, Hilary's interpretation primarily has the Scriptures of the Old Testament in view, as he suggests that the multitude was filled with the word of God that comes from the teaching of the law and prophets. Nevertheless, he also notes that after the time of the law and prophets, Jesus himself would be turned into 'evangelical food' (in *euangelicum cibum*).⁹⁵ Like Hilary, Jerome too interprets the five loaves as pointing to Moses, but sees the two fish as perhaps sig-

⁹⁰ Origen, *comm.* in Mt. 11.2 (SC 162.270). On the distinction between προφορικός and ἐνδιάθετος see also Origen, *Cels.* 6.65; Irenaeus, *haer.* 2.12.5. See also n.19 on page 14 above.

⁹¹ Origen, *comm.* in Mt. 11.1 (SC 162.268).

⁹² Origen, *comm.* in Mt. 11.2 (SC 162.268).

⁹³ Origen, *comm.* in Mt. 11.2 (SC 162.272-4).

⁹⁴ Origen, *comm.* in Mt. 11.3 (SC 162.276).

⁹⁵ Hilary, *comm.* in Mt. 14.10-11 (SC 258.20-4).

nifying either the two testaments or the law. As the Savior broke the bread to feed the multitudes, so the law and the prophets, must be 'broken' and 'torn into pieces' to publicly reveal its mysteries and so feed the 'multitude of the nations'. Moreover, like Origen, Jerome sees the 'grass' as signifying the need to transcend the flesh and its pleasures. Although he does not cite Isaiah 40:6, he perhaps alludes to it.⁹⁶ Ambrose as well comments on the feeding of the 5,000, and adds a distinctive emphasis to his interpretation. More than anyone else before him, he views the episode in a sacramental light. The five loaves correspond to the milk given to beginners, while more solid nourishment is the body of Christ, and the stronger drink is the Savior's blood.⁹⁷ Ambrose' interpretation also highlights at several points the various levels of spiritual growth that correspond to the levels of food given.⁹⁸ Moreover, like several before him, Scripture holds a place in Ambrose' interpretation, as he sees the bread that Jesus broke as being mysteriously the word of God and the discourse about Christ, and he allows that many think the two fish are a figure of the two testaments.⁹⁹ Finally, in keeping with the interpretations of Origen and Jerome, he interprets the 'grass' on which the people sat as signifying that the people who ate were still carnal, basing this point on Isaiah 40:6.¹⁰⁰

Not surprisingly, the interpretations of Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom bear little resemblance to that of Cyril. An example of Theodore's historical interest is that he infers from the setting of the miracle in a 'grassy place' that it must have taken place during the month of Nisan when there is more grass.¹⁰¹ Chrysostom's homilies on the feeding of the 5,000 are almost entirely taken up with moral exhortation. While he notes that Jesus was feeding the souls of the crowd, rather than merely their stomachs, in his exegesis the content of the food offered by Jesus was purely moral instruction—that the people should not be slaves to

⁹⁶ Jerome, *comm.* in Mt. 14:17-19 (SC 242.306-8).

⁹⁷ Ambrose, *exp.* in Lc. 6.71 (SC 45.253).

⁹⁸ Ambrose, *exp.* in Lc. 6.72; 6.81 (SC 45.254, 258).

⁹⁹ Ambrose, *exp.* in Lc. 6.86; 6.82 (SC 45.260, 259). Note in his exposition of the episode, Ambrose twice quotes Psalm 103:15, a passage that we will shortly see Cyril cite in his exposition of John 6. See Ambrose, *exp.* in Lc. 6.74; 6.92 (SC 45.255, 262).

¹⁰⁰ Ambrose, *exp.* in Lc. 6.82 (SC 45.259). Ambrose is here contrasting the feeding of the 5,000 with the feeding of the 4,000. The latter took place on the 'earth', while the former took place on 'grass'.

¹⁰¹ Theodore of Mopsuestia, Jo. 6:10 (CSCO 115.132; 116.94).

their belly but should cling to the things of the Spirit.¹⁰² We cannot be certain to which of these prior interpreters Cyril had access, but significant for my argument is that there already was a prior tradition going back to Origen that viewed the feeding of the 5,000 as a story about spiritual nourishment. To some degree Cyril stands in this tradition, even though his interpretation of the passage shows the distinctive features of his own Shepherd motif.

Bread from Heaven (John 6)

Cyril's lengthy treatment of John 6, spanning over one hundred pages in translation, stands out as one of the best and clearest examples of his theological exegesis. Here I want to draw attention to the way that he uses the passage to explicate once more his motif of Christ as Shepherd, and, once again, Scripture is central to his discussion of the way that Christ feeds the church. He begins his explanation of the passage by noting that the feeding of the 5,000 takes place just after the crossing of the Sea of Galilee (John 6:1), a symbolic act filled with import. For Cyril, the events of the life of Christ in the gospels are not mere historical facts, but filled with theological significance, for 'Christ intends something on nearly every occasion, and he portrays mysteries in the nature of his deeds, as if writing on a tablet'.¹⁰³ The overarching 'economy' (οἰκονομία) that he sees in John 6 has to do with Christ's rejection by the Jews.¹⁰⁴ After teaching the Jews in Jerusalem in John 5, chapter 6 opens with Jesus departing from Jerusalem and crossing the Sea of Galilee. The departure from Jerusalem is intended to convict Israel of their 'hatred of God', and to indicate the superiority of the 'church of the nations'.¹⁰⁵ The crossing of the sea thus indicates the placing of an impassable barrier between Christ and the Jews, symbolizing that they can no longer come to him due to their unbelief (cf. Hos. 2:6).¹⁰⁶ The Jews even find themselves in the place of the Pharaoh of the exodus. As the people of Israel passed through the water unharmed, while Pharaoh and his army drowned in the

¹⁰² John Chrysostom, *hom. in Mt.* 49.3-4. Cf. *hom. in Jo.* 42.

¹⁰³ Cyril, *Jo.* 6:1 (Pusey, 1.397): οἰκονομεῖ δέ τι σχεδὸν ἐφ' ἑκάστη, καὶ ἐν τῇ τῶν πραγμάτων φύσει, καθάπερ ἐν πίνακι, καταγράφει μυστήρια. Note that he here uses the term οἰκονομέω, which is the verbal form of οἰκονομία, a highly loaded theological word. On Cyril's understanding of this term, see above page 12, n.16.

¹⁰⁴ Cyril, *Jo.* 6:1 (Pusey, 1.401).

¹⁰⁵ Cyril, *Jo.* 6:1 (Pusey, 1.401). τὴν ἀμείνω ψῆφον τῇ ἐξ ἔθνων Ἐκκλησίᾳ διὰ τούτου διδοῦς, καὶ τὸ μισόθειον τῶν ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων εὐλαβείας ἐξελέγχεσθαι ποιῶν.

¹⁰⁶ Cyril, *Jo.* 6:1 (Pusey, 1.402).

deep, so the disciples passed over the Sea of Galilee with Jesus in safety, while the Jews will find the same judgment that Pharaoh suffered.¹⁰⁷ The rejection of Israel and the calling of the Gentiles is thus the theme that underlies Cyril's exegesis of John 6.¹⁰⁸ Although this theme was not explicitly evident in his exegesis of Psalm 22, it was also present in his interpretation of Zechariah 11. For this reason, it appears that the rejection of the Jews due to their unbelief is a piece of Cyril's Shepherd motif.

With this overarching narrative in place, Cyril comes to the account of the feeding of the 5,000. He notes that the evangelist says 'there was much grass in the place' (John 6:10), indicating that it was a fine country for people to sit. According to the 'whole mind of the passage' (εἰς ὅλην τοῦ προκειμένου τὴν διάνοιαν) regarding the Jews and the Gentiles, the sitting on grass is no mere insignificant detail, but rather means that Christ

justly (δικαίως) turns away from and abandons the insolent and arrogant people of the Jews, but also welcomes gladly those that belong to him, and fattens them with heavenly food, holding out the intelligible (νοητὸν) 'bread that strengthens the human heart' (Ps. 103:15). And he does not feed them as though he wearied of the task, but cheerfully and freely, with great enjoyment in the practice of religion (ἐν εὐλαβείᾳ). For the seating of the multitudes on the grass signifies (σημαίνει) to us that now it is fitting for each of those worthy of such grace to say that which is in the Psalms, 'The Lord shepherds me and I lack nothing. In a place full of fresh grass, there he caused me to dwell' (Ps. 22:1-2). For the mind (νοῦς) of the saints is nourished by the gifts of the Spirit (ταῖς τοῦ Πνεύματος χορηγίαις) in great enjoyment and delight, according to what is written in the Song of Songs, 'Eat and drink and become drunk, neighbors' (Cant. 5:1).¹⁰⁹

This passage nicely pulls together several of the themes I have been considering. Absent from Cyril's interpretation is the historical point noted by Theodore that the grass suggests the month of Nisan, as well as the way that Origen and others saw the grass as symbolic of the

¹⁰⁷ Cyril, Jo. 6:1 (Pusey, 1.402-403). M. F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 54, notes this 'Moses typology' in Cyril's interpretation of the passage. Of course, the connection between John 6 and Israel's time in the wilderness becomes explicit in the latter half of the chapter when Christ discusses the manna given by God.

¹⁰⁸ So also Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 35, who notes that Origen had made this same point before Cyril. However, Origen makes the point on the basis of the beheading of John the Baptist, the last of the prophets, since the account of John's death precedes the feeding of the 5,000 in Matthew's account (*hom. in Mt.* 10.23). Hilary and Ambrose present interpretations similar to that of Origen (Hilary, *hom. in Mt.* 14:8-9; Ambrose, *exp. Lc.* 6.69). Cf. also Chrysostom who made a similar point in passing, but without the exodus imagery (*hom. in Jo.* 42.1), basing it on John 6:4 rather than 6:1.

¹⁰⁹ Cyril, Jo. 6:10 (Pusey, 1.415).

flesh. Although other authors had viewed the feeding of the 5,000 as a story about spiritual nourishment, the fact that Cyril cites Psalm 22:1-2 suggests that he is not simply following the lead of earlier exegetes, but is deploying his by now familiar metaphor of Christ as the Shepherd. In fact, he appears to be the first author to bring together explicitly Psalm 22 and John 6.¹¹⁰ As we have already seen, he again presents the Church's spiritual nourishment as coming from the hand of Christ who holds it out to all who will believe in him. However, there is a slight difference between his presentation here and his exegesis of Psalm 22. Whereas in commenting on Psalm 22 he said that the Son gives the gifts of the Father, in this passage he suggests that the Son distributes the gifts of the Spirit. This variability reveals no inconsistency, but simply highlights again Cyril's conviction that all divine gifts come from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit, as a consequence of the inseparable operations of the undivided Trinity. The fulcrum to this scheme is Christ the Shepherd who feeds the church.

In the passage above, the content of this spiritual nourishment is not spelled out clearly. In fact, in commenting on this chapter, Cyril moves fluidly between various identifications of this spiritual nourishment offered by the incarnate Son. On the most fundamental level, Christ himself is the bread that nourishes:

He sets forth himself as bread from heaven, and he will feed the souls of those who fear him. And he prepares (ἐτοιμάζει) all things that will preserve them in life (πάντα . . . τὰ ζωαρκῆ) . . . For he will give, as I already said before, foods from heaven, and he will richly bestow the manifold grace of the Spirit. He is prepared to give foods to those who belong to him, not even waiting for their request. For 'we do not know what we ought to pray for' (Rom. 8:26), but he precedes us and holds out whatever sustains us in eternal life.¹¹¹

In this short passage Cyril speaks both of Christ himself as nourishment, and also of those gifts that Christ gives to be nourishment, albeit without spelling out what those gifts are. That he presents Christ as the source of all those gifts that sustain the church's renewed life suggests that Christ, as the 'bread from heaven', is the most basic spiritual nourishment. All other gifts

¹¹⁰ Cyril is the first author whom I can find who explicitly ties these two passages together. Origen had made a similar connection in his own *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, when he alluded to Psalm 22:1-3 in a discussion of the spiritual nourishment mentioned in John 4:32 (Jo. 13.33.211). Because books 14-18 of his commentary have not survived, we do not know how Origen treated the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6. Note that in his discussion of spiritual nourishment in John 4:32, Origen quotes Psalm 103:15, a passage that both Ambrose and Cyril cite in their exposition of the feeding of the 5,000. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 32, notes that Cyril connected John 6 and Psalm 22, but does not point out that he was the first to do so.

¹¹¹ Cyril, Jo. 6:5-6 (Pusey, 1.407).

are such because they are given by the Son who is himself the most fundamental gift of life given to the church.

When Cyril comes to the actual loaves and fishes in the story, the gifts that he has in mind become clearer. The boy in the story, who came forward with his food, had five barley loaves and two fishes. Without denying the literal or plain sense of the passage, Cyril asserts that 'both the very form and also the number of what is found are pregnant with a mystical word'.¹¹² The 'five-part book of the all-wise Moses, that is, the whole of the law', 'is signified' (σημαίνεται) by the five loaves, and, because the book of Moses is 'coarser' (παχυτέραν) food that comes through 'the letter and history' (διὰ τοῦ γράμματος καὶ τῆς ἱστορίας), the loaves are said to be barley loaves.¹¹³ Furthermore, the two fishes signify the 'food that comes through the fishermen', that is, the 'tenderer books' (τὰ τρυφερώτατα συγγράμματα) of the 'disciples of the Savior', and the number of the fish represents the twofold nature of the New Testament as the 'apostolic and evangelical proclamation'.¹¹⁴ Cyril's point here is in keeping with what he said previously about the two rods that Christ the Shepherd uses to care for the flock. In both instances, it is Scripture in its two parts that nourishes the church unto eternal life. Furthermore, in both instances, as in his exegesis of Psalm 22, he emphasizes that this scriptural nourishment comes from Christ. As he writes commenting on John 6, 'the Savior, mixing the new with the old, feeds the souls of those who have believed in him unto eternal life, through the law and the New Testament of the disciples (διὰ νόμου καὶ μαθημάτων

¹¹² Cyril, *Jo.* 6:11 (Pusey, 1.417). λόγον γὰρ ὠδίνει μυστικὸν τῶν ἡύρημένων αὐτό τε τὸ εἶδος, καὶ μὴν καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς.

¹¹³ A good example of the differing emphases of Cyril and Chrysostom is the way they each use the word παχύς. For Chrysostom, it refers to the crowd which, being attracted by the miracles of Christ, possessed an 'earthly mind' (παχυτέρας γνώμης) (*hom. in Jo.* 42.1 (PG 59.239)). For Cyril, the word refers, not to the crowd, but to the Old Testament, which is 'coarser food' (παχυτέραν τροφήν), since it comes through the letter and history (διὰ τοῦ γράμματος καὶ τῆς ἱστορίας) (*Jo.* 6:11 (Pusey, 1.417-8)). Chrysostom's point is a moral one, while Cyril's is salvation-historical.

¹¹⁴ Cyril, *Jo.* 6:11 (Pusey, 1.417-8). Cyril gives the same interpretation of the numbers in a fragment dealing with the feeding of the 5,000 from his *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (fr. Mt. 174 (14:13-21) (Reuss, 209-10)). In addition to using the same number symbolism, this fragment also interprets the 'barley' loaves as representing the coarser food of the Mosaic Law, calling it 'beastly' (κτηνώδης) food. See also the description of fish as τρυφερός ('tender') in Oribasius, *coll. med.* 2.58.5, quoting Xenocrates. In his *Tractates on the Gospel of John* Augustine offers an interpretation of the loaves that is similar to Cyril (*Io. ev. tr.* 24.5). For him, the five loaves are the five books of Moses, and the loaves are made of barley because the husk must be removed from barley in order for it to be eatable, just as the husk of the Old Testament must be stripped to satisfy the church. Cyril and Augustine are the only two exegetes whom I can find who saw the mention of 'barley' as denoting something characteristic of the Old Testament. However, Augustine takes the two fish as the office of priest and king in Israel, while Cyril understands it as the New Testament.

διαθήκης καινῆς).¹¹⁵ Although other commentators had previously seen a reference in the feeding of the 5,000 to a portion of Scripture, or to divine teaching in general, Cyril's emphasis is on the totality of Scripture, and the way that he articulates the relationship between Christ, Scripture, and the church gives his distinctive theological stamp to this widespread exegetical tradition.

The final part of the story commented upon by Cyril is the gathering of the pieces left over. He asserts that this detail of the narrative is not insignificant, but rather it too bears a 'great economy'.¹¹⁶ On the level of 'what is useful from the history' (τὸ ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας χρήσιμον), he notes that the gathering should set an example of showing hospitality to others. However, he again presses the historical narrative to produce a meaning 'spiritually' (πνευματικῶς). When Christ distributed the bread and fish to the multitude, he did so through the ministry of the disciples, and the fact that there were twelve basketfuls gathered afterwards is intended to drive home this same point.

Christ is the master of the feast (πανηγυριάρχης) for those who have believed in him, and he feeds those who go to him with teaching (μαθήμασι) that is divine and heavenly, both of the law and the prophets, and of the evangelical and apostolic kind. However, he does not appear to be accomplishing these things independently (ὁ αὐτουργός), but instead the disciples minister the grace from above to us. For as it is written, they 'are not the ones speaking, but the Spirit of the Father speaks in them' (Matt. 10:20). . . . And there is no doubt that after those persons these features of the typological action (τὰ ἐκ τοῦ τύπου) will be transferred also to the leaders of the holy churches.¹¹⁷

Some have fixed upon this passage to argue that Cyril envisions a continuity between the Spirit-empowered ministry of the apostles and that of later church leaders, and such a principle is clear enough in the final sentence.¹¹⁸ However, what I want to draw attention to here is the

¹¹⁵ Cyril, Jo. 6:11 (Pusey, 1.418).

¹¹⁶ Cyril, Jo. 6:12-13 (Pusey, 1.418).

¹¹⁷ Cyril, Jo. 6:12-13 (Pusey, 1.420-1).

¹¹⁸ See Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology*, 225-7. See also Cyril's description of his own homily as a table prepared by Christ in the opening paragraph of *hom. Lc. LXX* (CSC 70.278), in which he quotes Psalm 103:15 and Proverbs 9:5. Cyril negatively uses the metaphor at Nest. II.7 (ACO 1.1.6, 44), where he suggests that Nestorius is mixing 'mud' (θολόν) in the otherwise good pasture that is Scripture. A ninth- or tenth-century manuscript from the library of the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem contains a brief account of Cyril's life and, interestingly, it uses the same metaphor: 'by using spiritual teaching he converted the wolves into sheep . . . by interpreting with divine wisdom all of Scripture, both the old and new writings, he in this way piously shepherded the sheep of Christ' (Archimandrite Hippolytus, 'Βίος τοῦ ἐν ἀγίοις Κυρίλλου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀλεξανδρείας', *Nea Sion* 17 (1922): 593-601). The usage of the metaphor as a later description for Cyril himself might be a distant echo of

emphasis Cyril places upon Scripture, written by prophets, apostles, and evangelists, as the means by which Christ feeds his church. Christ is the ultimate agent responsible for the nourishing of the church with the inspired word, but he does not do so alone. Rather, he works through the agency of the disciples who minister divine grace to believers through their writings. Cyril's description of Christ as the 'master of the feast' (πανηγυριάρχης) is striking. The term is a rare one, though he uses it a handful of times.¹¹⁹ His choice of this word might be simply due to the nature of the biblical passage which speaks of eating, but it might also bear liturgical overtones. The gathering of the church around the inspired word, under the lordship of Christ, and presided over by the leaders of the church might be implicit in this passage.

Before leaving Cyril's interpretation of John 6, we should note that, as he did in commenting on Psalm 22, here again he turns eventually to discuss the Eucharist. That he does so is not surprising, for in the discourse following the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus tells the crowds that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood (John 6:54). As we saw him do earlier in his exposition of John 6, Cyril again says that the 'bread from heaven' is Christ, but this time he brings the sacraments clearly into view. In commenting upon Jesus' declaration 'I am the bread of life' (John 6:35), he asserts that, just as the manna given by God sustained Israel in the wilderness, so Christ is now the bread that 'nourishes us unto long-lasting life'. The twofold manner in which Christ brings believers to a 'participation in God' is 'through the support of the Holy Spirit and by participation in his own flesh' (διὰ τε τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος καὶ μετέξει τῆς ἰδίας σαρκός).¹²⁰ Thus, the indwelling of the Spirit, which is given at baptism, and the partaking of the Eucharist are the two means of participating in Christ that Cyril highlights in this passage, as indeed he does so often. The significance of this mention for my argument is that his exegesis of John 6 proves to be another example of Cyril placing Scripture in close connection to the Eucharist and the Spirit, implying that they somehow function analogously in the divine economy.¹²¹ Furthermore, we should note that in the course of his

his own preference for it.

¹¹⁹ The only prior occurrences of this word I can find are Plutarch, *quaes. conv.* 679b (LCL 424.410); Eusebius, *h.e.* 10.4.72 (SC 55.104). For Cyril's usage of the term, see *thes.* XI; XXVI (PG 75.164, 420); *Jo.* 3:29; 7:8 (Pusey, 1.236, 589); *Am.* 9:13-15 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.545); *hom. pasch.* 26.1 (PG 77.916). The related term πανήγυρις ('festal assembly') is much more common among ancient writers.

¹²⁰ Cyril, *Jo.* 6:34-35 (Pusey, 1.473).

¹²¹ So also Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 65: 'Given the more explicit eucharistic references later in this chapter [i.e., John 6], it is all the more striking that Cyril identifies the feeding of the multitude here [i.e., in

exposition of John 6, he presents Christ himself as the ultimate ground of the nourishment that comes through Scripture and through the sacraments. In both instances the church is fed ultimately by Christ himself who is the bread from heaven.

A Table Prepared in the Wilderness (Luke 9:12-17)

Cyril's Homily 48 on Luke 9:12-17 need not detain us long.¹²² I want to look at it in order to point out that the same themes are present here that we have already seen in his commentary on John 6, and that in his preaching Cyril presents his own homily as a piece of the shepherd motif that I have been exploring. Even though all the examples of his exegesis that I have looked at thus far in this chapter have come from exegetical commentaries, his approach to the feeding of the 5,000 in this homily differs little from what we have already seen.¹²³ The pastoral theme emerges quickly as Cyril goes through his interpretation of the passage at hand, for he notes that in the episode the disciples demonstrated their concern for the people, thereby revealing the 'pastoral skill' (τὴν ποιμενικὴν ἐπιστήμην) that was suited to their office. Moreover, in keeping with his designation of Christ as the 'bread of heaven' in the commentary on John 6, in the homily Cyril once more suggests that Christ himself is the ultimate 'blessing from above and from the Father'.¹²⁴ Furthermore, as he does in interpreting John 6, he presents the feeding of the 5,000 against the backdrop of the wilderness feeding of the Old Testament, relying this time on a textual connection with Psalm 77 (LXX). Despite such provision of food in the wilderness, the Jews, Cyril says, murmured against God, asking whether he was able to 'prepare a table in the wilderness' (Ps. 77:19).¹²⁵ In answer to their supposed question, he points to the 'table' that Christ has prepared and presented to the 5,000 in the wilderness, and asks the Jews whether they will 'accept the faith' (ܠܗܘܢܗܘܢ ܕܘܪܝܢ ܕܝܢܐ), now

John 6:10-13] exclusively with nourishment through the divine Word in Scripture'.

¹²² For the Greek fragments of Cyril's homily, see fr. Lc. 69-70 (Reuss, 88-9). The Syriac translation, which is a much fuller account than the Greek fragments, can be found at hom. Lc. XLVIII (CSCO 70.154-61).

¹²³ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 217-47, stresses the continuity between patristic exegesis across genres.

¹²⁴ Cyril, fr. Lc. 70 (9:12-17) (Reuss, 88).

¹²⁵ Psalm 77, referenced here by Cyril, also employs pastoral imagery as it concludes with King David shepherding the nation (77:70-72).

Scripture as food, not only for the spiritual elite, who are equipped for advanced study of the biblical text as in commentaries, but also for all Christians who would come to hear the bishop's homily. Thus, this homily gives a concrete setting within which the Shepherd gives Scripture to his flock for their nourishment. As the bishop stands before his hearers expounding the inspired word, the Shepherd is presenting to all who would believe the 'fruitful pasture' that will strengthen them unto eternal life. This homily is especially striking in that Cyril makes no mention at all of the Eucharist, and instead speaks only of Scripture. The lack of any eucharistic discussion highlights the immense importance of the written word for the sustaining of the church's spiritual life.

PARTICIPATING IN THE DIVINE WORD THROUGH THE WRITTEN WORD

This chapter might have seemed repetitious along the way, but I hope the reader will agree that the cumulative effect of these passages is significant indeed. The idea is so firmly entrenched (and rightly so) in the secondary literature that Cyril holds to a dual participation in the divine life by means of the Spirit and the Eucharist, that it seemed necessary to mount a significant body of evidence to nuance this established position. I suggest that Cyril conceives of Scripture alongside the Spirit and the Eucharist as a further means by which the church accesses the divine life of Christ that strengthens it in this world and sustains it unto the next. His presentations of this point are usually within the context of his deployment of the metaphor of Christ as the Shepherd, and his usage of this motif typically includes the following features. First, Christ is presented as the teacher of the church *par excellence*, abounding in life and knowledge since he is himself the divine Son who shares the Father's fullness. Second, Christ is himself the true blessing, and as such is the source of all aspects of the church's spiritual life. Third, Christ gives Scripture to the church as a shepherd does pasture for the sheep. Fourth, the nourishment of Scripture strengthens believers in courage and virtue, preserving them even unto life eternal. Fifth, in some instances the Shepherd motif is accompanied by an overt polemic against Jewish unbelief.

The consistency with which Cyril presents Scripture as coming from Christ is striking. The church's inspired word does not stand as a detached reservoir of spiritual life to be dispensed by bishops and accessed by believers. Rather I suggest that the reason Cyril so consistently connects Scripture with Christ as its source is because of his basic assumption that Christ

must be the source of every spiritual blessing that the church enjoys. It is this same structure that guides Cyril's thinking about the Eucharist and baptism, and with respect to those two realities, he typically describes this relation as one of participation.¹³⁰ Aside from the one rather ambiguous allusion to participation in his exegesis of Zechariah 11, we have not seen him speak of Scripture in similar terms. However, there are at least two passages in which he does so. First, in his Lucan homilies, when commenting upon the choosing of the twelve disciples, he writes,

For the bread (ἄρτος) that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world, who else could it be besides Christ, the Savior of the universe? And in imitation (μίμησιν) of him the blessed disciples have also been called loaves (ἄρτοι). For having become partakers (μέτοχοι) in the one who nourishes us unto eternal life, they themselves also, through their own writings (διὰ τῶν ἰδίων συγγραμμάτων), nourish 'those who hunger and thirst for righteousness' (Matt. 5:6). And just as the Savior who is the 'true light' (John 8:14) called the disciples light (for 'you are the light of the world' (Matt. 5:14)), thus also he who is the bread of life has granted to his own disciples that they be understood in the order of loaves (ἐν τάξει . . . τῶν ἄρτων).¹³¹

The reason the disciples can be understood as 'loaves' is because they 'participate' in the one who is the true 'loaf' from heaven. The logic of Cyril's exegesis suggests that when believers partake of the written word, they are feeding upon Christ, since the disciples participate in Christ. This is a mediated participation, but participation nonetheless. Cyril frequently speaks of the Spirit and the Eucharist also in terms of 'participation', so his usage of such language about Scripture in this passage further supports my claim that he conceives of Scripture as functioning in some sort of analogous way to the Eucharist.

A similar passage is found in a fragment of a homily on Luke 13:21. Commenting upon the comparison of the kingdom of God to leaven, Cyril asserts that

¹³⁰ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 162, summarizes the three basic principles that guide Cyril's understanding of participation: '(1) that which participates is necessarily distinct (and distinct in kind) from that which is participated in; (2) that which participates possesses the quality it receives only in part and from without; that which is participated in necessarily possesses that quality fully and by nature; (3) that which participates can lose what is [sic] has by participation; that which has a quality by nature cannot lose it'.

¹³¹ Cyril, fr. Lc. 76 (6:13-16) (Reuss, 257). This fragment is included in Reuss' group II, which consists of fragments that did not have a corresponding passage in the Syriac translation. In this case, the homily that covered these Lukan verses has not survived, aside from a single Syriac fragment that is not relevant to my argument (CSCO 70.36). The Greek fragment which I cite above occurs, with minor variations, also in the catena fragments that purport to be from Cyril's *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (fr. Mt. 112 (10:2) (Reuss, 188-9)). Whether this fragment was originally drawn from the *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke* or the *Commentary on Gospel of Matthew*, the theology it presents is clearly Cyrilline.

the divine word operates (ὁ θεῖος ἐργάζεται λόγος) in us in such a manner. For once it has come within us, it causes us to be holy and blameless, and once it has gone into (εἰσδεδουκῶς) the mind and heart, it makes us spiritual (πνευματικούς) . . . Therefore, let us receive the intelligible and divine leaven (τὴν νοητὴν καὶ θεῖαν . . . ζύμην) into our mind and heart, in order that we may be found as intelligibly (νοητῶς) unleavened through the sacred and holy leaven, having in us none of the evil of the world, but being rather pure and holy partakers (κοινωνοὶ) of Christ.¹³²

As in the previous passage here also Cyril speaks of partaking of the word as a participation in the Son himself. These passages suggest that he did regard Scripture as a means of participation, even though his use of participation language for Scripture is certainly not as common as his use of such language for the Spirit and the Eucharist.

Why did he not speak more frequently about Scripture in terms of participation? I suggest that one likely reason is that Scripture fits somewhat awkwardly into his overall scheme. His emphasis on the dual participation via the Spirit and the Eucharist nicely suits his dualist anthropology, a connection that he himself makes explicit on occasion. In such summary statements of divine participation he never brings Scripture into view as a 'third' means of participation, probably because it is not obvious how a third 'mode' of participation would correspond as well with his dualist anthropology. Moreover, another reason he might not have done so is that the Spirit and the Eucharist are, as it were, a direct participation in the divine life, whereas Scripture is mediated through human authors and written words. Cyril's emphasis on the immediacy of the Son's words in the gospels, which I looked at in the previous chapter, might provide the theological assumptions necessary for conceiving of Scripture as well as some sort of a direct participation in the divine life, but this is a connection that he apparently chose not to exploit. Nevertheless, this slight awkwardness and apparent hesitancy did not prevent him from emphasizing at length and repeatedly that the church's divine life depends upon its partaking of Scripture. In summary, I suggest that rather than conceiving of Cyril as holding to a 'threefold' means of participation in the divine life, it might be best to regard him as holding to 'two and a half' means of participation, or perhaps 'two means of participation with an asterisk'. At any rate, as I hope to have shown in this chapter, discussions of

¹³² Cyril, fr. Lc. 200 (13:21) (Reuss, 154); hom. Lc. XCVIII (Payne Smith, 258). The part of this passage beginning with 'having in us' in my translation above, is not preserved in Greek, but only in Syriac.

Cyril's theology of appropriation of the divine life are incomplete if they do not take account of the considerable space he grants to Scripture in the divine economy.

In concluding this chapter, two further observations following from the above discussion deserve mention. The first is that, while Cyril is certainly not unique in presenting Scripture as essential to the church's spiritual well-being, his presentation of this theme lacks an element present in several earlier authors. Origen, for example, makes much of this same point, as when he exclaims that believers drink the blood of Christ 'not only by the rite of the sacraments, but also when we receive his words, which have life within them'.¹³³ However, when Cyril discusses this theme, his presentation lacks a feature that regularly appears in earlier discussions of it. I noted at the beginning of this chapter that in his lecture on Psalm 22 Didymus asserts that Wisdom mixes different strengths of wine (i.e., teaching), corresponding to the different abilities of various learners. Origen makes the same point, writing 'the Word of God has different forms, appearing to each person as it is profitable to the seer, and appearing to no one beyond what the seer can receive'.¹³⁴ In none of the passages that I have surveyed above does Cyril engage in similar rhetoric, which is especially striking given the fact that so many prior authors had spoken in such terms, and that Cyril appears to have drawn upon Didymus in other respects. His concern is more with the fact of Scripture's nourishment and its ultimate source in the divine and incarnate Son, rather than with identifying varying levels of instruction or nourishment.¹³⁵ Keating has written with respect to Cyril's theology of baptism and the

¹³³ Origen, *hom. in Num.* 16.9.2 (SC 442.262): non solum sacramentorum ritu, sed et cum sermones eius recipimus, in quibus uita consistit. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 53, argues that, for Origen, receiving Christ by receiving his word is more important than the Eucharist. On this point see also J. H. Crehan, 'The Analogy Between Verbum Dei Incarnatum and Verbum Dei Scriptum in the Fathers', *JTS* 6 (1955): 87-90; Shin, 'Some Light From Origen'.

¹³⁴ Origen, *comm. in Mt.* 12.36 (GCS 40.152). διαφόρους γὰρ ἔχει ὁ λόγος *** μορφάς, φαινόμενος ἐκάστῳ ὡς συμφέρει τῷ βλέποντι, καὶ μηδενὶ ὑπὲρ ὃ χωρεῖ ὁ βλέπων φανερούμενος. The Latin translation reads *diversas autem habet verbum dei formas, apparens unicuique secundum quod videnti expedire cognoverit, et nemini supra quod capit semetipsum ostendit.*

¹³⁵ A good example of this difference is how Cyril handles the detail that only the men were numbered in the feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:10). Previous interpreters had used this point as a way to classify different levels of spiritual growth. See Origen, *hom. in Num.* 1.1.1-3; *comm. in Mt.* 11.3; Jerome, *comm. in Mt.* 14:21; Ambrose, *exp. in Lc.* 6.90. Cyril, following this prior tradition, references Numbers 1:2-3 in order to make the point that only what is 'manly and vigorous' (ἀνδρῶδες καὶ νεανικόν) is honored in Scripture, in contrast to what is 'infantile' (νηπιάζον) in understanding (Jo. 6:10 (Pusey, 1.416)). However, for him this remains simply a general moral principle. He does not use it to create the sort of spiritual stratification that earlier interpreters found in this detail. The difference is slight, but telling. John J. O'Keefe, 'Incorruption, Anti-Origenism, and the Incarnation: Eschatology in the Thought of Cyril of Alexandria', in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria*, 202, reaches a similar conclusion with respect to Cyril's annual festal letters: 'Cyril clearly believed that aspects of the ascetical project were applicable to all, but in general his recommendations are quite tame, non-elitist, and devoid of any cosmological or philosophical speculation'. O'Keefe concludes that Cyril's toned down rhetoric is due to the influence of

Eucharist, 'Cyril's primary concern is the fact (and indeed the effect) of Christ's indwelling presence, not so much the sacramental event or occasion of it'.¹³⁶ I suggest that something similar is the case with respect to his understanding of Scripture's salvific effect. The reality of the Christological blessing mediated through Scripture so captures his attention that he evinces little concern to specify varying 'levels' of scriptural blessing.

A second observation is that, despite Cyril's insistence in several of the above passages that the Jews have been rejected and judged by God as a result of their unbelief, he never draws from this principle the conclusion that their Scriptures are rejected as well. On the contrary, in his discussions of Scripture nourishing the church, it is striking how explicitly and consistently he proclaims that it is both the Old and the New Testaments that are spiritual fodder for the justified and sanctified flock. Therefore, in Cyril's estimation, the church is the rightful heir of the divine word that was formerly the property of the Jews, but the church has not simply arrogated to itself the Jewish Scriptures. Rather, the church possesses the Jewish Scriptures because they have been given to it by Christ, its Shepherd, who was himself the original divine source of those words. Cyril's interaction with the Jewish community in Alexandria has long been acknowledged as a significant influence on his theology.¹³⁷ His repeated assertion that it is both the Old and New Testament that nourish the church might be a result of this social context.

Moreover, it might also be for this reason that he rarely talks about divine teaching in the abstract, as had Origen and on occasion Didymus. Rather, when Cyril talks about the teaching that strengthens the church, he typically speaks concretely of the books of the Old and New Testaments, perhaps because he had interactions with Jews who claimed the Old Testament as belonging to themselves rather than the church. Over against such a supposition, Cyril

the Origenist controversy in the previous generation (p.203). Cf. also Du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité*, 437-8: 'Cette théologie mystique de Cyrille . . . est aussi éloignée d'un ésotérisme orgueilleux que d'une contemplation stérile, réservée à quelques privilégiés, qui ne ferait qu'enfler l'esprit et dessécher le cœur; elle est une doctrine spirituelle d'autant plus pratique et sociale qu'elle est plus sublime puisqu'elle nous fait voir dans le prochain le Christ présent par la grâce ou en train d'y venir'.

¹³⁶ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 92.

¹³⁷ See especially Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*. Cyril's conflict with the Jews is also discussed in Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 299-304; Davids, 'Cyril of Alexandria's First Episcopal Years', 190-1; Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 33-45. On the Jewish community in Alexandria in late antiquity see Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 91-127. Cf. William Horbury, 'Jews and Christians on the Bible: Demarcation and Convergence [325-451]', in *Christliche Exegese zwischen Nicaea und Chalcedon*, ed. U. Wickert and J. van Oort (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992).

holds that the Old Testament has been taken from the Jews due to their unbelief and given to the church by Christ for its spiritual nourishment. Such a theological move is unlikely to have convinced very many Jews of the Christian claim to legitimacy, but it does provide a denser theological account of the church's right to use the Jewish Scriptures. In Cyril's estimation, both testaments are now held in the hands of Christ the Shepherd and so are useful for the church's growth. He does present a distinction between the two, since the Old Testament must 'become eatable' by being interpreted 'spiritually'. In other words, the more 'fibrous' (παχύς) character of the Old Testament requires an exegesis that is somewhat different than the 'more tender' New Testament.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, the skillful exegete, aided by the Spirit, can extract from both parts of the inspired word the church's confession of Christ for the well-being of believers. It is to such spiritual and Christological exegesis that we must now turn.

¹³⁸ See especially his discussion at *ador.* VIII (PG 68.585), where he compares the 'writing of Moses' to 'flourishing gardens', and says that the exegete must 'purify' the 'trees' in this garden of their 'impurity', which is to 'cut off the purposelessness of the history'. Once the reader has done so, he can then 'investigate the interior fruit of the oracles', and thus, 'turn it into food'. In the midst of the same discussion he notes that the law is 'weighed down by the coarseness of history' (τῷ τῆς ἱστορίας πάχει κατηχθισμένος) (PG 68.588), using πάχος, a variant of the same word group that he uses to describe the books of Moses in his exposition of the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6. On this point see Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 138-40, 170-1; Blackburn Jr., *The Mystery of the Synagogue*, 130-1. Blackburn's summary of Cyril's usage of παχύς is on target: 'when Cyril predicates coarseness of the types of the law, he is affirming that their spiritual import is recondite and hence that they resist facile interpretation'.

6

Seeing the Father through the Son in the Spirit: The Theological Nature of Exegesis

Having placed our hope upon Christ himself, let us also apply ourselves to the labors that are beyond our ability, since he will be present with us and will indubitably guide believers with the torches of the Spirit to the finding of the truth. For our aim is to say that Jesus is Lord. And we will without doubt say this in the Holy Spirit. For thus Paul says, 'No one can say that Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:3).¹

This chapter continues the theme of the previous one by looking further at Scripture from the side of humanity's encounter with the revealed word. I intend now to fill out the basic point that I argued in the previous chapter, namely, that Christ uses Scripture for the church's spiritual health. Unlike the Eucharist, which also performs this role, Scripture has to be interpreted by the believer or the church in order to become spiritually beneficial. Hence, in this chapter I will consider Cyril's theology of exegesis, that is, his understanding of the process whereby Scripture becomes a nourishing word for the church. Furthermore, whereas the previous chapter was almost exclusively taken up with Christological themes, in this chapter we will see Cyril's Trinitarian vision come into play once more, bringing the discussion full circle to where I began in chapter two.

Like all patristic exegetes, Cyril's approach to the biblical text is deeply indebted to the grammatical and rhetorical training of late antiquity. J. David Cassel has demonstrated this thesis with respect to his *Commentary on Isaiah*, and Lois Farag has done the same for his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*.² Without doubt further investigation is needed to elucidate the manner in

¹ Cyril, *thes.*, prol. (PG 75.12).

² Cassel, *Science of the Grammarians*; Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, 149-98. On the late antique background for*

which Cyril appropriates those techniques that were common to late antique *paideia*. However, in this chapter I intend to take a different approach. Without denying the importance of this background for Cyril's exegesis, I suggest that equally important is the theological context within which he employs the standard set of late antique exegetical tools, since it is this explicitly theological context that distinguishes Cyril's scriptural exegesis from other examples of ancient interpretation, such as Stoic and Neoplatonist commentaries on Homer or Philo's commentaries on the Jewish Scriptures. In keeping with what I argued in chapter two with respect to Cyril's theology of revelation, so here also I suggest that it is the Trinitarian structure and Christological focus of his overall theological vision that gives decisive shape to his understanding of exegesis.

The question at hand is what kind of reader Scripture requires. I will argue that Cyril thinks the interpreter of the inspired word must have faith in Christ and must possess the indwelling Spirit, and that for such persons the practice of exegesis is a part of the growth in understanding of the Christological and Trinitarian mystery that leads ultimately to the eschatological vision of the Father. The argument of this chapter proceeds in two major stages. In the first half I look at Cyril's understanding of divine illumination, a theme that is central to his theology of exegesis, but which has received little attention in the secondary literature thus

patristic exegesis, see H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory, 350-1100* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); T. J. Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*; *ibid.*, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). The importance of this background for patristic exegesis is explored in Christoph Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der antiochenischen Exegese* (Köln: P. Hanstein, 1974); Bernhard Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe* (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag, 1987); Frances M. Young, 'The Rhetorical Schools and Their Influence on Patristic Exegesis', in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); *ibid.*, *Biblical Exegesis*, 76-116; Josef Lössl and John W. Watt, eds., *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity: The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition Between Rome and Baghdad* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011). For the most part Cyril does not engage in theoretical discussions regarding the appropriate way to use the grammatical and rhetorical tools for interpretation, but instead models them through his own exegesis. Cassel argues that in this way he sought to provide a rudimentary instruction in exegetical method for his clergy (p.125-6). Presumably Cyril does not attempt to offer any theoretical justification for the usage of grammatical and rhetorical practices because there was no one who at that time was questioning the legitimacy of such an approach. In the absence of any such challenge he was able to proceed by taking for granted grammatical and rhetorical training as the proper tool set for exegesis. Cyril does, however, occasionally provide brief comments on select methodological issues. See, for example, the introduction to his *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets* where he articulates the two levels (i.e., the historical and the spiritual) that must be undertaken in proper exegesis (*Os.*, praef. (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.2)). See also his discussion of what constitutes a proper 'type' at *Jon.*, praef. (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.562-5), on which see Simonetti, 'Note sul commento', 307-8.

far.³ In this section I will argue that Cyril clearly distinguishes between two levels of illumination, one that coincides with the creation of the human person, requiring no special operation of the Spirit, and the second that comes to pass redemptively, through the indwelling Spirit. The importance of this distinction lies in the fact that it creates a conceptual space within which Cyril can articulate a theological legitimation for his practice of Christological exegesis. Thus, in the second half of this chapter I proceed to the second stage of the argument to demonstrate that spiritual illumination, which has faith as its precondition, leads to a growth in understanding of the Christological and Trinitarian mystery through the contemplation of Scripture.

DIVINE ILLUMINATION THROUGH THE SON

Cyril's monumental *Commentary on the Gospel of John* opens both with a confession of human insufficiency for the task at hand, as well as with an expression of confidence in divine aid to meet this lack. Cyril writes,

'The Lord will give a word to those who proclaim good news with much power' (Ps. 67:12), as the singer quite rightly cries out. And I think it is necessary that those who approach this should not be people who simply happen upon it, but those who have been enlightened through the grace from above (τοὺς διὰ τῆς ἄνωθεν πεφωτισμένους χάριτος), since both 'all wisdom is from the Lord' (Sir. 1:1), as it is written, and 'every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights' (James 1:17). For discourse about the substance (οὐσίας) above all things and about the mysteries that pertain to it appears to be a perilous matter, one not free from danger for many people, and silence about these things is a matter free from hazards.⁴

Cyril goes on to offer a spiritual reading of the Old Testament sacrifices as a legitimation for his undertaking of such a perilous task. Significant for my argument is that in the opening lines of this, his *magnum opus*, he speaks of illumination, signaling the importance this theme bears for the labor of exegesis that follows.

³ See Burghardt, *The Image of God*, 33-39, 161-162; Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 157-62.

⁴ Cyril, *Jo.*, praef. (Pusey, 1.1). Statements about the difficulty of the authorial task and about confidence in divine assistance were *loci communes* in classical and late antique prefaces. See, e.g., Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions*, *Studia Latina Stockholmiensia* 13 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), 120-1, 144-5, who focuses especially on Latin prefaces, though the same is true for the Greek east as well. Cyril falls in line with this standard approach, although he gives it a distinctive theological angle.

When trying to understand Cyril's varied statements about enlightenment such as the one above, it is necessary to realize that he speaks of this theme in two distinct ways. First, all humanity possesses reason by virtue of divine illumination given by the Son at the moment of a soul's coming into existence. Second, and more importantly, the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit grants believers a knowledge of those things that surpass reason through an increased participation in the Son. Only those who are illuminated in the latter sense can understand the biblical text and teach it to others, and failure of interpretation inevitably results when persons still in darkness undertake the task of exegesis. In what follows I will first sketch Cyril's understanding of each level of illumination through his exegesis of two texts, John 1 and John 9, suggesting along the way that these two levels are distinguished according to their content, mode, and recipients. Then I will draw together these two discussions to suggest that, even though Cyril is clear regarding the distinction between them, there is a fundamental unity between these two kinds of illumination, since they both result from a participation in the divine Son and both come to pass through the Son's agency. After outlining Cyril's view I will show how distinctive his theology is in this respect, by comparing him with Origen, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Didymus.

Illumination according to Creation (John 1)

The key for understanding Cyril's exegesis of John 1:1-10 is the realization that he interprets this entire passage as having to do with the realm of 'theology' (θεολογία), rather than with the Son's incarnation.⁵ His usage of 'theology' to describe these verses means a discussion of the divine reality and its effects upon humanity apart from the incarnation. As a result of this approach, Cyril sees everything in verses one through ten as having to do with the divine

⁵ See his comment at Jo. 1:11 (Pusey, 1.130), where he says that beginning with this verse the evangelist moves from a discussion of 'pure theology' to an 'explanation of the economy with the flesh' (ἐξ ἀκράτου θεολογίας, εἰς ἐξήγησιν οἰκονομίας τῆς μετὰ σαρκός). On the distinction between 'theology' and 'economy', see Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 501-4. I follow her explanation of the sense these terms have for Cyril: 'Il faut donc remarquer que ces deux termes οἰκονομία et θεολογία ne correspondent pas chez Cyrille à l'opposition entre les actions divines pour nous (économie) et les relations internes à la divinité (théologie), mais servent à distinguer, parmi les paroles du Verbe incarné, celles, qu'il prononce comme un homme, et celles où il se présente comme Dieu. La théologie, c'est-à-dire le discours sur le Christ ou du Christ en tant que Dieu, se comprend par opposition aux paroles qui s'expliquent par l'économie, c'est-à-dire par l'incarnation' (p.502). Pace Frances M. Young, 'The 'Mind' of Scripture: Theological Readings of the Bible in the Fathers', *IJST* 7 (2005): 132, who sees it as a distinction between 'reflection on God in his own Being' and 'reflection on God's activity in the world'. Cyril is concerned with God's activity in the world even when he is talking about θεολογία in John 1:1-10. The difference is that the involvement he has in mind is apart from the incarnation.

being and humanity in ontological terms. It is in this context that he establishes the first level of illumination, that according to creation, in three successive chapters in the first book of his commentary, each providing an essential piece of his theory.⁶

First, underlying Cyril's entire exegesis of these verses is the basic pro-Nicene distinction between the Son and the creation. When he comes to John 1:4 ('And the life was the light of men'), he begins a new chapter in his exposition (chapter seven), titling the following discussion, 'That the Son is light by nature (κατὰ φύσιν) and therefore not created (γενητός), but of the substance of God the Father, as true light from true light'.⁷ The 'light from light' language here builds not only upon the light imagery of the Johannine prologue, but also recalls the 'light from light' statement of the Nicene Creed. Cyril follows with eleven proofs (συλλογισμοί) that demonstrate that the Son who illumines (ὁ φωτίζων) is other than the creation that is illumined (ἡ φωτιζομένη).⁸ When he comes to verse five of the chapter ('And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it'), he continues viewing the terms 'light' and 'darkness' in terms of ontology. The 'darkness' of the passage refers, not to the moral failure of humanity to receive the Son, but rather to the fact that human nature, as indeed 'the entire creation', falls under the category of 'the nature that lacks illumination' (τὴν τοῦ φωτίζεσθαι δεομένην φύσιν).⁹ Thus, the fundamental point that Cyril sees in these verses is that just as light and darkness are 'separated into an alienation that is according to nature' (εἰς ἄλλοτριότητα φυσικὴν χωριζόμενον), so the Son 'is far removed [from created beings] with respect to quality of substance (κατὰ τὴν τῆς οὐσίας ποιότητα)'.¹⁰ In other

⁶ On Cyril's interpretation of the Johannine prologue, see Hubert Du Manoir, 'Les premiers versets du quatrième évangile commentés par Cyrille d'Alexandrie', in *Studia mediaevalia et mariologica*, ed. P. Carolo Balic (Roma: Pontificum Athenaeum Antonianum, 1971), 101-19; Domenico Pazzini, *Il prologo di Giovanni in Cirillo di Alessandria* (Brescia: Paideia, 1997).

⁷ Cyril, Jo. 1:4 (Pusey, 1.80).

⁸ Cyril, Jo. 1:4 (Pusey, 1.83-6). Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 61, notes Cyril's attention to the voice of verbs as a part of his theological exegesis.

⁹ Cyril, Jo. 1:5 (Pusey, 1.88). Cyril's reading of 'darkness' as an ontological rather than moral category differs from Origen's reading of John 1:5. He views the passage as being about the invasion of the Son's light into the moral darkness that characterizes human souls (Jo. 2.26.167). D. Pazzini, 'Il prologo di Giovanni in Origene e Cirillo Alessandrino: Un confronto', in *Origeniana Sexta*, ed. Alain Le Boulluec and Gilles Dorival (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 622, rightly points out that Cyril's anti-'Arian' concern has caused him to stress the distinction between the light and the darkness. Moreover, he notes that, even though Cyril and Origen differ on their reading of John 1:5, Origen's anti-'gnostic' concern is not too dissimilar from Cyril's anti-'Arian' concern in that both authors stress the ability of the darkness either to receive or be transformed into the light. In other words, neither endorse an unqualified dualism between the light and the darkness.

¹⁰ Cyril, Jo. 1:5 (Pusey, 1.89). Cyril's pro-Nicene reading of John 1:4-9 might owe something to Basil's

words, when it comes to the ontological distinction between Creator and created, the Son falls on the side of the Father.

With the Creator-creature distinction firmly in place, Cyril moves on in the following chapter of the commentary (chapter eight) to argue that humankind participates in the light that is the special property of the Son, basing this point upon John 1:9—‘He was the true light that enlightens everyone’. While chapter seven places emphasis upon the divine nature of the Son who in no way is originate, chapter eight places emphasis upon the reality of humanity’s participation in this divine light. Cyril titles the chapter, ‘That the Son of God alone is the true light, and the creature not at all, being a partaker (μέτοχος) of light, as created’.¹¹ Under this heading, he produces twenty-seven ‘thoughts or syllogisms’ (Ἔννοιαι ἤτοι συλλογισμοὶ) to demonstrate his claim.¹² In this section he continues the ontological contrast that he developed in the previous chapter, albeit now described in terms of participation. Cyril writes that the Word is the light οὐσιωδῶς (‘essentially’), in contrast to created beings that have light merely συμβεβηκῶς (‘accidentally’), as something non-essential to their nature, but added to them from without. The point he seems to be making here is that ‘light’ is an essential property of the Son’s nature, one which the Son cannot exist without. In contrast, created beings possess the light merely ‘by participation, which is according to grace’.¹³ Accordingly, to say that someone is light ‘according to nature’ means that he is ‘the true light’, a status that applies to the divine being alone.¹⁴

Next, Cyril argues that illumination is something that humans receive at the moment of their coming into existence. He titles chapter nine, ‘That the soul of a person does not preexist the body, nor is embodiment the result of former sins, as some say’.¹⁵ In this chapter Cyril is still commenting upon John 1:9, but it is the latter part of the verse that now captures his at-

response to Eunomius’ understanding of ‘light’, in which the Cappadocian uses the light imagery of these verses to argue that the Son stands on the side of the Creator rather than the created. See *Eun.* II.25-27.

¹¹ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:9 (Pusey, 1.96). On Cyril’s understanding of participation, see page 172, n.130 above.

¹² Cyril, *Jo.* 1:9 (Pusey, 1.97-107).

¹³ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:9 (Pusey, 1.96). On the difference between an ‘accident’ and an ‘essential’ property, see *thes.* XXXIV (PG 75.596). Cf. Siddals, ‘Logic and Christology’; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 260, 294; van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology*, 95-7.

¹⁴ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:9 (Pusey, 1.101).

¹⁵ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:9 (Pusey, 1.108). On Cyril’s exegesis of John 1:9-10, see Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 91-2, who points out how ‘Athanasian’ Cyril’s theology is in these passages.

tention: ‘He was the true light that enlightens everyone who comes into the world’. Now his point is that the illumination that a created being receives, he receives concurrent with the creation of his soul and his embodiment. As he says,

the nature of human beings accepts enlightening (φωτίζεσθαι) immediately from its first moments (ἐκ πρώτων χρόνων), and it receives understanding (τὴν σύνεσιν) formed in it simultaneous with its being, from the Light that is in the world, that is the Only-begotten who fills all things with the ineffable power of the Godhead.¹⁶

His purpose for making this claim is to oppose those who say that souls preexisted in heaven and only came to earth as punishment for sin.¹⁷ Dimitrios Zaganas has recently shown that in another section of his exegesis of the Johannine prologue (verse six), Cyril appears to have had access to Origen’s Johannine commentary and was responding directly to Origen’s reading, albeit without naming Origen explicitly. The portion of Origen’s commentary dealing with 1:9 has been lost, but, as Zaganas suggests, it is reasonable to suppose that here as well he might be whom Cyril seeks to oppose¹⁸, though other ‘Origenist’ thinkers cannot be completely ruled out as well.¹⁹

The need to refute Origen might be a factor in Cyril’s proposed solution to an ambiguity inherent in the text. At issue is whether the participial clause in 1:9—ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν

¹⁶ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:9 (Pusey, 1.113).

¹⁷ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:9 (Pusey, 1.116).

¹⁸ Dimitrios Zaganas, ‘Against Origen And/Or Origenists? Cyril of Alexandria’s Rejection of John the Baptist’s Angelic Nature in His Commentary on John 1:6’, *STPatr* (forthcoming). See Origen’s mention of preexistence at *Jo.* 2.30.182; princ. 2.8.3. Pace Joseph W. Trigg, ‘Origen and Cyril of Alexandria: Continuities and Discontinuities in Their Approach to the Gospel of John’, in *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition*, vol. 2, 957, who does not think Cyril was specifically responding to Origen anywhere in his commentary.

¹⁹ D. Pazzini, ‘La critica di Cirillo Alessandrino alla dottrina origenista della preesistenza delle anime’, *CrSt* 9 (1988): 267-8, suggests that Cyril might here be responding to Evagrian monks in the aftermath of the Origenist controversy. Marie-Odile Boulnois, ‘La résurrection des corps selon Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Une critique de la doctrine origénienne?’, *Adamantius* 8 (2002): 87, notes Pazzini’s argument, and, rightly in my view, points out that it is probably impossible to determine definitively whether Cyril’s exegesis of John 1:9 is directed against Evagrius or Origen himself. Boulnois (p.83) raises the possibility that Cyril might even have met Evagrius in person during his stay in the desert. On Cyril’s supposed time in the desert see page 67, n.34 above. It is also possible that he might have Didymus in view as well, since he too affirmed the preexistence of souls (cf. Layton, *Didymus the Blind*, 72-4). Part of the difficulty in identifying whom Cyril is responding to in this passage is that, according to Boulnois and Pazzini, Cyril’s comments here are the only evidence of an ‘Origenist’ author making use of John 1:9 as an argument for preexistence. On Cyril’s anti-Origenist polemic, see also Constantine I. Dratsellas, *The Problem of Pre-existence of Souls in St. Cyril of Alexandria* (Athens, 1968); O’Keefe, ‘Incorruption, Anti-Origenism, and the Incarnation’. Only on one occasion in the extant sources does Cyril mention Origen by name, and it occurs in the fragments from a letter to the monks of Phua (ep. 81 (ACO 3, 201-2)).

κόσμον (‘was coming into the world’)—refers to τὸ φῶς (i.e., the Word) or to πάντα ἄνθρωπον (‘every person’). Either option is grammatically possible, so Cyril makes an argument on the basis of context. He notes the two possible readings and then rejects the notion that it refers to the Light coming into the world, instead taking the clause as referring to the coming into existence of each human person. His argument for reading the text in this manner is that the very next verse states that the Light ‘was in the world’ (1:10). If, Cyril argues, the Light is already in the world, it cannot be said to ‘come into the world’.²⁰ Thus, he reads 1:9 as stating that each person receives illumination, or understanding, from the Word at the same moment that he receives his being, and, as a result, there is no room left for the preexistence of souls prior to their entrance into the world.

Examining the content, mode, and recipients of this illumination will further fill out the picture of what Cyril means by the term in this general sense, as well as serve to contrast it with the second level that we will look at momentarily. All three of these questions are dealt with in the following quotation. Commenting upon the line ‘the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it’ (John 1:5), Cyril writes that the Word,

who was in God the Father [is] both life and light, not of some persons successively, and not of others. Rather, according to some ineffable kind of participation (κατὰ τινὰ μετουσίᾳς ἄρρήτων τρόπων), as wisdom and understanding (which is what is called light in rational beings), he mingles (καταμιγνύς) himself with everything that exists, so that rational beings may be endowed with reason, and beings able to receive sense may have sense, which they could not have had in any other way.²¹

Regarding the content of this general type of illumination, Cyril speaks in this passage and elsewhere of three related terms—σοφία (‘wisdom’), σύνεσις (‘understanding’), and φρόνησις (‘sense’). Since he gives no indication of how these terms differ from one another, they seem to be virtually synonymous for him, and all refer to the basic reasoning capacity that human persons have that distinguishes humanity from the rest of creation. This capacity is what Cyril terms ‘light’ in rational creatures. Thus, the ‘enlightening’ that the evangelist speaks of is humanity’s endowment with reason by the Word.²² Passages from Cyril’s other works

²⁰ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:9 (Pusey, 1.112).

²¹ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:5 (Pusey, 1.87). Cf. *Jo.* 1:4 (Pusey, 1.81).

²² Cyril’s reading of the ‘light’ in John 1 as universal human rationality is a departure from Origen’s interpretation. In his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, he took the ‘life’ to be the ‘true life’ that comes from the Word, and the ‘light’ to be the ‘light of knowledge’ that comes to the one who embarks upon the true life. In other

support the idea that basic rationality is the content of general illumination. In his *Commentary on Isaiah* he notes that God ‘engraved a natural law’ within humanity that could ‘guide them to a knowledge of good and evil’.²³ This ‘implanted and necessary law’ also leads persons to a basic knowledge of God, and operates even within those who worship idols, who are moved to sacrifice to powers higher than themselves.²⁴ In this respect it approaches the knowledge that is given by the second, redemptive kind of illumination, but never attains the perfect knowledge that is knowledge of the Trinity.

The mode of divine illumination is a mysterious participation of the Son in all things that are created. Here Cyril’s language is notably more ambiguous. In the above passage he defines it as an ‘mingling’ (καταμίγνυμι) that occurs by an ineffable mode of participation (τινα μετουσίας ἄρρητον τρόπον).²⁵ He later says much the same thing, arguing that the Word

after the manner of creation (δημιουργικῶς) inserts into each of those that are called into existence a seed of wisdom or of knowledge of God, and implants a root of understanding, and in this way he makes the living creature rational, rendering it a participant (μέτοχον) of his own nature, and sending into the mind, as it were, certain luminous vapours (τινάς ἀτμούς φωτοειδεῖς) of the inexpressible splendor, according to a manner and principle that he himself knows. For it is necessary, I think, not to say too much about these matters.²⁶

Cyril expresses a hesitancy to speak with too much specificity about the exact mode of operation of this general enlightenment, but he does say that it occurs ‘after the manner of creation’, highlighting again that all humans possess illumination from the moment of their coming into existence.

Moreover, we should note that the point he wants to stress above all is that this enlightening comes to pass by a participation in the Son. Mention of the Spirit is noticeably absent

words, according to Origen, ‘only the saint is rational (λογικός)’ (Jo. 2.16.114; 2.18.129; 2.24.156 (SC 120.282-4, 292, 308-10)). Basil, it seems, follows Origen’s reading (Spir. 18.47).

²³ Cyril, Is. 24:5-6 (PG 70.540). Cf. Cyril, Ps. 18:8 (PG 69.832), which may or may not be authentically Cyrilline, but also speaks of a ‘natural law’.

²⁴ Cyril, *glaph. Gen.* (PG 69.36). On Cyril’s idea of a ‘natural law’, see Burghardt, *The Image of God*, 37-8.

²⁵ The word καταμίγνυμι will later occur in the Nestorian debate. Nestorius accuses Cyril of ‘mingling’ the impassible Word with an earthly body, making him passible (Cyril, Nest. III.4 (ACO 1.1.6, 68)). However, the later debate has to do with the appropriateness of the term for the incarnation, whereas in this passage from his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, the incarnation is not Cyril’s concern.

²⁶ Cyril, Jo. 1:9 (Pusey, 1.111). Burghardt, *The Image of God*, 37, calls Cyril’s language in this passage ‘embarrassingly vague’. We should consider the possibility, not noted by Burghardt, that he was being intentionally vague in this instance.

from the passages that I have quoted above. In fact, mention of the Spirit is almost entirely absent from Cyril's exegesis of John 1:4-10, in which he develops his theology of illumination according to creation. In one instance he does say that the Son 'engraves illumination through his own Spirit'. However, the object of this illumination is not all humanity, but rather 'believers', suggesting that what is in view in this instance is the second level of illumination that I will consider shortly.²⁷ On one other occasion, after making a statement about the Son being the light in all the creation, he states, 'God the Father is all in all through the Son in the Spirit', using his typical Trinitarian axiom.²⁸ Given this statement, it would seem that illumination according to creation is a Trinitarian operation, as indeed are all divine works. Cyril's resolute affirmation of inseparable operations requires that he hold to the Spirit's involvement in this level of illumination. However, the overwhelming emphasis in Cyril's explanation of creative enlightening is on the agency of the Son, in keeping with the Johannine identification of the Son as the Light.²⁹

Regarding the question of the recipients of illumination, Cyril states that it extends to all humankind, but not to all of the creation. The Word's enlightening of humanity appears to be simply a function of his filling of all creation and holding it in existence. As in the passage above, Cyril says that the Word is mingled 'with everything that exists'. By virtue of the Son's omnipresence, those beings who have a predisposition towards reason become, by virtue of the Son who is mingled with them, 'rational' (τὰ λογικὰ) and in possession of 'sense' (φρόνησιν). As he goes on to say, the light is not simply something given as a 'reward' to those who demonstrate that they are 'righteous', but rather is the possession of all who have understanding and sense.³⁰ Cyril maintains his insistence on the universal extension of this illu-

²⁷ Cyril, Jo. 1:9 (Pusey, 1.103). Lower down on the same page he refers to the 'revelation' that comes 'through the Spirit'. It is not clear that here he has in mind illumination according to creation.

²⁸ Cyril, Jo. 1:5 (Pusey, 1.88). On this phrase, see pp. 35-47 above.

²⁹ For this reason I cannot follow Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 93, who wants to correlate the human capacity for rationality with the possession of the Spirit. She is certainly right to point out that in some passages Cyril speaks of the restoration of human rationality by the Spirit through redemption, but this restoration or fulfillment of reason by the Spirit does not mean that all humanity does not still possess rationality by virtue of their creaturely participation in the Son.

³⁰ Cyril, Jo. 1:5 (Pusey, 1.87). See also Jo. 5:35 (Pusey, 1.366), where Cyril says that everything that can 'reason' and that 'has sense' (τὴν τοῦ λογικεύεσθαι καὶ φρονεῖν . . . δύναμιν) is formed like a vessel by God 'in order to be able to be filled with the divine light' (εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι θεοῦ πληροῦσθαι φωτός). In Cyril's view then, the ability to reason results when the innate capacity implanted in the human mind by God interacts with the light of the divine Word that fills all creation.

mination despite statements in the first chapter of the Johannine gospel about those who reject the light. In commenting upon John 1:5 ('the darkness did not comprehend [the light]'), Cyril takes the verse to mean that the darkness, that is the created realm, does not 'know' the light, that is, it 'worships the creature in place of the Creator' (cf. Rom. 1:25). However, he immediately follows this interpretation with an affirmation that despite this idolatry, humans still possess the power of perception given by the Son as a result of the divine 'love towards humanity'.³¹ Therefore, it seems that Cyril thinks humanity does not possess the ability to reject completely the Son's illumination. Rationality is among those properties that inheres within human nature 'essentially' (οὐσιωδῶς), which are indispensable to its existence and so cannot be lost.³² Cyril elsewhere states that the principle (λόγος) of a human being, that is, the 'definition of his substance' (ὁ ὅρος τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ), is 'a living creature, rational, mortal, recipient of mind and knowledge'.³³ No one, it seems, can be completely without the light of the Son.

When he came upon John 1:10, 'the world did not know him', Cyril once again has to address the creation's rejection of the light. This time he emphasizes that the fault for the failure lies not with the light itself, but with the creature. Although the Son illumines, yet, 'the creature blunts the grace'.³⁴ In order to illustrate his point, Cyril draws a comparison with the light given by the sun. A blind man is not profited by such light, but the fault for this does not lie with the light itself, but instead with the disease. Similarly, the failure of the creature to worship God is due to a defect in the creature. The light granted indiscriminately to humanity allows a person to 'perceive him who is God by nature'. Yet the creature 'squandered the gift' by not rising above contemplating merely those things that are made.³⁵ Presumably, then, humanity might have been able to reason rightly about God simply on the basis of this illumina-

³¹ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:5 (Pusey, 1.89).

³² Cyril, *resp. ad Tib.* 10 (Wickham, 166-7): ἀποβεβλήκαμεν γὰρ οὐδὲν τῶν ἐνότων οὐσιωδῶς. Cf. Burghardt, *The Image of God*, 143. Although see Cyril's comments at *Jo.* 1:32-33 (Pusey, 1.183), where he says that after the Fall, when humanity had reached a sufficient level of corruption, the Spirit completely withdrew from humankind, and, as a result, the 'rational person (ὁ λογικός) fell unto the lowest irrationality (τὴν ἐσχάτην ἀλογίαν), being unaware even of its Creator'.

³³ Cyril, *Jo.* 8:55 (Pusey, 2.128): ζῶον λογικόν, θνητόν, νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν. Cf. *thes.* XXXIV (PG 75.596); Burghardt, *The Image of God*, 33.

³⁴ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:10 (Pusey, 1.128). φωτίζει μὲν γὰρ ὁ Υἱός, ἀπαμβλύνει δὲ τὴν χάριν ἢ κτίσις.

³⁵ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:10 (Pusey, 1.128-129). Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 92, points to Athanasius, *inc.* 11.4 and *gent.* 8 as texts parallel to Cyril's exegesis here.

tion common to all. Nevertheless, Cyril's overriding emphasis throughout his works is the failure of those who have the light of illumination to reason correctly about the divine. This inability to receive illumination arises from 'a more foolish manner of life', and from the god of this world who has blinded the minds of those who do not believe (2 Cor. 4:4).³⁶ Still, this 'blunting of the grace' did not result in a total loss, since humanity yet preserves understanding and sense.

Illumination according to Redemption (John 9)

As I noted earlier in this chapter, Cyril begins his commentary with an assertion that divine enlightenment is necessary for exegetical endeavor. I suggest that in making this claim, it is not the general level of illumination that he has in mind, but something more specific and redemptive. It is to this second kind of illumination that we must now turn. Cyril develops this theme in his exegesis of John 9, an interpretive move that is not surprising given that the passage itself deals with the issues of blindness and sight.³⁷ In the pericope, Jesus heals a man blind from birth by spitting on the ground to make mud and placing the mud on his eyes. When the Pharisees learned of the healing and realized that it had taken place on a Sabbath, they questioned the man who could now see in order to bring charges against Jesus. The passage closes with Jesus' ominous words, 'For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind' (John 9:39).

Cyril's central thesis in his exegesis of this passage is that the healing of the blind man was a 'type' of the calling of the Gentiles.³⁸ At the outset of the passage he states this point, and returns to it throughout his exposition.³⁹ The man born blind represents the Gentiles, while the

³⁶ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:10 (Pusey, 1.129). Cf. *Is.* 24:5-6 (PG 70.540), where he says that humanity squandered the gift of illumination through 'fleshly pursuits and earthly thinking'.

³⁷ For a recent study of Cyril's interpretation of John 9, see William M. Wright, *Rhetoric and Theology: Figural Reading of John 9*, BZNW 165 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 112-122, who argues that Cyril's 'familiarity with the techniques of Greco-Roman school exegesis informs his figural reading,' and that he recognizes that the figural sense of the words and events is 'inherent in the Gospel, and not something extrinsic to it' (p.122). The first patristic author to comment on John 9 was Irenaeus. See *haer.* 5.15.2-4, on which see Barnes, 'Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology', 85ff. Irenaeus emphasizes the continuity between the agency of the Word in creation and in redemption. Cyril makes the same point at *Jo.* 9:6-7.

³⁸ Cyril, *Jo.* 9:6-7 (Pusey, 2.155). Εἰς τύπον τῆς τῶν ἐθνῶν κλήσεως.

³⁹ Cyril, *Jo.* 9:1 (Pusey, 2.134-5), where he says that Jesus places the blind man as a 'sign' (σημεῖον) that he will 'abandon' unbelieving Israel.

Pharisees represent the obstinate nation of the Jews. The Jews had received the Mosaic Law that was intended to ‘rekindle’ the divine light.⁴⁰ However, due to their ‘disobedience’ (ἀπειθείαν), that is, their rejection of Christ’s message and their clinging to the law of Moses, Israel was rejected by God.⁴¹ As Cyril writes, ‘For truly even the nations were illuminated (κατεφωτίσθη) by Christ through the evangelical instruction, and Israel died in the types given by Moses and was buried by the shadow of the letter’.⁴² In contrast to the Pharisees who failed to believe stood the man born blind who was healed by Jesus. Just as the blind man at the beginning of the story did not even know the identity of Jesus due to his blindness, so also the nations remained completely in the darkness until the Son brought to them the unexpected blessing of sight.⁴³

When one asks what caused these Jews to reject the miracle of Christ, and what in general causes persons to be blind to the light, Cyril gives the answer of inordinate passions and unbelief. Regarding the fact that the Pharisees cast the man born blind out of the temple, he notes that the reason for their action was that they loved sin, since they ‘rooted their mind in desires for what is base’. Thus, like a person who has fallen overboard in a fast river cannot help but be swept along by the current, so the Pharisees are ‘overcome by the tyranny of their own desires’ (τῆ τῶν οἰκείων ἡδονῶν τυραννίδι νικώμενοι).⁴⁴ As a result, instead of being enlightened by Christ, they lived in a ‘self-chosen darkness’ (αὐτόκλητον . . . τὸν σκοτισμόν), and the coming of Christ, the ‘illuminator’, was thus for them simply a coming ‘for judgment’ (εἰς κατάκριμα).⁴⁵ In contrast to the Jews, just as the man who was healed had faith in Christ, so the proper response to Christ is faith which ‘strengthens the God-given grace in us’.⁴⁶ More-

⁴⁰ Cyril, Jo. 1:10 (Pusey, 1.129). Cf. Is. 10:17-19 (PG 70.289) where he says that the law was ‘able to enlighten’ (καταφωτίζειν) Israel.

⁴¹ Cyril, Jo. 9:1 (Pusey, 2.135).

⁴² Cyril, Jo. 9:28 (Pusey, 2.185): καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ὄντως κατεφωτίσθη μὲν τὰ ἔθνη παρὰ Χριστοῦ διὰ παιδεύσεως εὐαγγελικῆς, ἐναπέθανε δὲ τοῖς διὰ Μωυσέως τύποις ὁ Ἰσραὴλ, καὶ τῆ τοῦ γράμματος ἐνεχώσθη σκιᾷ. Cyril supports this reading of the episode with a reference to 2 Corinthians 3:15, where Paul speaks of the ‘veil’ that lies over the heart. Cf. Elliott, ‘What Cyril of Alexandria’s *de Adoratione* Is All About’, 248-9.

⁴³ Cyril, Jo. 9:1 (Pusey, 2.135). The same point is made at Jo. 9:6-7 (Pusey, 2.156).

⁴⁴ Cyril, Jo. 9:34 (Pusey, 2.196). Elsewhere he describes the error of the Jews as pride (Is. 5:20-21 (PG 70.161)).

⁴⁵ Cyril, Jo. 9:39 (Pusey, 2.204).

⁴⁶ Cyril, Jo. 9:6-7 (Pusey, 2.158).

over, according to Cyril, the fact that the Jews later came asking the man who it was that had healed him signifies that the nations, having received Christ's enlightening, have now become the teachers of the people of Israel.⁴⁷ In reading John 9 in this manner Cyril is possibly following the lead of Didymus. Although Didymus' treatment of this passage in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* has not survived, in his *Commentary on Zechariah*, the blind Alexandrian comments briefly on the episode, presenting it as a type of the calling of the nations to belief in Christ.⁴⁸

The distinction between illumination according to creation and that according to redemption is well illustrated by examining the content, mode, and recipients of each. The mode and recipients of illumination according to redemption are seen in the manner in which the man was healed. The fact that Jesus spit on the ground to create mud which he then applied to the blind man's eyes signifies that

it was not possible in any other way for the nations to throw off the blindness that laid upon them, and to behold the divine and holy light, that is, to receive the knowledge of the holy and consubstantial Trinity, except by becoming partakers of his holy body (μέτοχα τῆς ἁγίας αὐτοῦ σαρκός), and by washing off the sin that darkens, and by stripping themselves of the authority of the devil, namely through holy baptism. And when the Saviour engraved on the blind man the type that anticipated the mystery, he at that time fulfilled the force of the participation (τῆς μετοχῆς τὴν δύναμιν) by anointing him with the spittle. Indeed, as an image (εἰς εἰκόνα) of holy baptism he commands him to run and wash in Siloam.⁴⁹

Cyril's point is that the anointing with spittle and washing in Siloam are a type of the participation in the Son through baptism, and here again he might be following Didymus who also interpreted the manner of the healing as symbolic of the nations' recovery of sight through the incarnation of Jesus.⁵⁰ If Cyril is following Didymus, he is much more explicit than his forebear with his language of participation. Cyril more frequently speaks of becoming a 'partaker' (μέτοχος) of the body of Christ with respect to the Eucharist rather than baptism, but in this instance, he clearly has baptism in mind. His assumption, though not stated here, is likely that

⁴⁷ Cyril, *Jo.* 9:10 (Pusey, 2.160).

⁴⁸ Didymus, *Zach.* 1.249-50 (3:8-9) (SC 83.322). A single fragment of Didymus' exegesis of John 9:37 from his commentary has survived. See *fr. Jo.* 14 (9:37) (Reuss, 183).

⁴⁹ Cyril, *Jo.* 9:6-7 (Pusey, 2.157). On this passage see also Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 92, who notes that it is anointing and baptism that are in view in this passage, and not the Eucharist.

⁵⁰ Didymus, *Zach.* 1.249-50 (3:8-9) (SC 83.322).

baptism is what brings the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which is one of the two ways in which believers participate in the body of Christ, the other being the Eucharist.⁵¹ In this passage, he has left out the Spirit and directly equated baptism with participating in the body of Christ.⁵² The important point for my argument is that, in contrast to the illumination according to creation that is universal, only those who are baptized possess this illumination according to redemption.

As has already become evident, the kind of illumination that Cyril has in mind in his exposition of John 9 is one that specifically depends upon the Spirit, and this mode distinguishes it from the illumination that is according to creation. Indeed, at the outset of his exposition of this pericope, he says that the passage has to do with the 'illumination through the Spirit' (τὸν διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος φωτισμόν), and he references to the Spirit are scattered throughout his discussion.⁵³ According to Cyril, the blessing conferred on the blind man by Christ was twofold: 'on the one hand he has the light of the physical sun in his fleshly eyes as we do, and on the other hand, he allows within himself, as it were, the intellectual beam (ἀκτῖνα . . . τὴν νοητὴν), I mean the illumination (φωτισμόν) by the Spirit, and he receives it into his heart'.⁵⁴ In keeping with his overall framework for interpreting the pericope, Cyril sees the healing of the blind man as foreshadowing that the nations would 'escape from their previous blindness and enjoy the illumination (φωτισμός) from our Savior Christ through the Spirit'.⁵⁵ Elsewhere in the commentary, when he speaks about the redemptive illumination brought by Christ, it is almost always in relation to the Spirit as the means by which this illumination comes to pass. In fact, Christ's 'predetermined goal' in coming in his incarnation, was 'to enlighten

⁵¹ See Cyril, *Jo.* 20:17 (Pusey, 3.118-9), where Cyril says that those who have not received baptism do not have the Holy Spirit and are thus unfit to partake of the Eucharist. Cf. *fr. Lc.* 21 (3:16) (Reuss, 61), where Cyril suggests that baptism is equivalent to becoming 'partakers of the divine nature' (cf. 2 Pet. 1:4). Also at *glaph. Ex.* (PG 69.432), he speaks of baptism and illumination in connection with one another. On Cyril's theology of dual participation see the bibliography on page 139, n.3.

⁵² Pace Abramowski, 'The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia', 17-22, who suggests that for Cyril participation only has positive meaning when it is understood in relation to the Eucharist. For a critique of her argument, see Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 91.

⁵³ Cyril, *Jo.* 9:1 (Pusey, 2.135).

⁵⁴ Cyril, *Jo.* 9:25 (Pusey, 2.179-80).

⁵⁵ Cyril, *Jo.* 9:10 (Pusey, 2.160).

(καταφωτίσαι) everyone by the torch (δαδουχία) of the Spirit'.⁵⁶ This heavy emphasis on the Spirit is clearly distinct from the near absence of the Spirit from the earlier discussion of creative enlightenment.

Finally, the kind of knowledge given in the illumination described in John 9 is something more than merely the understanding and sense that is common to all rational creatures. In the passage I quoted above from Cyril's exegesis of John 9:6-7, he says that 'to behold the divine and holy light' is 'to receive the knowledge of the holy and consubstantial Trinity'.⁵⁷ Later, when commenting on John 9:38 in which the man confessing his faith in Jesus and worships him, Cyril asserts that illumination results in seeing past the humanity of Jesus to recognize 'the beauty of his divine and ineffable nature'.⁵⁸ Therefore, the light of redemptive illumination brings not simply understanding and sense, but a recognition that Christ is divine, and a corresponding knowledge of the Trinity. This kind of knowledge granted through redemptive enlightening is, as Cyril says later in the commentary, a 'knowledge of those things that surpass mind and reason' (ἐπίγνωσιν τῶν ὑπὲρ νοῦν καὶ λόγον).⁵⁹ He even calls it an 'exact knowledge of all things' (τὴν τῶν ὅλων εἶδησιν ἀκριβῆ) given by the Spirit.⁶⁰

The fact that Cyril explicitly ties this kind of illumination to baptism raises the question of whether he might also have a specifically ecclesial context in mind when he speaks of a knowledge of the Trinity and a knowledge of Christ as the content of the knowledge brought about by redemptive enlightening. This supposition is confirmed by his exegesis of John 9:35 in which Jesus finds the healed man and asks him, 'do you believe in the Son of God?' Cyril takes this verse to mean that Jesus 'initiates him into the mysteries' (μυσταγωγεῖ). In chapter three above I looked in some detail at Cyril's usage of mystagogical language in relation to the apostles (see pp.88-97). In this instance he uses this language to refer to actual mystagogical instruction given to catechumens. Jesus, Cyril says,

⁵⁶ Cyril, Jo. 9:39 (Pusey, 2.204). On Cyril's usage of δαδουχία, see page 99, n.154 above.

⁵⁷ Cyril, Jo. 9:6-7 (Pusey, 2.157): τὸ θεῖόν τε καὶ ἅγιον ἐπαθρῆσαι φῶς, τούτεστι, τὴν τῆς ἁγίας καὶ ὁμοουσίου Τριάδος γνῶσιν ἀναλαβεῖν. Cf. Jo. 16:23-24 (Pusey, 2.645), where he defines the 'perfect knowledge' given by the Spirit to the disciples as a correct understanding of the Trinity.

⁵⁸ Cyril, Jo. 9:38 (Pusey, 2.201).

⁵⁹ Cyril, Jo. 17:26 (Pusey, 3.13).

⁶⁰ Cyril, Jo. 16:14 (Pusey, 2.634).

hastens to implant in him the most perfect word of the faith. And he introduces the question in order to receive the assent. For this is the manner in which one confesses belief. For this reason those who are going to divine baptism are first asked along the way if they have believed, and then once they have consented and agreed, we guide them to this grace as lawfully begotten. . . . Accordingly he asks the man who had at one time been blind, not simply if he was willing to believe, but he also adds in whom he believes. For the faith is in the Son of God, and not as in a man like one of us, but as in the God who has become incarnate. For thus is the fullness of the mystery concerning Christ.⁶¹

This passage leaves no doubt that the form of mystagogical instruction Cyril has in mind is that which would be given to catechumens prior to their undergoing baptism. His typological reading of the passage is chronologically confused insofar as the blind man undergoes his 'baptism' in verses six and seven, yet does not receive his 'catechetical' instruction until verse thirty-five. Nevertheless, it is clear that the enlightening Cyril speaks of in his interpretation of John 9 has a concrete ecclesial context in the catechetical or mystagogical instruction given to initiates and their resulting baptism. For this reason, it is reasonable to assume that the Trinitarian and Christological content of redemptive illumination is coextensive with the doctrinal teaching given to converts. I will return in the second half of this chapter to consider the content of this knowledge in more detail. For now it is enough to note that this robustly theological knowledge obviously goes beyond the mere rationality and recognition of the divine being that Cyril discussed with respect to John 1:4-10.

A final aspect of Cyril's discussions of enlightenment that should be mentioned is the way that he uses such language with respect to the commissioning of the disciples when they received the Spirit from Christ in the upper room.⁶² I looked in some detail on this episode in chapter three and do not intend to cover that ground again here. Some have focused upon the use of illumination terminology in this passage in order to emphasize the special or unique enlightening that the disciples received.⁶³ Cyril's usage of such language at the outset of his com-

⁶¹ Cyril, *Jo.* 9:35 (Pusey, 2.198). τελεώτατον αὐτῷ τὸν ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει λόγον ἐμφυτεύειν ἐπιέγεται. προσάγει δὲ τὴν πεῦσιν ἵνα λάβῃ τὴν συναίνεσιν. οὗτος γὰρ τοῦ πιστεύειν ὁ τρόπος. διὰ γὰρ τοι τοῦτο τοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ θεῖον ἰόντας βάπτισμα προδιερωτημένους παρέργως εἰ πεπιστεύκασι, συναινοῦντάς τε ἤδη καὶ διωμολογηκότας, ὡς γνησίους ἤδη τῇ χάριτι παραπέμπομεν. . . . ἐρωτᾷ τοιγαροῦν τὸν ποτε τυφλὸν οὐχ ἀπλῶς εἰ βούλοιο πιστεύειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τίνα, προστίθησιν. ἡ γὰρ πίστις εἰς τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ οὐχ ὡς εἰς ἄνθρωπον ἓνα τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς, ἀλλ' ὡς εἰς Θεὸν ἐνανθρωπήσαντα. πλήρες γὰρ οὕτω τὸ ἐπὶ Χριστῷ μυστήριον.

⁶² See *Jo.* 12:16 (Pusey, 2.307), where Cyril uses φωτίζω to describe what happened to the apostles both in the upper room and on the day of Pentecost.

⁶³ Hillis, *Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology*, 214-24. Hillis to some degree concedes what I am arguing here when he writes, '[Cyril] is clear that growth in knowledge of doctrine and scripture characterizes the spiritual de-

mentary might be taken as further evidence of such usage, since this might be seen as evidence of his own self-understanding as the inheritor of the illumination given to the original apostles. There is no doubt that Cyril held to some notion of continuity between the apostles and later church leaders⁶⁴, but we should pause before assuming that the enlightening given to the disciples in the upper room was essentially different from that given to all baptized Christians. In fact, the usage of mystagogical language in Cyril's exegesis of John 9 and John 20:22-23 suggests a significant continuity between the apostles and all baptized Christians, since Christ 'initiated' and 'enlightened' the apostles precisely so that they 'initiate' and 'enlighten' the nations through the church's catechetical instruction.⁶⁵ The fact that in some passages in the commentary Cyril moves without pause between speaking of the illumination given to the disciples and that given to all believers further strengthens my argument for a fundamental continuity between these two realities.⁶⁶ Cyril no doubt believes that the apostles and later church leaders possess a special commissioning, status, and authority, but he does not describe the distinction between them and all other Christians as a difference in enlightenment. The significance of this fact will become clearer in the second half of this chapter.

velopment 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' (p.223). Later he writes, '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' (p.233). It is indeed clear that Cyril emphasizes the apostles' enlightenment, but he equally as much highlights the illumination of all those who have faith in Christ as the ongoing effect of the apostles' enlightenment, given through the church's catechetical instruction. This aspect of his theology of enlightenment comes out clearly in his exposition of John 9, a passage that Hillis does not discuss.

⁶⁴ See pages 102-106 and page 167 above.

⁶⁵ See the description of the apostles' mission in terms of 'enlightening' at Jo. 17:18-19; 20:21 (Pusey, 2.717-8; 3.130). Cf. *Abac.* 3:11 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 2.153) where Cyril describes the apostles and evangelists as 'shining weapons' which are 'flashing' since they teach the ignorant, thereby enlightening them. So also Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 181.

⁶⁶ See Jo. 17:26 (Pusey, 3.13). In the broader context of this passage Cyril clearly has the disciples primarily in view. However, when he speaks of the 'illumination' (φωτισμὸν) from the Spirit, he broadens the scope beyond the disciples to include all believers, saying that Christ implants this enlightenment in 'each person' (ἐκάστῳ), and 'those who love him' (τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας αὐτόν). See also Jo. 16:14 (Pusey, 2.634), where, although the biblical text has to do with Jesus' speech to the disciples, Cyril speaks of the knowledge given by the Spirit 'to the saints', and so seems to have in mind all believers. Although illumination is not mentioned, a similar ambiguity is present at Jo. 4:14-15 (Pusey, 1.271-2), where Cyril says that whoever becomes a 'partaker of the grace of the Holy Spirit' has the 'gift of the divine teachings' and no longer needs 'instruction from others', but can instead 'exhort' those who 'thirst for the divine and heavenly word'. Since all baptized Christians are 'partakers' of the Holy Spirit, Cyril's words here might be read as applying to all Christians. However, by the end of the passage he speaks specifically of the prophets and apostles and their successors as examples of such persons. Either Cyril is simply ambiguous regarding the distinction between enlightenment of the apostles and that of all believers, or he assumes a significant continuity between them.

Relating the Two Types of Illumination

We need now to try and discern how in Cyril's thought these two discussions of illumination relate to one another. The first thing to note is that his comments about illumination that I have highlighted above are not simply a function of the Johannine texts that speak of light and receiving sight. Similar passages occur throughout his corpus, and can usually be aligned with one of the two kinds of illumination that I have sought to distinguish. For example, Cyril frequently begins a homily with a prefatory statement about the proper way to approach sacred doctrine and Scripture, and often these opening paragraphs contain illumination language. For example, he says in one instance,

Let those who are zealous for spiritual skillfulness and who thirst for participation in the sacred doctrines (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ) receive once again possession of the things in which they delight. It is no earthly teacher (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ⁶⁷) who hands you the beneficial food, nor do you receive someone like us as an instructor (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ⁶⁸), but the Word of God, who came down from heaven above. He is the true light (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ) of heaven and earth. For the whole rational (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ) creation is illuminated (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ) by him, and he is the giver of all wisdom and understanding (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܕܢܐ).⁶⁹

Since 'the whole rational creation' is the recipient of this enlightening, and since the content of it is 'wisdom and understanding', it seems that in this passage Cyril has in mind illumination according to creation. On other occasions, it is clear that he has redemptive illumination in view, as when he says,

The language (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ) of the divinely inspired Scripture is constantly, so to speak, profound (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ), and it is not for those who simply seek to bend it towards what they are able to understand, but for those who properly know how to examine it, and who are enriched with the divine light (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ) in their mind (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ), by means of which even the meaning (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ) of those things that are hidden (ܩܘܪܕܢܐ) becomes intelligible. Therefore, let us ask for the un-

⁶⁷ The term ܩܘܪܕܢܐ is not simply a generic word for one who offers instruction, but refers to someone who initiates into mysteries (so J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), s.v., ܩܘܪܕܢܐ). Given Cyril's penchant for mystagogical language, especially in the Lukan homilies (see pp. 88-97 above), it is probably a translation of *μυσταγωγός*.

⁶⁸ The term ܩܘܪܕܢܐ is probably a transliteration of *παιδαγωγός*, a word Cyril often uses.

⁶⁹ Cyril, *hom. Lc. LIV* (CSCO 70.192-3). Just after the passage I have quoted here Cyril goes on to cite Isaiah 54:13, an important passage for him that I looked at above on page 122ff.

derstanding (ﻋﺮﻭﻓﻨﺎ) that comes from God above, and the illumination (ﻋﺎﻟﻤﺎﺗﻨﺎ) that comes from the Holy Spirit, so that we might proceed once more along the straight and unerring way, I mean the way by which we might be able to see the truth in the passage laid before us.⁷⁰

The mention in this passage of the Spirit, and the fact that it is concerned with knowledge of Scripture rather than mere rationality, suggests that he has in mind redemptive enlightenment. Furthermore, the fact that Cyril exhorts his congregation to pray for enlightening as he begins his homily indicates that he regards illumination as not simply an event that takes place at one's baptism, but also as an ongoing event in the life of the believer and church.

How then are these two realities to be related to one another? There are two passages that I want to look at that help to answer this question. The first occurs in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, during the course of Cyril's explanation of how John the Baptist is like a 'lamp' (John 5:35). Cyril asserts that the Baptist received the ability to 'enlighten' (φωταγωγεῖν) as a result of the 'intelligible oil' (διὰ τοῦ ἐλαίου τοῦ νοητοῦ), most likely meaning the Holy Spirit who filled him. He explains the operation of the Spirit thus: 'the nature of the Holy Spirit, running within us incomprehensibly like oil lying in a lamp, nourishes, maintains, and increases the illumination (φωτισμὸν) in the soul'.⁷¹ The fact that Cyril refers to an 'illumination' already lying in the soul prior to the coming of the Spirit suggests that he has in mind what I am calling illumination according to creation. If so, then his comment here means that the Spirit builds upon this illumination that is already present, strengthening and intensifying it. In other words, there is a fundamental continuity between the two levels of illumination, with the Spirit neither destroying or negating the light already present in the soul, but instead redeeming that which is present from creation.

This interpretation of Cyril's comments finds further verification from a passage in his *Commentary on Isaiah*, in which he interprets Isaiah 30:25-26 ('And the light of the moon will be like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold on that day when the Lord heals the fracture of his people, and he will heal the pain of your wound'). Cyril's comments on this text are worth quoting at length:

⁷⁰ Cyril, *hom. Lc. LXXVIII* (CSCO 70.315). For similar statements about illumination, see *hom. Lc. LV*; *LVI*; *LXI*; *LXXXII*; *XCII*; *CVI*; *CVIII*; *CX*; *CXXV*; *CXXVIII*.

⁷¹ Cyril, *Jo. 5:35* (Pusey, 1.369). ἡμῖν ἐλαίου δίκην ἀπερινοήτως εἰστρέχουσα ἀποτρέφει καὶ συνέχει καὶ αὖξει τὸν ἐν ψυχῇ φωτισμὸν, καθάπερ ἐν λύχνῳ κείμενον.

He calls ‘the moon’ those who spend their time in the light that is from the moon, and who are enlightened, as it were, provisionally and to a limited degree (οἷον νόθως τε καὶ μετρίως κατηυγασμένους). And such persons would be those who are accustomed to live only by the innate human understanding (φρονήσει) that is in us, not yet enriched with the illumination (φωτισμόν) from above. Such people do not yet know the one who is God by nature and in truth, but instead remain in the night, except that they do have a limited light that God put within the nature of humanity at its creation. When these people receive the light of the true knowledge of God (θεογνωσίας), they no longer remain with the insignificant light of the moon, as in the night, but they then see the rays of the sun, as ‘in the day’. And those who are ‘in the day’, upon whom the sun shines through their knowledge of the one who is God by nature, will in this way receive an illumination many times over (πολλαπλασίονα . . . τὸν φωτισμόν). Those who were learned in the Mosaic Law (οἱ νομοῖστορες) were some of these people, since they had the radiance of the sun’s rays in their mind, according to their knowledge of the Lord and Creator of all: ‘The Lord your God, the Lord is one’ (Deut. 6:4). At that time they did not yet understand the law accurately (ἀκριβῶς), but when Christ shines forth (Ἐπιλάμπαντος), and when their knowledge advances to what is better, and finally when the law is viewed spiritually (θεωρουμένου . . . πνευματικῶς), then the light of the sun that is in them will also be ‘sevenfold’. For he who both is and is regarded as the God over all, and who is all wisdom, is the ‘sun of righteousness’ (Mal. 4:2). And through the law he shone (Ἐλαμψε) upon those from Israel. For he brought them out from their previous error in Egypt, as though from a mist, and he caused them to understand and to confess that he alone is the God and Lord of all. But these things will happen, the text says, when the Lord ‘heals the fracture of his people, and he will heal the pain of your wound’. For we are broken and are in the pain of a wound. For the fear of punishment hung over both Greeks and Jews, but Christ will heal.⁷²

Several features of this passage are notable. First, the fact that in the short compass of this single paragraph Cyril speaks of both kinds of illumination and clearly distinguishes between them indicates that the distinction I am arguing for here was not simply something implicit in his theology, but rather that he self-consciously regarded them as distinct from one another. What I am calling illumination according to creation corresponds to the light of the moon, and redemptive illumination corresponds to the light of the sun. Furthermore, the most original aspect in this passage is that Cyril here adds a further nuance not present in the passages I have

⁷² Cyril, Is. 30:25-26 (PG 70.685-8). For a similar passage to this one, see Mal. 4:2-3 (Pusey, In xii prophetas, 2.620-1), on which see John J. O’Keefe, ‘Christianizing Malachi: Fifth-Century Insights From Cyril of Alexandria’, VC 50 (1996): 136-158. See also Is. 50:4-5 (PG 70.1089-92), where Cyril says that upon accepting faith in Christ, the believer gains an ‘addition of an ear’, which is the ‘power of extraordinary hearing’, by which he can transform types into reality through a spiritual meaning of the Mosaic Law.

considered thus far. Within the category of illumination according to redemption he adds a further distinction corresponding to the two stages of redemptive history. Those who were learned in the Mosaic Law had the light of the sun, but once they learned to read the law in the Spirit, the light of the sun within them became sevenfold. Thus, the redemptive-historical cast of Cyril's theology finds expression also in his understanding of divine enlightening.

Furthermore, as in the passage about the Baptist, so here also his comments suggest an underlying, fundamental unity between the two kinds of illumination even while he distinguishes between them. The innate reason that all humans possess from the moment of their creation is a real enlightenment, but, like the light of the moon, is only partial in comparison to that which is brought through Christ's redemption, which is like the light of the sun. The Spirit is not mentioned in this passage, since in this instance Cyril emphasizes the agency of the Son in bringing redemptive light. This is not a departure from the theology presented in his exegesis of John 9, but should be read as simply another indication that the principle of inseparable operations allows him to attribute the agency of a given operation to Father, Son, or Spirit. Moreover, as in the passages I looked at above dealing with John 9, so here again Cyril speaks not of some generic or vague theological knowledge. Rather, it is 'through their knowledge of the one who is God by nature', that is Christ, that they receive this greater enlightenment. In fact, in this passage Cyril defines the distinction between the two levels of illumination, and between the two stages of redemptive illumination, according to increasing knowledge of the divine. Those in the light of the moon have not yet learned to worship the one true God; those in the light of the sun know that there is only one God, and worship him according to the law; and those who know Christ and can interpret the law by the Spirit have a sevenfold light of the sun. This tendency to define varying levels of illumination according to knowledge of the divine indicates how resolutely theological is Cyril's thought. He has no general epistemology detached from knowledge of God, because the general, creative light of knowledge is meant to find its fulfillment in the knowledge of the Son who creates and redeems.

We should note as well that in the various passages I have been considering, Cyril does not distinguish between the two levels of illumination on the lexical level. Throughout these passages we have seen him use the same set of words to refer interchangeably to one or the other kind. He most often prefers φωτίζω and φωτισμός, or various compound forms of them, probably because this is the word group used in John 1. The usage of the same terms in

both discussions of illumination is further evidence that, although the two are distinct in his theology, there is an underlying unity or continuity between them. Furthermore, we should note that these two kinds of enlightenment are united in a common divine agency and a common divine source. I emphasized above that the agency of the Spirit distinguishes redemptive from creative illumination. However, Cyril almost never speaks of the Spirit's agency without placing the Spirit's work in the context of the work of the Son. A clear example of this tendency is his explanation of why the Spirit was sent to the disciples after Jesus departed. Cyril writes that, following the ascension, when the minds of the disciples were 'enlightened by the torch of the Spirit' (τῆ τοῦ Πνεύματος δαδουχία λελαμπρυσμένοι τὸν νοῦν), it was 'not because they lacked illumination (φωταγωγίας) from [Christ]'. Rather, when the disciples 'received his own (ἴδιον) Spirit', they 'received the abundant gift of understanding from him through the indwelling Holy Spirit'.⁷³ That is, it is the Son who enlightens believers even after the Spirit comes. Therefore, the divine Word is the primary agent responsible for dispensing both illumination according to creation and that according to redemption. The role of the Spirit in redemption is to increase or deepen the participation in the Son that is common to all humanity, thereby bringing believers to know the incarnate Son who is truly God over all by nature.

Similar to what I noted previously with respect to Cyril's interpretation of Exodus 19:19 (see p.114), it is right to note an implicit tension in Cyril's theology of illumination between his Trinitarian theology and his theology of redemptive history. According to his understanding of divine operations, the Spirit must be at work in general, creative acts, as well as in special, redemptive acts, but the Spirit typically only explicitly comes into view in Cyril's discussions of redemption, since he wants to emphasize that the Spirit salvifically returns to humanity in baptism.⁷⁴ This is a tension, rather than an outright contradiction, in his theology. Relieving it would require an explanation of how the operation of the Spirit in creation differs from the operation of the Spirit in redemption, something like the way that he distinguished between the Spirit's operation among the Hebrew prophets and his indwelling within believ-

⁷³ Cyril, Jo. 16:23-24 (Pusey, 2.645-6). Cf. Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 189.

⁷⁴ Origen as well had distinguished between the operation of the Son in all rational creation and the operation of the Spirit among the redeemed. See *princ.* 1.3.5-6; Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 152. To some extent Cyril continues this tradition, although as a pro-Nicene he also affirms the Spirit's implicit involvement in every act of the Son.

ers.⁷⁵ Alternatively, what Cyril's distinction between twofold illumination might point the way towards is something like the doctrine of appropriation whereby specific divine acts may be appropriated to one or another of the hypostases.⁷⁶ His distinction seems to suggest or assume some such method of appropriation, but this is a point that he does not state explicitly, at least not in the passage I have considered.

My argument for a fundamental unity between the two levels of illumination finds further evidence in the way in which Cyril speaks of Adam's possession of enlightenment, since in such discussions the distinction between the two is blurred to the point that they almost become indistinguishable. For example, in comment upon John 1:9, after just speaking of illumination according to creation, Cyril writes:

For this reason also, our forefather Adam seems to have the benefit of being wise not in time (ἐν χρόνῳ), as is the case with us. Rather, immediately from the first moments of his existence (ἐκ πρώτων εὐθὺς τῶν τῆς γενέσεως χρόνων), he appears perfect in understanding (ἐν συνέσει). He maintains in himself the illumination (φωτισμὸν) given to his nature by God as still untroubled and pure, with the dignity (ἀξίωμα) of his nature free from corruption. The Son therefore illumines after the manner of creation (φωτίζει . . . δημιουργικῶς).⁷⁷

The usage of the adverb δημιουργικῶς suggests that it is creative enlightenment that Cyril has in mind here, which Adam possessed perfectly. However, the mention of 'perfect understanding' and the contrast with later humans suggests redemptive enlightenment. Furthermore, Cyril elsewhere speaks clearly about Adam possessing what I have called illumination according to redemption. He writes that God the Father, 'through his own Word', 'enlightened [Adam] by a participation in his own Spirit' (τῆ τοῦ ἰδίου Πνεύματος μετουσίᾳ καταφαιδρύνας).⁷⁸ As a result, Adam, in his prelapsarian state, had his 'mind totally and con-

⁷⁵ See pp. 98-102 above.

⁷⁶ For a discussion of a pro-Nicene doctrine of appropriation, see Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 227-9.

⁷⁷ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:9 (Pusey, 1.111). Burghardt, *The Image of God*, 144, n.23, notes that this passage is 'confusing,' since it could be read as referring either to the adult wisdom that Adam possessed instantaneously by virtue of his unique creation, or to a special higher wisdom that Adam possessed by virtue of his undefiled, prelapsarian state. He thinks that the latter meaning is more likely in light of similarities with other passages from Cyril's corpus. It seems better to me not to try and fit this passage neatly into either category, since Cyril might be intentionally blurring the distinction.

⁷⁸ Cyril, *Jo.* 20:22-23 (Pusey, 3.134-5).

tinually absorbed in the contemplation of God'.⁷⁹ This same ambiguity is apparent in Cyril's language about the *imago Dei*. He sometimes speaks of the image as consisting of generic rationality⁸⁰, which would associate it with creative enlightenment, and sometimes with reference to the pneumatological illumination given to redeemed humanity.⁸¹ This ambiguity likely results from the fact that Adam possessed perfectly both kinds of illumination. Indeed, in the ideal state, whether prelapsarian or eschatological, the distinction between the two types of illumination seems nearly to disappear, since illumination according to redemption takes the illumination already residing in the mind and perfects it. For Cyril, then, human reason was always intended to find its completion in the contemplation of God, through the interior working of the Spirit. So it was in the first Adam, and so it is restored in the second Adam.⁸² In the union of these two kinds of illumination the *imago Dei* comes to its intended *telos*.⁸³

⁷⁹ Cyril, Rom. 5:18 (Pusey, 186). ὅλος ἦν καὶ διὰ παντὸς ἐν θεοπτίαις ὁ νοῦς.

⁸⁰ See *ep. Calos*, where he defines the *imago Dei* as, among other things, rationality (and therefore bound up with illumination according to creation) (Wickham, 216). Cf. Jo. 6:27 (Pusey, 1.439) where Cyril says a human person is a 'rational animal according to the image of the Creator'. On this point see Burghardt, *The Image of God*, 25-39. Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 93, is somewhat critical of Burghardt's argument, pointing to the paucity of his evidence. In my estimation she does not give sufficient weight to these Cyrilline passages, even if such statements are relatively rare in his corpus.

⁸¹ See Jo. 1:9 (Pusey, 1.103), where he says the 'light of the face' of God the Father (cf. Ps.4:7) is the Only-begotten. The Son, as the 'image' of the Father, 'was impressed (ἐνεσημάνθη) upon us, causing us to be similar in form (συμμόρφους) to himself and engraving the illumination (φωτισμόν ἐγχαράξας) through his own Spirit as a divine image (θεϊάν εἰκόνα) upon those who believe on him, so that they also may now be reckoned as both gods and sons of God like him'.

⁸² So also Burghardt, *The Image of God*, 39: 'Specifically, what Cyril sees in the mind of every man born into the world is reason in quest of faith . . . Cyril's interest in the human mind, in human reason, in human understanding, centers in its supernatural finality: it is created to be Christian'. He posits this principle as the explanation for some of the ambiguous passages in Cyril's corpus. Similarly, Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 159, suggests that Cyril's occasional lack of consistency might be an indication that in his theology, 'the lines between the created and the redemptive orders need not be so carefully distinguished'.

⁸³ The most difficult passage for understanding Cyril's theology of enlightenment occurs at Jo. 1:9 (Pusey, 1.101). Here Cyril says that creatures possess rationality not 'by will' (ἐκ βουλής), but rather 'from nature' (παρὰ τῆς φύσεως), since a person does not choose to be rational. He presents this as an illustration of the broader principle that 'those things that belong to someone by nature are firmly rooted as a possession', in contrast to those things that are 'chosen according to one's will', which do not have such 'stability'. However, his reason for making this point is to argue that humanity cannot be the light 'by nature', since, according to John 3:19-20, humanity does not come to the light, but instead loves darkness. Thus, Cyril concludes that humanity is not the light 'by nature', since it can choose either something better or something worse. In other words, in the course of a single paragraph Cyril argues that humanity is not the light 'by nature', but also states that humanity is rational 'by nature'. A similarly confusing paragraph occurs at Jo. 1:9 (Pusey, 1.106). As suggested by Burghardt, *The Image of God*, 35-6, one reason this passage is unclear is that 'Cyril fails to discriminate the expression, κατὰ φύσιν, as it applies to God and to man'. Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 160, repeats this same criticism. The passage is also complicated by the fact that Cyril for the most part wants to read John 1 as an ontological distinction between light and darkness, Creator and creature, while in this instance he is using light imagery in a moral sense. Cyril's own theology might help to clarify the ambiguity, since he could say that rationality, that which is

Writing in the early twentieth century, Eduard Weigl recognized a twofold structure in Cyril's thought, calling one 'eine natürliche Teilnahme', which is 'secundum essentiam', and the second 'eine übernatürliche Teilnahme', which is 'secundum gratiam'.⁸⁴ While I follow Weigl in seeing a twofold structure, I suggest that describing it as a difference between 'natural' and 'supernatural' is potentially misleading, since it imposes later theological categories upon Cyril's thought.⁸⁵ The most extensive discussion of Cyril's theology of illumination offered thus far in the secondary literature is that of Keating who comments upon it in connection with the role enlightenment plays in Cyril's theology of participation in the divine life. In an examination of Cyril's exegesis of John 1:3-10, he picks up on the twofold structure of Cyril's theology of illumination, describing it as 'different levels of participation in Christ the Light', on the one hand that which is 'grounded in creation' and on the other hand that which is 'founded on the grace of the incarnate Christ'.⁸⁶ Keating further writes, 'the twofold sense of illumination in creation and by grace, corresponds to the twofold manner in which the Christ is understood to be the Light of the World. He is Light in the world first of all as the one who sustains the creation as God; but he also came into the world after the manner of the Incarnation'.⁸⁷ It should be apparent that my argument in the first half of this chapter is basically in keeping with what Keating has previously stated more briefly. I hope, however, to have provided further elucidation of the manner in which these two levels of illumination are both distinct and united. Furthermore, Keating's description of these two senses of illumination as that 'in creation' and that 'by grace' is similar to my proposal for seeing one as 'illumination according to creation' and the other as 'illumination according to redemption'. However, I prefer the term 'redemption' to 'grace' because, even though Cyril does at times use the language of nature and grace⁸⁸, he also emphasizes, as Keating himself notes, that even that which the

brought by illumination according to creation, is indeed inherent in humans apart from any choice of their own. However, the illumination according to redemption is 'by will' since turning away from the divine commandments to sin prevents one from having this special, redemptive light.

⁸⁴ Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 18-20.

⁸⁵ So also Münch-Labacher, *Naturhaftes und geschichtliches Denken*, 93.

⁸⁶ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 158.

⁸⁷ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 161.

⁸⁸ At Jo. 1:9 (Pusey, 1.101), Cyril says that humanity has rationality 'from nature' (παρὰ τῆς φύσεως), corresponding to what I am calling illumination according to creation. At Jo. 1:9 (Pusey, 1.111), he says that believers are adopted as sons and become gods 'according to grace' (κατὰ χάριν). In the latter passage illumination

saints possess ‘essentially’ (οὐσιωδῶς) is a ‘gift’ of the Creator’s ‘generosity’, being ‘rooted in the grace (χάρις) of the Maker’.⁸⁹ If one speaks of creative illumination as being ‘by nature’ and redemptive illumination as ‘by grace’, it might be taken to imply that the former inheres within humanity apart from any divine operation. I propose ‘according to creation’ and ‘according to redemption’ as a more useful summary of Cyril’s theology, because it highlights the agency of the Son in both respects, as Creator and Redeemer, rather than leaving open the possibility that human rationality might be understood as an existing independent from any divine operation.

Earlier Authors on Illumination

At least as early as Justin Martyr, baptism had been described in terms of enlightenment, and the theme of illumination became a common one among patristic authors.⁹⁰ Thus, it is not surprising to see Cyril’s frequent usage of such language. His linking of enlightenment to baptism and divine knowledge, and specifically to a knowledge of the Trinity, is in keeping with the prior tradition. However, his theology stands out in three respects: first, the way in which he clearly distinguishes between the two levels of illumination that I have described above; second, the fact that he does not speak of various ‘levels’ through which the Christian ascends in the pursuit of virtue or contemplation; and third, his Christological focus with respect to both the agency and the content of illumination. A brief comparison with Origen, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Didymus the Blind will highlight these distinctive elements of Cyril’s theology.

Like Cyril, Origen can at times speak of illumination as if it extends to all humanity, such as when he writes that ‘the light of the world that is created by God is one, which shines upon all universally and equally’.⁹¹ However, when Origen speaks of such light, he is quick to note that the soul can either be illuminated by this light or by the light of Satan, suggesting

is not explicitly mentioned, but it is implicit insofar as Cyril is speaking of redeemed existence.

⁸⁹ Cyril, *Jo.* 1:9 (Pusey, 1.110). Keating cites this passage on p.160. So also Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 20-1, who notes that even what he calls ‘eine natürliche Teilnahme’ is still ‘Gnade’.

⁹⁰ See, e.g., Justin Martyr, *2 apol.* 61.

⁹¹ Origen, *hom. in Jud.* 1.1 (SC 389.54-6). On this aspect of Origen’s thought, see especially Harl, *Origène et la fonction révélatrice*; Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, 51-72.

that the soul must respond to this universal light in order to enjoy its benefits.⁹² Furthermore, Origen also makes a distinction between the common and basic gift of rationality and the gift of illumination given only to the redeemed. In his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, he states that the soul first receives ‘the natural law and a sense of rationality and free will’ (*lex naturae et rationalis sensus ac libertas arbitrii*) as ‘dowry gifts’. However, not content merely with these, the soul then prays that ‘her pure and virginal mind may be illuminated by the enlightenment and visitation (*illuminationibus ac visitationibus illustretur*) of the Word of God himself’. Accordingly, the soul is instructed to cry out with the bride ‘Let him kiss me with the kisses of my mouth’ (Cant. 1:2), that is, to long for the teaching of Christ himself, rather than that which comes through human or angelic intermediaries. This kiss is only given to the ‘pure and perfect soul,’ so the believer must purify himself in order to receive from the mouth of the bridegroom ‘the power by which he illumines the mind (*virtutem . . . qua illuminat mentem*) and . . . makes manifest whatever is unknown and dark’.⁹³ Purification then is a prerequisite for enlightenment and understanding. In speaking of these two ‘levels’ of enlightenment, basic rationality and advanced knowledge, Origen is something of a precursor for Cyril, as well as in his focus upon Christ as the giver of light to the soul.

However, Cyril notably departs from Origen’s view with his reticence to speak of varying ‘levels’ of illumination available to the believer according to one’s level of purification. According to Origen, although the Son’s illumination extends to everyone, it does not affect them all in the same way. Rather, the light has a dual function. For those who are in sin, it is like a fire that burns, but for those who are righteous, the light illuminates.⁹⁴ The state of the soul thus determines the effect of the light upon the individual. As Origen says in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, ‘God enlightens (*φωτίζει*) the mind of those whom he judges to be worthy of their own enlightenment (*τοῦ οικείου φωτισμοῦ*)’.⁹⁵ In the course of his *Homilies on Genesis*, he asserts that Christ, the light which enlightens the mind as the sun enlightens the body, ‘does not enlighten all equally’. Rather ‘each person is enlightened (*illuminantur*) accord-

⁹² Origen, *hom. in Jud.* 1.1 (SC 389.56).

⁹³ Origen, *Cant.* 1.1.9-13 (SC 375.182-4). Cf. *Cant.* 1.4.4.

⁹⁴ Origen, *hom. in Ex.* 13.4 (SC 321.388-90). Cf. *Cant.* 2.2.21.

⁹⁵ Origen, *Jo.* 13.23.136 (SC 222.102).

ing to the measure to which he is able to receive the strength of the light'.⁹⁶ Again, in his *Homilies on Numbers*, Origen says that the soul, 'passing through each of the different stages . . . will be more fully enlightened (*illuminetur amplius*), and going from one to another, it always searches for greater growth in its enlightenment (*maiora . . . illuminationis augmenta*), until it becomes accustomed to endure gazing upon the "true light" itself, "which enlightens every man" (John 1:9), and to bear the brightness of its true majesty'.⁹⁷

This is perhaps the most striking difference between the understanding of illumination in Origen and Cyril. For Origen, illumination refers to the gradual process of the soul ascending to God, whereas Cyril usually presents it in more absolute terms, as something gained through creation or baptism. As I will look at in a moment, Cyril does speak of an ongoing growth the life of the believer, but he does not usually describe this process in terms of illumination.⁹⁸ His theology of illumination implies instead that someone either does or does not have it, because one either does or does not have the indwelling Spirit. As I noted above in a passage from the *Lukan homilies*, Cyril occasionally exhorts his congregation to pray for the divine light as he preaches the word, implying that there is an ongoing enlightening work of the Spirit in the life of the church that is to be sought after.⁹⁹ However, he spends little time developing this idea, and instead focuses on the enlightenment given at creation and that given in baptism. If Origen wishes to distinguish between various types of Christians, Cyril is much more concerned with identifying Christians as distinct from non-Christians, be they Jews, pa-

⁹⁶ Origen, *hom. in Gen.* 1.7 (GCS 29.9).

⁹⁷ Origen, *hom. in Num.* 27.5.1 (SC 461.292). On Origen's understanding of various 'stages' in the believer's knowledge of God, see Harl, *Origène et la fonction révélatrice*, 220-42; Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, 53-5.

⁹⁸ For passages where Cyril speaks of differing levels among believers, see *Jo.*, book 1, praef. (Pusey, 1.11-12); *Joel.* 2:21-24 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.331); *1 Cor.* 2:15-16 (Pusey, 258); *ador.* V; VII (PG 68.400-1, 489-92). At *Jo.* 14:22; 14:23 (Pusey, 2.494, 496-7) he clearly has differing levels of Christians in view, and even uses illumination language. He says that 'the saints' who 'enlighten their own minds with every virtue' (οἱ δὲ διὰ πάσης ἀρετῆς τὸν οἰκεῖον καταλαμπρύνοντες νοῦν), and who thus are able to 'studiously learn the hidden divine mysteries', will receive the 'torch from the Spirit' (τὴν διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος . . . δαδουχίαν), and will even 'behold with the eyes of the mind the Lord himself dwelling within them' (*Jo.* 14:23 (Pusey, 2.497)). We should note carefully Cyril's wording in this passage. He does not say that the saints receive an extra illumination from God, but rather that they enlighten their own minds. Moreover, he does not say that they have the torch that is the Spirit, implying some extra measure of the Spirit himself, but rather the torch from the Spirit, which probably suggests that they can now lighten the way for others. In those cases where he does delineate levels of believers, he often does so on the basis of the ability to teach (see, e.g., *1 Cor.* 2:15-16), suggesting a continuity between the knowledge had by 'higher' Christians and that held by common believers.

⁹⁹ Cyril, *hom. Lc.* LXXVIII. See similar statements at the opening of the following homilies: *hom. Lc.* XXXVIII; LXXIV; CVI; CXXXIII; CXXXVII. Cf. Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 184-5.

gans, or heretics.¹⁰⁰ For him, the line of demarcation does not run along the rungs of the ascetic ladder, but rather along the absolute fault line represented by the church's baptismal font. The presence of the Spirit, and thus the Spirit's illumination, provides Cyril with a sharpened polemical tool with which to mark out the boundaries of acceptable doctrine and exegesis.

The importance of light imagery for the theology of Gregory of Nazianzus has long been recognized, and his usage of such imagery presents both similarities and differences with that of Cyril.¹⁰¹ One of the striking features of Gregory's discussions of enlightenment is that he rarely speaks of illumination in terms of rationality, and even when he does say the Word is the light of rationality in rational beings, he quickly qualifies such a statement by asserting that the Word leads us towards God.¹⁰² Coinciding with this tendency, Gregory also highlights the insufficiency of human reason for discerning divine knowledge, and emphasizes faith as reason's *telos*.¹⁰³ This sense of reason's fulfillment in faith is not too dissimilar from the way that Cyril blurs his two levels of illumination when speaking of Adam and of the original and restored *imago Dei*. However, Cyril seems more willing to talk about illumination as mere rationality than is Gregory, even though he too insists on the limited usefulness of innate reason.

Oration 40 presents the greatest abundance of Gregory's comments on illumination, as he uses the word throughout the homily as a synonym for baptism. In fact, Christopher Beeley suggests that throughout the oration Gregory prefers the word *φώτισμα* for illumination rather than the more common *φωτισμός* because the former word echoes *βάπτισμα*.¹⁰⁴ Although, as I have argued above, Cyril undoubtedly thinks of baptism in terms of enlighten-

¹⁰⁰ Trigg, 'Origen and Cyril of Alexandria', 962, picks up on this element of Cyril's theology, though he casts it in negative terms. He notes that Cyril highlights the 'simpler' person as the one who encounters the Spirit, in contrast to Origen's emphasis on more advanced Christians, and he then asserts that in Cyril's view the Holy Spirit 'has no time for those who find too many problems or ask too many questions'. Cyril does highlight the access that all believers have to enlightenment through the Spirit, but, as will become clear later in this chapter, he does not think this forestalls theological investigation. So also Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 78, who points out that Cyril extols simplicity as a doctrinal virtue, emphasizing 'credal formulations that simply and unambiguously affirmed the several tenets necessary for ordinary Christians to achieve salvation'. However, her concern is only with how this idea functions as a rhetorical device, rather than with its theological significance.

¹⁰¹ So, for example, Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 104: 'Gregory's primary concept for God's nature is light, and he frequently refers to the knowledge of God as illumination, or coming to share in the divine light'.

¹⁰² See, e.g., or. 6.5. So also Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 104.

¹⁰³ Gregory of Nazianzus, or. 28.21; 29.21. So Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 112-3.

¹⁰⁴ Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 108. Beeley says that for Gregory baptism is 'the preeminent instance of divine illumination'.

ment, he never uses *φώτισμα* as does Gregory. Moreover, in the oration Gregory clearly speaks of illumination as bound up with the doctrine of the Trinity as does Cyril. For example, in Oration 40 he calls on his hearers to be baptized, saying, ‘If you are blind and unenlightened, “lighten your eyes lest you should sleep in death” (Ps. 12:4). In the light of the Lord see light, and in the Spirit of God receive the brilliance (*αὐγάσθητι*) of the Son, that threefold and undivided Light’.¹⁰⁵ The essence of God is light, according to Gregory, and thus to be illumined is to perceive and participate in the divine light that is both one and three.¹⁰⁶ In his concern to emphasize the unity of the divine three, Gregory asserts that the ‘light which enlightens every man’ (John 1:9) is not merely the Son, but also the Father and the Spirit. Each one is the true light who enlightens every person.¹⁰⁷

At times, such as in the passage I just referred to, Gregory’s imagery of light seems nearly to erase the Trinitarian taxis of Father, Son, and Spirit. However, immediately after this reading of John 1:9 he speaks in terms that highlight the taxis, writing ‘we have both seen and we proclaim that we grasp the light, the Son, from the light, the Father, in the light, the Spirit—the concise and simple theology of the Trinity’.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, he reads David’s declaration ‘In your light we will see light’ (Ps. 35:10) to mean ‘in the Spirit we will see the Son’.¹⁰⁹ Thus, the purpose of the Spirit’s illumination is to draw attention to the glory of the Son. Cyril’s usage of illumination language is more in keeping with these latter passages from Gregory that speak in terms of Trinitarian taxis. Unlike Gregory he does not typically speak of the divine essence itself as the incomprehensible light, or of being enlightened by the Trinity. As I suggested above, even when he does speak of the Spirit’s enlightening work, he usually does so in the context of the Son’s operation by means of the Spirit. In other words, Cyril’s light imagery has a greater focus upon the Trinitarian taxis, and also a heightened Christological emphasis both upon the agency of the Son as illuminator and upon the knowledge of the Son as the content of illumination. This is not to suggest that Gregory does not also at times have a Christo-

¹⁰⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus, or. 40.34 (SC 358.276).

¹⁰⁶ ‘As soon as I think of the one, I am surrounded by the splendor of the three; as soon as I distinguish the three, I am brought back to the one’ (or. 40.41 (SC 358.294)).

¹⁰⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, or. 31.3 (SC 250.280).

¹⁰⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus, or. 31.3 (SC 250.280).

¹⁰⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus, or. 34.13 (SC 318.220).

logical focus in his theology of enlightenment¹¹⁰, but with Cyril this has become the overriding emphasis.

A final point of comparison is the way that Gregory, no doubt following Origen, closely ties illumination to purification. Beeley describes Gregory holding to a 'two-part process' consisting of purification that leads to illumination.¹¹¹ The flesh, Gregory says, is 'that cloud cast over the soul that prevents it from seeing clearly the divine rays', but by purification believers can 'enlighten themselves with the light of knowledge' and then even 'enlighten others'.¹¹² At the end of *Oration 39* he issues a stirring call to be purified so that his hearers might be 'lights in this world' and thus, 'as perfect lights, stand with the great light, and there be mystically initiated into the light, illuminated more purely and clearly by the Trinity'.¹¹³ Similarly, in *Oration 40* Gregory says the light of God 'appears to us to the degree that we are purified'.¹¹⁴ Thus, like Origen had before him, Gregory regards illumination as dependent upon the degree of purification in the individual. The goal, therefore, is an ever greater purification leading to ever greater enlightenment. I argued above that Cyril departs from Origen in this respect, and this appears as a difference between him and Gregory as well.

Another source that might have influenced Cyril's theology of illumination is Didymus and the possibly pseudo-Didymean *De Trinitate*. As Gregory had done before, the *De Trinitate* uses light imagery in connection with the Trinity, stating, for example, that the Spirit is he 'in whom and by whom we are illuminated'.¹¹⁵ In fact the author makes use of the same passage from the psalter that Gregory of Nazianzus had earlier used, albeit with the roles of the Spirit and Son reversed. He says that 'In your light we will see light' (Ps. 35:10) means 'in your Son, the radiance of your glory, we shall see your Holy Spirit'.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the *De Trinitate* speaks

¹¹⁰ So Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 113: 'the illumination of which he so often speaks is not a generic kind of divine knowledge, but the supreme Light of the Holy Trinity revealed through the incarnation of Jesus Christ'.

¹¹¹ Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 71.

¹¹² Gregory of Nazianzus, *or.* 39.8 (SC 358.164); *or.* 39.10. (SC 358.168).

¹¹³ Gregory of Nazianzus, *or.* 39.20 (SC 358.194-6).

¹¹⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus, *or.* 40.5 (SC 358.204). On this point see Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 103-4, 109.

¹¹⁵ Ps-Didymus, *Trin.* II.3.18 (Seiler, 50). Cf. *Trin.* II.12; II.20 (PG 39.681, 737).

¹¹⁶ Ps-Didymus, *Trin.* II.3.18 (Seiler, 50).

of baptism using the language of illumination, often in connection with the Spirit.¹¹⁷ In Didymus' *Commentary on Zechariah* light imagery is also employed, specifically with reference to the church. The church, he says, is like a house and those in it who teach are like lamps that illuminate those within who live according to the church's 'laws, rules, and teachings' (τοὺς θεσμούς καὶ κανόνας καὶ δόγματα).¹¹⁸ Thus, like Cyril, Didymus can describe the leaders of the church as those who give forth light for others. Moreover, also like Cyril, Didymus speaks of the incarnation in terms of Christ spreading light so as to overcome the darkness of ignorance.¹¹⁹ However, unlike Cyril, and in keeping with Origen and Gregory, Didymus presents an expectation of ever increasing enlightenment. There are within the church the 'introductory enlightenments' (αἱ εἰσαγωγικαὶ ἐκλάμψεις), and those who do not despise these initial stages will experience further 'shining progress' (λαμπρῶν προκοπῶν).¹²⁰ Eventually such persons can, even in this life, reach such a state that they 'illuminate themselves with the light of knowledge' (οἱ γνώσεως φῶς φωτίσαντες ἑαυτοῖς) rather than needing enlightening from others.¹²¹ Enlightenment thus brings an increased awareness of spiritual truth, and seems to be particularly tied to a knowledge of the Trinity, which Didymus describes as a 'luminous doctrine.'¹²² By bringing together knowledge of the Trinity with illumination and baptism, and by viewing illumination as the work of both the Son and the Spirit, Didymus laid the foundation for Cyril to develop these themes much more fully just a few decades later in Alexandria. However, his emphasis on ascending through levels of enlightenment stands in contrast to Cyril's concerns.

TRINITARIAN EXEGESIS

In the remainder of this chapter I want to look at the implications Cyril's theology of illumination has for his practice of scriptural exegesis. I have spent the first half arguing that

¹¹⁷ Ps-Didymus, *Trin.* II.12; II.14 (PG 39.676, 681, 696, 713).

¹¹⁸ Didymus, *Zach.* 1.289 (4:1-3) (SC 83.344).

¹¹⁹ Didymus, *Zach.* 2.51 (6:12-15) (SC 84.452).

¹²⁰ Didymus, *Zach.* 1.329 (4:10) (SC 83.366).

¹²¹ Didymus, *Zach.* 5.72 (14:5-7) (SC 85.1008).

¹²² Didymus, *Zach.* 1.279 (4:1-3) (SC 83.338). Also, the illumination of the Spirit brings an understanding of the 'divine oracles' (εἰς νόησιν τῶν θείων λόγιων) (*Trin.* II.19 (PG 39.729)).

Cyril presents a clear distinction between these two forms of enlightenment, and that the clarity with which he makes this distinction is his own contribution to the patristic tradition. This twofold understanding of participation in the divine light has important implications for exegesis. If all that one has is a general sense of the way that the Word enlightens the mind of all with rationality, it becomes difficult to give an adequate answer to the epistemological question of why some exegetical endeavors fail and others succeed. However, Cyril's twofold understanding of illumination serves as an epistemology that corresponds to his actual practice of exegesis. By highlighting the activity of the Spirit with respect to redemptive illumination, he provides the conceptual space within which to offer a theological legitimation for his practice of Christological exegesis.

Thus, in what follows I argue that Cyril regards the Spirit as necessary for proper exegesis, since exegesis is a matter of seeing Christ in Scripture for the nourishment of the church, and since it is impossible to see Christ apart from the Spirit. When the exegete undertakes this spiritually enabled and Christologically focused interpretation, there results a growth in understanding of the Christological mystery hidden in Scripture, a mystery that unfolds the Trinitarian reality. This growth in Trinitarian understanding finds its culmination in the Christologically mediated, eschatological vision of the Father. Thus, corresponding to Cyril's Trinitarian axiom that all things are 'from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit' is the parallel affirmation that salvation is a process that occurs in the Spirit, through the Son, unto the Father, a pattern that Boulnois and others have previously pointed out.¹²³ Here I am suggesting what no one has yet argued—that this Trinitarian pattern characterizes his theology of exegesis.

Spiritual Exegesis

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, Cyril opens his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* with an assertion that only those who have been enlightened from above can undertake the

¹²³ Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 580-3. Bermejo, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, 45, also comments on the 'perfect parallelism' in Cyril's thought between the downward movement and the return. See also Weigl, *Die Heilsehre*, 23. A good example of this parallel movement is 1 Cor. 12:7ff (Pusey, 287-8): 'For all things, as I said, are from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, and the holy and consubstantial Trinity is glorified in all things that are accomplished. For consider how [all things] begin from the Spirit, as the one who is in us and who brings about (ἐνεργούντος) the distribution of divine gifts. And returning the discourse back towards the Son, who is Son according to nature, it then approaches unto the Father, to whom is assigned the operation through the Spirit by the mediation of the Son (τὴν διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνεργεῖαν διὰ μέσου τοῦ Υἱοῦ)'. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 179-80, detects a similar pattern in Gregory of Nazianzus.

task of exegesis. The placement of this statement at the beginning of his commentary highlights the significance of the connection between illumination and interpretation. This assertion is but a single instance of a theme that recurs broadly throughout his corpus, namely, that one must have the Spirit to see the Son. A text that he cites in connection with this principle is 1 Corinthians 12:3, in which the Apostle Paul says, ‘no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, “Jesus is accursed”, and no one is able to say, “Jesus is Lord”, except in the Holy Spirit’. This verse had some currency among some earlier pro-Nicenes, but was not universally employed. Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Didymus cite the passage, but it does not occur at all in Athanasius or Gregory of Nazianzus.¹²⁴ Cyril likely drew upon some of these earlier authors, and he presents a consistent interpretation of the passage. In a surviving fragment from his *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, he says that ‘those who confess that Jesus is Lord and God’ demonstrate by their confession that ‘through the Spirit they have been initiated into knowledge of the vision of God in him’ (τῆς ἐπ’ αὐτῷ θεοπτίας τὴν γνῶσιν μεμυσταγωγῶνται διὰ Πνεύματος).¹²⁵ Thus we see the pattern of achieving divine vision or contemplation through the Son by means of the Spirit’s work.

It is especially significant that this verse shows up at key moments in his works. In his exegesis of the commissioning of the disciples in the upper room and their reception of the Spirit from the Son Cyril cites the passage.¹²⁶ At the outset of his early work *De incarnatione* he cites the passage in order to assert that believers can speak about the ‘incarnation of the Only-begotten’ only insofar as they have received the ‘gift of the Spirit’s help’ (cf. Phil. 1:19).¹²⁷ Similarly, in the preface to the *Thesaurus*, another early work, Cyril confesses to the difficulty of the task at hand, and then states his confidence in undertaking such a work of theological inquiry:

Having placed our hope upon Christ himself, let us also apply ourselves to the labors that are beyond our ability, since he will be present with us and will in-

¹²⁴ See, e.g., Hilary, *Trin.* 8.28-34; Basil of Caesarea, *Spir.* 11.27; 16.38; 18.47; Gregory of Nyssa, *Maced.* (GNO 3.1, 98 114); *Eun.* I.531; *fid.* (GNO 3.1, 67); *hom. in Cant.* 4 (GNO 6.106); Didymus, *Spir.* 15; *Zach.* 5.118 (14:9-11); ps-Didymus, *Trin.* 1.24.7; 2.5.19; 2.21. The verse is not cited, but is probably alluded to in Gregory of Nyssa, *diff. ess.* 4, where Gregory says no one can perceive the Son without the Spirit’s illumination. Cf. Origen, *Jo.* 32.11.124-130; *princ.* 1.3.2; 1.3.7; 2.7.4.

¹²⁵ Cyril, 1 Cor. 12:3 (Pusey, 285).

¹²⁶ Cyril, *Jo.* 20:22-3 (Pusey, 3.132).

¹²⁷ Cyril, *inc.* (678c-d) (SC 97.190).

dubitably guide believers with the torches of the Spirit (ταῖς τοῦ πνεύματος δαδουχίαις) to the finding of the truth. For our aim (σκοπὸς) is to say that Jesus is Lord. And we will without doubt say this in the Holy Spirit. For thus Paul says, ‘No one can say that Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit’ (1 Cor. 12:3).¹²⁸

This passage draws together several of the strands we have been looking at in this chapter. It is Christ himself who is guiding believers to an understanding of theological truth, but he does so by the Spirit working within the saints, in keeping with Cyril’s usual description of redemptive illumination. I will return in a moment to consider more fully the Christological focus of this passage, but for now it is enough to see that these passages demonstrate a pattern of seeing the Son in the Spirit.

Two of the three works I drew from in the last paragraph, *De incarnatione* and *Thesaurus*, take the form of theological treatises, rather than verse-by-verse exegesis of Scripture, and all three of the passages I looked at above deal with some sort of Trinitarian or Christological reflection. Is it perhaps the case that this pattern applies to theological reflection rather than scriptural exegesis? I suggest that this same pattern applies to exegesis as well, and that, in fact, it is unlikely that Cyril conceived of the goal of theological reflection as distinct from the goal of biblical interpretation. In both cases, his writings reveal that the pattern suggested by this Pauline text of confessing Jesus by the Spirit has become for him an overarching principle that applies broadly to theological reflection, biblical exegesis, and indeed the entirety of the believer’s redeemed existence. Cyril’s exegetical writings are filled with similar statements that are specifically related to interpretation. The passage from the Lukan homilies that I quoted earlier in this chapter serves as one example, since there he asserts that only those who are enriched with the ‘divine light in the mind’ are able to understand the hidden things in Scripture.¹²⁹ Similarly, in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* he asserts that ‘the mysteries in the divinely inspired Scripture exceed our understanding’ (ὑπὲρ . . . νοῦν τὸν ἡμέτερον τὰ ἐν τῇ θεοπνεύστῳ γραφῇ μυστήρια), and that ‘without the illumination (φωτισμοῦ) through the Spirit no one can attain to a knowledge of the truth’.¹³⁰ Elsewhere in the commentary he says the reason he offers the interpretations he does is because he has the ‘torch’ (δαδουχία) of the

¹²⁸ Cyril, *thes.*, prol. (PG 75.12). On this passage see also Francis Joseph Houdek, *Contemplation in the Life and Works of Saint Cyril of Alexandria* (diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1979), 219.

¹²⁹ Cyril, *hom. Lc. LXXVIII* (CSCO 70.315).

¹³⁰ Cyril, *Jo. 17:16-17* (Pusey, 2.715).

Holy Spirit.¹³¹ More passages could be listed, but these suffice to demonstrate that the principle of Spirit-aided understanding applies to scriptural exegesis as much as it does to theological reflection, and we should probably not regard these two tasks as fundamentally distinct for Cyril.¹³² If we recall what I argued earlier with respect to redemptive illumination, namely, that it comes via the gift of the Spirit in baptism, then such statements suggest that proper theological reflection and exegesis can only take place within the boundaries of the church. Scripture, as the book inspired by the Spirit for the church's well-being, is only intelligible for believers within the church who have the aid of the same Spirit. In other words, exegesis in Cyril's understanding, occupies a distinctly and necessarily ecclesiological location.

In fact, I suggest that this principle is so basic to Cyril's understanding of the exegetical task that it influenced the very terminology with which he described exegesis. Sixty years ago Alexander Kerrigan pointed out that Cyril has a variety of terms that he employs for describing the spiritual or higher sense of Scripture. Notably he almost always avoids words in the *αλληγορ-* word group, and among the dozen or so expressions he uses, the one that he prefers most frequently is *θεωρία*, often in conjunction with qualifying adjectives such as *θεωρία πνευματική*.¹³³ Kerrigan explained that according to Cyril the spiritual sense of Scripture 'is *θεωρία*, since it is a kind of "vision" that opens the mind to Christ's mystery: it is *πνευματική*, because during this "vision" the human mind is aided by the Holy Spirit'.¹³⁴ My argument in

¹³¹ Cyril, *Jo.* 14:20 (Pusey, 2.479). Elsewhere Cyril says that he does his exegesis 'through the operation and grace of the Spirit' (*διὰ τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνεργείας τε καὶ χάριτος*) (*Jo.* 5:37-38 (Pusey, 1.375)). Trigg, 'Origen and Cyril of Alexandria', 961, asserts, 'Cyril felt confident in being a priest, not so much because of his gifts as an interpreter, real as they are, but because he was bishop of Alexandria'. Further on he says that for Cyril the exegete does not have to be 'spiritually transformed', since all that is required is that one be 'a competent bishop' (p.964). Although my reading of Cyril agrees with Trigg in seeing the importance of ecclesial context for Cyril's exegesis, he severely downplays the role of the Spirit in Cyril's theology of exegesis. I think it is better to say that Cyril was confident in his exegesis because he was illumined by the Spirit and thus had faith in the church's confession leading to increasing understanding.

¹³² Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 180ff, points out that Gregory of Nazianzus also emphasized exegesis taking place in the Spirit.

¹³³ Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 112-5. For example, at the outset of his *De adoratione* he uses the phrase *θεωρία πνευματική* to describe the sort of spiritual reading of the Mosaic Law that he intends to pursue (PG 68.137). On Cyril's avoidance of the *αλληγορ-* word group see Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 115; Simonetti, 'Note sul commento', 324, n.86; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 78, n.103; Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 36-7, 58.

¹³⁴ Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 191. Although I am not quite ready to follow Kerrigan in asserting that Cyril's understanding of *θεωρία* was 'derived from the Platonic tradition' (p.116). The most extensive study of Cyril's usage of *θεωρία* is Houdek, *Contemplation*. He finds only one text in Cyril's entire corpus that uses the term to refer to the literal sense (p.109, referring to *ador.* VIII (PG 68.552)). After surveying his usage of the term widely across his entire corpus he concludes that the word has a threefold sense: '[1] Subjectively *θεωρία* can be defined as a God-inspired, and God-initiated use of human reason preceded by considerable personal asceticism

this chapter largely confirms Kerrigan's conclusion, although I hope to have advanced his thesis by developing more clearly the distinction between the two kinds of illumination and by situating Cyril's practice of spiritual reading firmly within its ecclesial context. Cyril prefers to speak of the higher sense of Scripture as a 'spiritual vision' because the phrase highlights what for him was a principle fundamental to exegesis, namely, that the Spirit must be had in order to see the divine mystery in the Bible.

In both his monograph, as well as in a later article, Kerrigan also attempted to define what in Cyril's estimation distinguishes the literal from the spiritual sense. Through a comparison of the terminology with which Cyril describes the spiritual sense of Scripture and the terminology that he applies to the objects of the spiritual sense, he argued that in both his Old and New Testament exegesis, the Alexandrian understands the 'senses of Scripture' to be defined 'chiefly by their objects and . . . the difference existing between them is based chiefly on the differences of nature that constitute and characterize these objects'.¹³⁵ Interpretations that deal with 'earthly' realities are accordingly historical, and interpretations pertaining to higher, spiritual realities, that is, to the mystery of Christ, are ascribed to the spiritual sense. In Kerrigan's estimation, those objects that Cyril speaks of in relation to the spiritual sense correspond to 'Plato's intelligible world'.¹³⁶

I am in basic agreement with Kerrigan's conclusion, but I think there is a more helpful way to distinguish between Cyril's understanding of the senses of Scripture. To describe the exegetical task as Kerrigan does implies that the practice of exegesis takes place solely within

and leading to an enlightened understanding of and intuition into divine mysteries which defy the normal limited human intellectual capacities. . . . [2] Objectively, therefore, **θεωρία** can be defined as the very mystery of God, especially in its Christological dimensions, hidden by God in and throughout the literal text of the sacred Scriptures, and apprehended from the inspired text by the specific exercise of Christian contemplation. . . . [3] This third meaning can be defined as the God-inspired intellectual process by which one progresses from unexpressed understanding of mystery to accurate verbal expression of the underlying mystery and all its implications and ramifications' (pp.281-2). Houdek suggests that with the objective sense of the term Cyril makes a genuine contribution to the prior tradition of usage. On Cyril's usage of **θεωρία**, see also Simonetti, 'Note sul commento', 303; Bertrand de Margerie, 'Saint Cyril of Alexandria Develops a Christocentric Exegesis', in *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis, Volume I: The Greek Fathers* (Petersham, MA: Saint Bede's Publications, 1993), 244-5; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 79; McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ*, 25-32; Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 58; Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 241-3. The chapter by de Margerie is a translation of Bertrand de Margerie, 'L'exégèse christologique de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *NRT* 102 (1980): 400-423.

¹³⁵ Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 42-3, 124, 131. On Cyril's New Testament exegesis, see Kerrigan, 'The Objects of the Literal and Spiritual Senses'. Houdek, *Contemplation*, 84-85, 97, and McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ*, 26-8, follow Kerrigan's conclusion regarding Cyril's distinction between the literal and spiritual senses.

¹³⁶ Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 131.

the confines of human ability. That is, his construal suggests that the exegete takes an independent and objective stance towards a static object of study (i.e., the biblical text), and then searches in his own power for those things in the text that correspond either to the earthly or intelligible realm, assigning what he finds to whichever category is more appropriate. However, for Cyril, Scripture is no merely static text, because the Spirit is required to see the life-giving Son in it who nourishes the church, and Cyril certainly is not interested in taking an objective stance towards the biblical text since he insists that baptism and catechesis are necessary for proper interpretation. I suggest that for this reason it is better to say that he distinguishes the objects of the literal and spiritual sense on the basis of what is required of the interpreter to see those objects about which Scripture speaks. In other words, the literal and spiritual senses of Scripture correspond to the distinction between illumination according to creation and illumination according to redemption. Presumably any reasonably skilled and rational person could discern the literal or historical meaning of Scripture. However, given Cyril's epistemology there is no reason to expect that an unbeliever could discern the spiritual sense of Scripture, since he does not possess the Spirit. In fact, Cyril consistently argues that groups like pagans, Jews, and heretics are void of the Spirit and therefore unable to interpret Scripture rightly.¹³⁷ Therefore the literal and spiritual senses should be defined according to whether or not the Spirit is required to perceive them. Spiritual exegesis of the spiritual sense receives its distinctive nature from the fact that it is exegesis guided by the Spirit. Stating the matter in this way is more in keeping with Cyril's own theology of exegesis. Moreover, defining the spiritual sense by referencing the Spirit avoids the unhelpful implications of Kerrigan's assertion that Cyril's 'spiritual realm' correspond to Plato's 'intelligible world', thereby giving a more properly theological account of spiritual exegesis.

¹³⁷ Evidence that the Jews do not have illumination is given in Cyril's interpretation of John 9 which was discussed above. For instances in which he places pagans and heretics in the same category as those who are enslaved in darkness without divine illumination, see Is. 9:5-7 (PG 70.252-53); Mich. 3:6 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.649-50). Cf. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 591, who also notes that Cyril's thought is opposed to pagans, Jews, and heretics. Cf. Jo. 18:37-38 (Pusey, 3.56), where Cyril uses Pilate as an example of someone who does not believe and who therefore is blind to Christ, who is the truth, standing before him. Blackburn Jr., *The Mystery of the Synagogue*, 141, specifically with reference to *De adoratione*, also notes that Cyril thinks someone must be a Christian to read Scripture.

Christological Exegesis

Scholarship on Cyril's exegesis is universally agreed that in his understanding interpretation is resolutely Christological. For example, Robert Wilken, who has written at length on this point, says, 'The subject of Cyril's exegesis is never simply the text that is before him, it is always the mystery of Christ. . . . Christ is Cyril's true subject matter'.¹³⁸ Such statements are entirely appropriate given Cyril's explicit descriptions of exegesis as well as his actual practice of spiritual reading. This principle is not isolated to either the Old or New Testament, but describes all of his biblical interpretation. For example, Cyril says 'every spiritual vision (θεωρία πνευματική) looks to the mystery of Christ'.¹³⁹ Elsewhere he says, specifically with reference to the Old Testament, that Christ 'becomes the fullness of the law and the prophets' when 'every prophetic and legal oracle looks towards him and has been turned towards him'.¹⁴⁰ Cyril's actual exegesis is in keeping with these overarching statements, insofar as his spiritual readings are nearly always concerned with some aspect of the mystery of Christ, whether having to do with correct doctrinal belief, or with the Christian's moral formation. Even though he grants legitimacy to the historical or literal sense¹⁴¹, the goal of Cyril's exegesis is not to stay on this

¹³⁸ Wilken, 'Cyril of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Old Testament', 21. See also Robert L. Wilken, 'Exegesis and the History of Theology: Reflections on the Adam-Christ Typology in Cyril of Alexandria'; *ibid.*, 'St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Mystery of Christ in the Bible', *ProEcl* 4 (1995): 454-78; *ibid.*, 'St. Cyril of Alexandria: Biblical Expositor', *CCR* 19 (1998): 30-41; *ibid.*, 'Cyril of Alexandria', in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 840-69. On Cyril's Christological exegesis, see further Louis Ma Armendáriz, *El nuevo Moisés: dinamica cristocentrica en la tipologia de Cirilio Alejandrino*, *Estudios Onienses* 3, 5 (Madrid: Ediciones Fax, 1962); J. Sauer, *Die Exegese des Cyrill von Alexandrien nach seinem Kommentar zum Johannes-Evangelium mit Berücksichtigung der Beziehungen zu Origenes und Athanasius* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1965); Simonetti, 'Note sul commento', 309-13; Houdek, *Contemplation*, 200-1; J. J. Doherty, *Scripture and Soteriology in the Christological System of St. Cyril of Alexandria* (diss., Fordham University, 1992), 78-84; O'Keefe, 'Christianizing Malachi'; John A. McGuckin, 'Moses and the "Mystery of Christ" in St. Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis', *CCR* 21 (2000): 98-114; Blackburn Jr., *The Mystery of the Synagogue*; de Margerie, 'Christocentric Exegesis'; McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ*, 32-48; Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes*, 57-62; Young, 'The "Mind" of Scripture', 131-6; Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 199-254.

¹³⁹ Cyril, 2 Cor. 3:13 (Pusey, 336). πᾶσα θεωρία πνευματικὴ πρὸς τὸ Χριστοῦ βλέπει μυστήριον.

¹⁴⁰ Cyril, *ador. I* (PG 68.140). Πλήρωμα δὲ νόμου καὶ προφητῶν, εἴη ἅν· εἰς αὐτὸν οἶμαί που παντὸς ὄρωντος καὶ τετραμμένου προφητικοῦ τε καὶ νομικοῦ θεσπίσματος.

¹⁴¹ On Cyril's understanding of the literal sense see Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 35-110; Kerrigan, 'The Objects of the Literal and Spiritual Senses', 354-63; McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ*, 26-32; Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 149-98. One of the main arguments of Simonetti, 'Note sul commento', 306, 329, is that Cyril grants greater prominence to the literal sense than either Origen or Didymus. He also points out that Cyril is unique among these earlier authors in applying the methods commonly used to develop the spiritual sense (e.g., etymologies) to give a fuller account of the literal sense (pp.317-8). Prior to Simonetti's work, Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 446, also highlighted the importance Cyril places upon the literal sense in comparison with earlier

level, but always to move towards bringing the life-giving Son to believers. If we recall what I argued in the previous chapter, namely, that Scripture nourishes the church because it communicates Christ to believers, it is not at all surprising that Cyril's exegesis is so consistently Christological, since such an approach is necessary, on his reckoning, to feed the sacred flock.

This established picture of Cyril's exegesis is correct as far as it goes, but his attempt to find Jesus in every text might appear arbitrary if it is abstracted from his overarching theological vision. For this reason, I want to situate this standard account of his exegetical method within the context of his Trinitarian theology that we have been looking at throughout this chapter. Christological exegesis is not simply an isolated principle for Cyril, floating free from other doctrinal commitments. Rather, it results from his conviction that the illuminating Spirit directs the attention of believers towards the Son. Earlier I quoted a passage from the prologue to Cyril's *Thesaurus* in order to demonstrate the necessity of the Spirit for exegesis. The same passage also speaks of the Christological focus of theological and exegetical endeavor. When Cyril writes 'our aim (σκοπὸς) is to say that Jesus is Lord'¹⁴², he highlights the fact that the goal towards which the Spirit leads believers is not just generic theological truth, but specifically a knowledge of the Son as consubstantial with the Father.¹⁴³ This Christological focus of the theologian's task complements Cyril's emphasis on the agency of the Son in giving illumination by the Spirit. Thus, when the theologian-exegete engages in the task of theological reflection upon Scripture, the Son is guiding the believer by the Spirit to a greater knowledge of the

Alexandrians.

¹⁴² Cyril, *thes.*, prol. (PG 75.12). The term σκοπός plays an important role in Cyril's exegesis. Here he uses it to state his own 'aim' in exegesis. Elsewhere, he frequently uses it to define the central 'aim' of a given biblical passage, and then proceeds to offer an interpretation that is in keeping with the passage's 'aim'. See, e.g., Is. 31:7-9 (PG 70.700). Sometimes he uses it to state the 'aim' of the entirety of Scripture, a practice that he seems to have picked up from Athanasius. See Cyril, *glaph. Gen.* (PG 69.308); and *ep.* 1.4, where he cites Athanasius, *Ar.* 3.29 on the σκοπός of Scripture. On his usage of σκοπός, see Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 87-110, 224-6; Sauer, *Die Exegese des Cyrill von Alexandrien*, 44-9; Simonetti, 'Note sul commento', 302-3; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 76-87; Cassel, 'Key Principles in Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis', 413-5; Wilken, 'Cyril of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Old Testament', 14-9. On the significance of the term for patristic exegesis in general, see Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 21-7. The word also had currency among Neoplatonist commentators who were probably drawing on the same grammatico-rhetorical training that shaped patristic exegetes. On the background to the term in late antiquity see Roswitha Alpers-Gözl and Wolfgang Haase, *Der Begriff ΣΚΟΠΟΣ in der Stoa und seine Vorgeschichte* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1976); James A. Coulter, *The Literary Microcosm: Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 77-94; Malcolm Heath, *Unity in Greek Poetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 124-36; Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, 126.

¹⁴³ At Jo. 1:6-7 (Pusey, 1.90) Cyril says that τὸ τῆς κυριότητος ἀξίωμα ('the dignity of lordship') belongs by nature only to someone who is 'true God'. So the confession of the Son as 'Lord' is a confession of his consubstantiality with the Father.

Trinitarian mystery revealed in the Son himself. This focus on knowledge of the Son in the prologue to the *Thesaurus* is all the more striking given that the work covers not only the Son's divine status, but also has much to say about the Father and the Spirit. It might be that Cyril later wandered from his original intent to write only about the Son. Or rather, what is more likely, it might be that he opens the work with this statement because he regards the confession of Jesus' divinity as the entry point for grasping the Trinitarian mystery.

The pattern of seeing Christ in Scripture by the Spirit, and the relation between Christological and Trinitarian knowledge, become clearer when we consider the way that Cyril's positions faith and understanding vis-à-vis one another.¹⁴⁴ The first thing to note is that he consistently presents faith as the prerequisite for illumination, and rarely ever speaks of anything else as a requirement for receiving the divine light.¹⁴⁵ Earlier I noted that in his exegesis of John 9, Cyril uses the blind man as the exemplar of faith in Christ, tying this response to the man's enlightening. Elsewhere he asserts the opposite point—that those who have not yet believed in the Son are still in darkness without the Spirit's illumination.¹⁴⁶ In his discussions of faith, he usually speaks of assent to the body of teachings the Christian is required to believe by the rule of faith. In light of his focus upon catechetical confession with respect to the healing of the blind man, we may surmise that Cyril tends to define 'faith' in this manner because he has in mind the confession of faith made by catechumens as they approach baptism.¹⁴⁷

In his discussions of faith Cyril most often makes reference to orthodox belief in the person of Christ. For example, he writes that the 'boast of the true faith' is the confession that the Son is 'begotten from the very substance of God the Father', and is thus not a created be-

¹⁴⁴ On Cyril's understanding of faith, see Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 129-36; Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 106-11. Sauer, *Die Exegese des Cyrill von Alexandrien*, 108-15, focuses especially on the relation between faith and exegesis.

¹⁴⁵ Even though, as I noted above, Gregory of Nazianzus emphasizes purification as a prerequisite for illumination, he also says that illumination leading to a knowledge of Scripture comes by faith. See *or.* 32.23-27; Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 111-2.

¹⁴⁶ Cyril, *Jo.* 12:46 (Pusey, 2.331).

¹⁴⁷ Cyril, *Jo.* 9:35 (Pusey, 2.198). So also Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 108, who notes that for Cyril faith has 'a strongly objective character'.

ing.¹⁴⁸ However, he also asserts that faith in the Son is faith in the Father as well, as when he paraphrases Jesus' statement in John 12:44-45:

When you believe in me—I who, on the one hand, am a man like you for your sakes (δι' ὑμᾶς), and who, on the other hand, am God for my own sake (δι' ἑαυτὸν)—and in the Father from whom I am (ἐξ οὐπὲρ εἰμι), do not think that you are ascribing faith to a man. For I am nothing less than God by nature, even if I appear like you, and I have in me the one who begot me. Accordingly, since I am consubstantial with the one who begot me, your faith will certainly proceed on even to the Father himself.¹⁴⁹

Thus, as Cyril writes here, faith in the Son must lead on to faith in the Father as well, since the Son is consubstantial with the Father and has the Father within himself. The Trinitarian content of this catechetical faith is nicely summed up when Cyril writes,

Those who hold an orthodox view (φρονουῖσιν ὀρθῶς) must believe in God the Father, and not merely in the Son, but also in his incarnation (ἐνανθρωπήσαντα), and in the one Holy Spirit. For the holy and consubstantial Trinity is distinguished both by the difference of the names and by the quality and property of the persons (ταῖς τῶν ὀνομάτων διαφοραῖς καὶ τῶν προσώπων ποιότησί τε καὶ ιδιότησι διαστέλλεται). For the Father is Father and not Son, and again the Son is Son and not Father, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit proper (ἴδιον) to the Godhead, and this is summed up in the very definition of substance (τὸν αὐτὸν τῆς οὐσίας . . . λόγον) which sets down for us not three gods but one God. Nevertheless, I think it is necessary for us to make a confession accurately, not simply by saying 'We believe in God', but by explaining the confession and attributing to each person the same definition (λόγον) of glory. For there is no distinction of faith within us, for our faith in the Father is not greater, and that in the Son or in the Spirit is not lesser. Rather, the very definition and form of our confession (ὁ αὐτὸς τῆς ὁμολογίας ὄρος τε καὶ τρόπος) is one, passing through the three names in equal measure, in order that the holy Trinity may appear again by progressing to the unity of nature.¹⁵⁰

This passage contains a number of basic Trinitarian affirmations, while offering little metaphysical explanation for them. Cyril speaks of the irreducible distinction between the persons, as well as their inseparable unity in the one divine nature. It is not too much of a stretch to

¹⁴⁸ Cyril, Jo. 14:5-6 (Pusey, 2.409). Cyril usually defines faith as the believer's orthodox confession, but he also insists that it is the gift of God. At Jo. 11:40 (Pusey, 2.285) he says the form of faith is 'twofold', being both an assent of the soul and a gift of Christ. Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 116, also notes that Cyril thinks faith is a gift of God.

¹⁴⁹ Cyril, Jo. 12:44-45 (Pusey, 2.330). A similar statement about faith in the Son including faith in the Father is found at Jo. 14:5-6 (Pusey, 2.409-11). See also Nest. I.7 (ACO 1.1.6, 28) where Cyril says that when we believe in Christ Jesus as the one true Son by nature, 'our faith ascends to the Father through him'.

¹⁵⁰ Cyril, Jo. 14:1 (Pusey, 2.401).

imagine that some such confession of faith is what was required of catechumens in the Alexandrian church.

These two passages demonstrate that, although faith may be focused upon Christ, this faith must include within it a basic pro-Nicene confession of Father, Son, and Spirit as inseparably united in substance and irreducibly distinct in person. Some such Trinitarian understanding is necessary to receive illumination from the Spirit, because a confession of belief is required for baptism through which the Spirit comes. Furthermore, we see here that it is Cyril's pro-Nicene theology that provides the link between his Christology and his Trinitarian theology, for, as he asserts, faith in the Son necessarily entails faith in the Father and Spirit as a consequence of divine consubstantiality. Thus, Trinitarian belief is not separated from Christological belief, because the consubstantial and incarnate Son serves as the mediator between God and humanity. The believer's attention is drawn towards the incarnate Son, but only in order to see therein the revelation of the Trinitarian reality.

It is against the backdrop of such a faith that Cyril casts the believers' growth in understanding. He repeatedly and explicitly tells his readers that understanding can only follow on the heels of faith and cannot precede the act of confession.¹⁵¹ The call to the unbeliever is therefore first to believe, so that one might then understand. Through a confession of faith, those whose minds are dead, as was Lazarus in the grave, are brought to new life by Christ.¹⁵² A text that Cyril tends to cite in this regard is Isaiah 7:9 which in his version reads, 'If you will not believe, neither will you understand'.¹⁵³ Earlier authors had occasionally used this verse¹⁵⁴, but Augustine in the west made more of it than had anyone prior.¹⁵⁵ In a manner somewhat parallel to Augustine, Cyril stands out among eastern fathers by the frequency of his usage and

¹⁵¹ Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life*, 109, notes that, for Cyril, faith 'serves as a foundation for the progressive advance in divine knowledge'.

¹⁵² Cyril, *Jo.* 11:44 (Pusey, 2.292).

¹⁵³ For references to this text in Cyril's works (though not an exhaustive list), see *Jo.* 6:53; 6:69; 17:3; 18:37-38 (Pusey, 1.529, 576; 2.668; 3.56); *Is.* 7:8-9; 43:10; 52:13-15 (PG 70.200, 896, 1168); *Os.* 2:20 (Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, 1.77); *apol. orient.* 10 (ACO 1.1.7, 55); *ador.* VI; IX; XV (PG 68.409, 624, 953); *Ps.* 24:10 (PG 69.849); *thes.* VIII; XXXIII (PG 75.109, 565); *Juhn.* 1.24 (SC 322.152); *Juhn.* 7 (PG 76.877).

¹⁵⁴ See, e.g., Irenaeus, *dem.* 3; Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 2.2.8.2; 4.21.134.4; Origen, *comm. in Mt.* 16.9; *pasch.* 47; *hom. in Ex.* 7.3; Eusebius of Caesarea, *d.e.* 7.1.26-28; *p.e.* 12.1.3; *Is.* 1.43; Cyril of Jerusalem, *cat.* 5.4; *ps-Basil.* *Is.* 7.198; Didymus the Blind, *fr. Ps.* 1068 (115:1); *ps-Didymus.* *Trin.* 2.3.31. Harl, *Origène et la fonction révélatrice*, 261, notes Origen's usage of Isaiah 7:9, and argues that faith is the 'first stage of knowledge' for Origen.

¹⁵⁵ On Augustine's account of understanding, see especially Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 142-70.

the clarity with which he emphasizes the priority of faith over understanding. For example, he says the reason Christ did not explain to the Jews in John 6 how they might eat his flesh and drink his blood was because they had not yet believed. To them he simply announced the reality of the mystery so that he might incite them to faith, since only after they had believed would they be able to understand the mystery. About this episode Cyril writes,

The ability to learn follows accordingly for those who have already believed, since the prophet Isaiah also speaks thus, 'If you will not believe, neither will you understand' (Is. 7:9). Therefore it was fitting that the faith be first rooted in them, and that the understanding of those things about which they are ignorant should be brought in second, and that the inquiry should not come before faith (οὐ πρεσβυτέραν τῆς πίστεως ὄρασθαι τὴν ζήτησιν).¹⁵⁶

Similarly, Nicodemus, rather than asking Jesus question after question should simply have 'accepted by a simple faith that which he was unable to understand'.¹⁵⁷ Although understanding does not come until after one has faith, faith itself is not completely groundless, but rather is based on the demonstration of Christ's person presented in the gospels. Thus, Jesus performed miracles, such as walking on water, so that he might confirm the faith of those who would believe in him.¹⁵⁸

Since faith is required for the spiritual illumination by which one reads Scripture, and since this faith serves as the foundation for growth in understanding, I suggest that this movement from faith to understanding is the proper context in which to situate Cyril's practice of Christological exegesis.¹⁵⁹ There is without doubt a certain circularity here, insofar as one begins the task of exegesis with an awareness of the church's confession of Christ and pursues an exegetical goal that is also a knowledge of Christ. However, the fact that divine truth is only received on the basis of faith is not intended to forestall the search for understanding. As Cyril writes,

¹⁵⁶ Cyril, Jo. 6:53 (Pusey, 1.529). Cf. Jo. 6:8-10 (Pusey, 1.412) where he says the 'things which are above us' (τὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς) are received 'by faith' (πίστει), not 'by investigation' (ζητήσιν). Similarly, Cyril, against Nestorius who sought exacting precision in theological language, asserts that the mystery of Christ does not require subtle investigation but rather a simple faith that regards the tradition as true and trustworthy (Nest. III, praef.).

¹⁵⁷ Cyril, Jo. 3:11 (Pusey, 1.222). ἀπεριεργάστῳ λοιπὸν τῇ πίστει συμβουλεύει χρῆναι λαβεῖν, ὃ νοεῖν οὐ δύναται.

¹⁵⁸ Cyril, Jo. 6:16-17 (Pusey, 1.426).

¹⁵⁹ So Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, 177*: 'faith in [Christ] furnish[es] a key to understanding [Scripture] properly'.

It is necessary both to believe and to understand. Because divine things are received by faith, we certainly should not for this reason entirely abandon inquiring into them (τῆς ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς ἐρεῦνης), but rather should endeavor to ascend to a moderate knowledge (εἰς μετρίαν . . . γνῶσιν), a knowledge ‘in a mirror and dimly’ as Paul says (1 Cor. 13:12).¹⁶⁰

Therefore, in Cyril’s estimation, searching after understanding has its appropriate place. In fact, it would be hard to imagine why he wrote so prolifically if he thought otherwise. However, the advantage of defining the exegetical task in this manner is that the theologian-exegete never grows beyond the church’s most basic confession of Christological and Trinitarian faith. We should recall what I argued earlier about Cyril’s relative lack of interest in various levels of illumination in the believer’s post-baptismal experience. By defining redemptive illumination as a single, unrepeatable event in the life of the Christian, that is, baptism and catechesis, rather than an ongoing series of illuminations that one receives as a Christian, Cyril emphasizes the church’s confession as the boundary of acceptable exegesis. One does not grow in ever greater degrees of esoteric knowledge, but rather in an ever greater awareness of the church’s faith that is summed up in the confession.¹⁶¹ The understanding that one gains through the process of exegesis thus does not differ in content from the faith with which one begins. The difference is that now one sees this reality in the pages of the written word, throughout the story of Israel and in the writings of the evangelists and apostles, and through this process of growth in understanding receives from Scripture a participation in the life-giving Son himself.

¹⁶⁰ Cyril, *Jo.* 6:69 (Pusey, 1.576). In commenting on this text (John 6:69) both Cyril and Augustine note the ordering of verbs in Peter’s declaration ‘we have believed and have come to know’. Based on this observation they both argue that his statement indicates that faith must precede understanding. See Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 27.9.

¹⁶¹ So Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 183: ‘St. Cyril deprives the gnostics of the privilege of being the exclusive interpreters of Scripture. Abandoning Clement on this point, he tends to rejoin the position of St. Irenaeus who confides the explanation of Holy Writ to priests’. However, Kerrigan also says that Cyril fails to draw a clear distinction between ‘faith’ and ‘knowledge’ since his descriptions of them are sometimes quite similar (p.185). I suggest that the similarity in the way Cyril speaks of ‘faith’ and ‘knowledge’ is simply due to the basic continuity that he sees between these two realities, which is not to say that he does not consciously distinguish them.

A passage that might be raised as an objection to my argument is *Jo.* 14:23 (Pusey, 2.497), where Cyril says that the knowledge possessed by the saints who have pursued virtue is a knowledge ‘not common to others’ (οὐ κοινὴ τοῖς ἄλλοις), but is a ‘special and distinguished knowledge that has much excellence’ (ἐξαίρετός τις καὶ διωρισμένη καὶ πολλὴν ἔχουσα τὴν διαφορὰν). Even though Cyril here contrasts the knowledge possessed by the virtuous and that held by all believers, I suggest that, in light of the other passages I have looked at in this chapter, the weight of the evidence points to a fundamental continuity between these two realities. Even in this passage he defines this heightened knowledge possessed by the virtuous as an awareness of Christ dwelling within them, so it remains a Christological knowledge, presumably bounded by the church’s confession.

The Eschatological Vision of the Father

I have focused primarily in this chapter on the Spirit and the Son because these are the divine hypostases that appear most frequently in Cyril's discussions of illumination. What then of the Father? Is the exegetical task somehow related to a knowledge of the Father as well? An initial answer to this question would be that for Cyril knowledge of the Son contains knowledge of the Father, since the Son is the perfect image of the Father and speaks the exact words of the Father, a point that I discussed in the conclusion to chapter two. However, his reticence with respect to the believer's increasing knowledge of the Father in this life might also be related to the fact that when he does speak of the knowledge of the Father, it is often in relation to the eschaton. To understand this tendency, we need to recognize two principles in Cyril's theology that he wishes to hold in tension. On the one hand he wants to uphold the veracity of the believer's knowledge even on this side of the resurrection. In commenting on John 16:23-24 he insists on the 'perfection' of the believer's knowledge in this life, stating that even though Christians now 'see in a mirror dimly (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12), nevertheless, 'so long as we do not wander outside of the exactness of the doctrines, and follow the aim (σκοπῶ) of the holy and divinely inspired Scripture, we have knowledge that is not imperfect, knowledge that someone could grasp in no other way unless the light of the Holy Spirit shines upon him'. Cyril defines this 'perfect knowledge' (τελείαν γνώσιν) available in this life as that which 'has an orthodox view of the holy and consubstantial Trinity' (ὀρθῶς δὲ δοξάζουσιν περὶ τῆς ἁγίας τε καὶ ὁμοουσίου Τριάδος).¹⁶² Therefore, the believer can have a true and correct understanding of the Trinitarian reality even in this life, so long as he follows Scripture and the church's confession that was taught by Christ to the apostles and has been passed down through the church's catechetical instruction.¹⁶³

However, on the other hand, Cyril also distinguishes between the knowledge available in this life and that to be had in the final vision of God. In the passage of his Johannine commentary immediately following the one I referred to in the previous paragraph his eschatological understanding comes clearly to the fore. In commenting on John 16:25 ('I have spoken

¹⁶² Cyril, Jo. 16:23-24 (Pusey, 1.645).

¹⁶³ Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianus*, 105, highlights that Gregory of Nazianus also emphasizes the continuity between believers' knowledge now and that to be had in the eschaton.

these things to you in figures of speech; the hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but I will speak to you about the Father plainly'), Cyril says that this verse could be either about the coming of the Spirit after the resurrection of Christ, or about 'the time to come after the conclusion of the world when we will behold the glory of God clearly and with an uncovered gaze'. Although he does not reject the former reading, it is the latter one that he chooses to focus upon. After again quoting Paul's statement that believers 'see dimly in a mirror' and only 'in part' in this life (1 Cor. 13:8-12), Cyril characteristically develops this idea using vivid imagery, writing,

It is just as in the obscurity of the night the bright beauty of the stars shines through, with each one flashing its own light, but when the radiance of the sun arises again, at that time the partial brightness (τὸ ἐκ μέρους λαμπρὸν) is abolished, and, since it is inferior to the sun's ray, its own ray becomes impotent and useless. I think it is in this way that the knowledge (γνώσις) that exists in us now will cease, and that which is in part (τὸ ἐκ μέρους) will come to a close, when the perfect light marches in and pours into us the most complete ray of divine knowledge (θεογνωσίας). Then, when we are able to approach with confidence (παρρησίας), Christ will proclaim those things concerning his own (ἰδίου) Father. For now through shadows and illustrations, and diverse images and types that are ascertained through our experiences, we are guided with difficulty to a certain dim knowledge (ἐπί τινα γνώσιν ἀμυδρὰν) through the inherent feebleness of our minds. Then, however, we will need no types or riddles or parables, and will, in a certain manner, consider (ἐννοήσομεν) the beauty of the divine nature of God the Father with naked face and an unhindered mind (γυμνῶ τρόπον τινὰ τῷ προσώπῳ καὶ ἀπαραποδίστῳ διανοίᾳ), having seen the glory of the one who proceeded from him. For 'we will see him as he is' (1 John 3:2), according to the saying of John. For now we do not know him in the entire glory that is suitable to the deity on account of that which is human (διὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον). But when the time of the economy with the flesh has passed, and the mystery which is for us and on our behalf has been accomplished, he will finally be seen in his own glory and in the glory of the Father. For being God by nature, and for this reason consubstantial (ὁμοούσιός) with the one who begot him, he will certainly also possess honors equal to him and will be in his own glory and in the resplendence that is proper to the deity.¹⁶⁴

Cyril does not explicitly speak of exegesis in this passage, but he does describe knowledge of the divine, which is, as I have argued above, the goal of exegesis. Moreover, types, riddles, and

¹⁶⁴ Cyril, *Jo.* 16:23-24 (Pusey, 2.647-8). On this passage see Vladimir Lossky, *The Vision of God*, trans. Asheleigh Moorhouse (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983), 99-100, who rightly asserts, 'it is indeed Christ whom we see face to face, but this vision is inseparable from communion with the whole Trinity in the illumination of the age to come'.

parables (τύπος, αἴνιγμα, παραβολή) are some of Cyril's typical terms for referring to the obscurities inherent within Scripture, obscurities through which the wise exegete sees Christ by the Spirit.¹⁶⁵ Thus, we may take his statement in this passage as an attempt to contrast the knowledge to be had now through Scripture with the eschatological vision.

Among the striking things in this passage is that Cyril places particular emphasis on the knowledge of the Father to be had in the eschaton. There is a sense in which believers will have a more immediate or fuller apprehension of the Father in the exalted state than is possible now in this life. The Spirit has receded from view in this passage probably because the biblical text speaks only of the Father and Son. However, we should note that Cyril says even the knowledge of the Father in eternity is still Christologically mediated, since it is the Son who teaches the saints, even once the time of the incarnation is over. In this manner the proper Trinitarian taxis that we have seen again and again in this chapter—seeing the Father through the Son in the Spirit—is preserved for all eternity. The difference between the knowledge to be had now and then is due to the transformation of our humanity. When the 'feebleness of our minds' is removed and when we behold the Father 'with naked face and an unhindered mind', then the exegetical task of making sense of the types and riddles of Scripture will have finally reached its goal.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ On Cyril's exegetical usage of τύπος, αἴνιγμα, and παραβολή, see Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 61-5, 191-214; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 107-10; Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 225-30, 234-6.

¹⁶⁶ Against Trigg, 'Origen and Cyril of Alexandria', 961, who says that for Cyril there is no 'eschatological horizon' to the exegetical task. Further on he writes that Cyril rejects 'Origen's view that the Bible provides an elementary introduction to a limitless possibility of deeper meaning not fully attainable short of eternity' (p.965). On the contrary, it seems to me that Cyril does think there is 'a limitless possibility of deeper meaning' in Scripture, but he thinks that possibility is always constrained by the church's confession. Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 110, says that for Cyril 'the heart of eschatological beatitude is direct knowledge of God'. On Cyril's eschatology, see further Weigl, *Die Heilslehre*, 326-43; Frank J. Caggiano, *The Eschatological Implications of the Notion of Re-Creation in the Works of Saint Cyril of Alexandria* (diss., Pontificiae Universitatis Gregoriana, 1996); O'Keefe, 'Incorruption, Anti-Origenism, and the Incarnation'.

Conclusion: ‘The Whirlwind is in the Thorn Tree’¹

For, as I said, all things are from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, and the holy and consubstantial Trinity is glorified in all things that are accomplished. For consider how all things begin from the Spirit, as the one who is in us and who brings about the distribution of divine gifts. And turning the discourse back towards the Son, who is the Son according to nature, it then approaches unto the Father, to whom is assigned the operation through the Spirit by the Son’s mediation.²

For much of the twentieth century, estimations of patristic exegesis in general, and Cyril’s contribution towards it in particular, tended towards either patronizing dismissal or outright mockery. Viewed in light of the ‘scientific’ understanding of history and exegesis that developed in the wake of the Renaissance and then especially in the centuries following the Enlightenment, the church fathers appeared rather like school children trying to make sense of a particle accelerator, without having any knowledge of modern physics. For example, J. N. D. Kelly once wrote about John Chrysostom, ‘Neither John, nor any Christian teacher for centuries to come, was properly equipped to carry out exegesis as we have come to understand it. He could not be expected to understand the nature of the Old Testament writings, still less the complex issues raised by the study of the gospels’.³ Similarly with respect to Cyril himself, Johannes Quasten wrote, ‘His exegetical works form the greater but not the better part of his lit-

¹ Johnny Cash, ‘The Man Comes Around’, *American IV: The Man Comes Around* (American Recordings, 2002).

² Cyril, 1 Cor. 12:7ff (Pusey, 287-8).

³ J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom, Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 94. Cf. Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1986* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 98: ‘Much in the patristic commentaries is quaint, unscientific, even absurd’.

7. Conclusion:

'The Whirlwind is in the Thorn Tree'

erary output'.⁴ Again, G. Jouassard who nevertheless praised Cyril's theology and erudition, called him a 'très imparfaitement' exegete, because 'il a chéri l'Écriture, mais en théologien, à ce point que sa théologie est facilement envahissante, quand il prétend expliquer un texte'.⁵ Finally, Alexander Kerrigan concluded his influential study of Cyril's Old Testament exegesis by stating that his 'exegetical principles are not likely to be employed by those, who are now in quest of a new brand of spiritual exegesis which can be harmonized with rigorously scientific method', and that his 'chief title to greatness is not that he was an outstanding exegete, but that he was a theologian'.⁶ Without denying the genuine advances in interpretation that have come about in the intervening millennium and a half, I submit that such statements do not take seriously enough the attempts of early Christians to understand their hallowed text using the most advanced interpretive tools of late antiquity, namely, the skills inculcated by the then centuries-old grammatical and rhetorical tradition.⁷ Furthermore, such views fail adequately to understand early Christian exegesis on its own terms, and instead too quickly move to evaluate patristic interpretation according to the canons of judgment accepted in the modern world.

In this thesis I have attempted to give a more sympathetic reading of Cyril of Alexandria's exegetical practice by looking at it through the lens of his theology of Scripture. What emerges from this study is not a picture of Cyril stumbling along in the twilight, barely able to make sense of a text lying on a historical horizon far removed from his own late antique Alexandria. Rather, I suggest that Cyril had a well-defined conception of the exegetical task, in terms of its origins, its execution, and its intended goal. Specifically, what animated Cyril's imagination was the pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology that he received as an inheritance forged in the fires of conflict from the previous century. This Trinitarian understanding of the divine life, and the Christologically focused interpretation given to it by Cyril, captured his attention like nothing else. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that his theology of revelation and the-

⁴ Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, *The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon* (Westminster, MA: Christian Classics, Inc., 1984), 119. On the problem of attempting to affirm the theological conclusions of the patristic period, while rejecting the exegetical arguments by which the church fathers arrived at those conclusions, see Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 100; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 386.

⁵ Jouassard, 'L'activité littéraire', 173.

⁶ Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 460.

⁷ See the literature above on page 177, n.2.

7. Conclusion:
'The Whirlwind is in the Thorn Tree'

ology of exegesis receive their shape, their focus, and their telos from his Trinitarianism and Christology.⁸

Earlier interpreters of Cyril have remarked upon the striking consistency and elaborate symmetry that mark his theological thought.⁹ The interpreter always risks imposing a systematization foreign to his subject. The reader will have to determine if such is the case with the present study. Aware of such a danger, I nevertheless submit that one of the remarkable features of Cyril's theology of Scripture is the correspondence between his understanding of the nature of Scripture as revelation of the Triune life and his understanding of the nature of interpretation as participation in the Triune life. Cyril never conceived of Scripture as merely a static text originating from the Ancient Near East and susceptible to the sophisticated apparatus of technical exegesis. Rather, he viewed Scripture as located within the story of the actions taken by the Father, Son, and Spirit to redeem humanity, whether among Israel of old, among the church of the apostles, or among the church of his own day.¹⁰ That is to say, Cyril did not approach Scripture from a 'neutral' standpoint, and those who would fault him for failing to do so should at least take notice that had no pretensions of such a project. In fact, Cyril would probably have found the notion of 'neutrality' itself to be absurd.¹¹

Time and again we have seen Cyril's understanding of the Trinitarian taxis come to the foreground in this thesis. This is not to say that he had a 'personalist' Trinitarian theology, nor that he privileged the 'persons' before the 'essence'. Such claims fail to represent adequately Cyril's own concerns and methods. However, it is to say that, like all pro-Nicenes, he affirmed

⁸ For a contemporary argument for the Trinity as the center of Christian belief, see Bruce D. Marshall, *Trinity and Truth*, CSCD 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 17-49.

⁹ So Janssens, 'Notre filiation divine d'après Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', 234, who noted 'la cohérence et l'harmonie remarquables de son système'. Similarly, Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 591, who spoke of 'une cohérence rigoureuse dans sa pensée. Le paradoxe de la Trinité constitue le centre de sa réflexion : que ce soit dans le mouvement descendant par lequel Dieu agit, se révèle et se donne, ou dans le mouvement ascendant de l'homme jusqu'à la divinisation, il faut maintenir les deux pôles de l'unité et de la distinction des personnes.'

¹⁰ So also John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 216, who writes, 'The overwhelming presumption of classical Christian figural reading . . . is that the Christian Bible is read Christianly when it is seen to depict the ongoing historical outworking of a divine intention to transform humanity over the course of time'.

¹¹ For a recent argument that all interpretation is inevitably theological, see Mark A. Bowald, 'The Character of Theological Interpretation of Scripture', *IJST* 12 (2010): 172-4. See also John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), who argues that the social sciences are inescapably theological. Milbank's argument might apply equally well to the 'scientific' approach to biblical exegesis.

7. Conclusion:
'The Whirlwind is in the Thorn Tree'

the inseparability of Father, Son, and Spirit and the irreducibility of their distinct identities. His understanding of this Trinitarian mystery comes to expression most frequently according to the pattern 'from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit'. This phrase serves him not only as an axiom useful for explaining a specific divine act, but also as a principle governing his entire theological vision. Yet, within this structure Cyril is content to admit a significant degree of fluidity. So, for example, he usually follows Scripture's own pointers to attribute the act of revelation to the Spirit, when the biblical text speaks of the Spirit, or to the Father, when it speaks of the Father, or to the Son, when the Son is in view. This tendency is best understood as Cyril's desire to follow Scripture's own formulations. However, when he generalized from such pointers in Scripture, it is evident that in a more systematic or formal mode of discourse he prefers to speak according to the Trinitarian taxis, and, in fact, his disparate and occasional statements can usually, perhaps even always, be fitted within this overarching scheme.

With respect to the manner of revelation, Cyril emphasizes most strongly the agency of the Son as the Word of the Father who makes known the Father's will. However, the Son does not make known merely some esoteric or arcane knowledge. Rather, the Son makes himself known as the Father's revelation, speaking the exact words that the Father would have him say, since he is himself the living Will of the one who begot him. Moreover, since the Son is the perfect image of the Father, in making himself known, the Son makes the Father known through himself. Furthermore, since the Spirit is the mind and finger of the Son, the Spirit's agency too is necessarily entailed in the Son's revelation. In other words, to say that the Son reveals the Father in the Spirit is nothing less than to say that in and through the Son the Triune life is revealed to humanity.

This Trinitarian conception of revelation finds concrete expression in the inspiration of holy Scripture. Following cues he sees as given in Scripture, Cyril frequently highlights the Spirit as the divine source of the inspired word. It is the Spirit who works within the prophets, apostles, and evangelists, to bring their words to expression. However, this basic axiom requires a twofold qualification. First, the Spirit's agency never completely overrides the agency of the human authors of Scripture. Far from being mere 'pipes' through whom the Spirit blows, the prophets, apostles, and evangelists recorded their writings from their own mind and in their own words. Scripture is so much their own word that the apostles can be said to preach even today through its reading. Thus, Cyril holds in tension the agency of the Spirit and that of human authors. Second, the Spirit's agency must be fitted within a pro-Nicene under-

7. Conclusion:
'The Whirlwind is in the Thorn Tree'

standing of divine operations. Hence, the Spirit alone does not inspire, but instead inspiration is a Trinitarian act, since when the Spirit indwells a human agent, the Son and Father reside as well by means of the Spirit. It is in this way that Cyril is able to maintain his emphasis on the Son's agency as revealer even while upholding Scripture's testimony to the Spirit's involvement in the act of inspiration. The Son, once more as Word of the Father, speaks in and through the prophets and apostles by the Spirit. Even more importantly, the Word speaks through himself as the incarnate Son in the gospels. For this reason, the gospels are especially inspired, useful, and worthy of the believer's attention. It would not be too much to say that in Cyril's understanding, all of Scripture looks to the gospels as the place wherein the Son, who has spoken throughout the written word, speaks most clearly and forthrightly for the salvation of all who would believe.

Corresponding to this theology of revelation is Cyril's theology of exegesis. Exegesis is of immense significance for the life of the church, since it is the inspired word that the Son as Shepherd has given to believers for their spiritual nourishment. Alongside the Eucharist and the Spirit, through which believers participate in the Son corporeally and spiritually, the Son mediates his saving divine life through the written word. Like the Eucharist and the Spirit, Scripture strengthens believers to withstand errant passions and false teaching. Moreover, even though the gospels are especially inspired by the Son, this by no means implies that the remainder of Scripture is of little benefit. Rather, the Son gives all of Scripture, encompassing both the Old and New Testaments, to the church as spiritual food. This is a profoundly theological understanding of the place of Scripture in the divine economy. The church does not decide for itself where to look for saving teaching. Rather, it receives it from the Son who is the Shepherd of the flock. If indeed Scripture is the site wherein the Son has revealed the Father by the Spirit, then truly the church must look to the written word to learn of and participate in the Triune life. This is not to deny the prominent place that the Eucharist and baptism hold in Cyril's theology, but it is to emphasize that alongside these two Scripture also stands as indispensable.

For Cyril, if the Son has indeed given Scripture to the church for its nourishment, and if the Son himself is the source of the church's redeemed life, then nothing less than a Christological reading of Scripture will suffice for Scripture to achieve its divinely intended goal within the church. Moreover, this Christological reading occupies a distinctly ecclesial and Trinitarian location. Specifically, the Christological interpretation of Scripture is impossible apart from the illumination by the Spirit received in baptism and catechesis. As the Spirit dwells within

7. Conclusion:
'The Whirlwind is in the Thorn Tree'

believers, he directs their attention to the Only-begotten Son, who is the church's truest blessing, that they might confess him as consubstantial with the Father and truly incarnate. This emphasis in Cyril's theology highlights just how far removed he is from the understanding of exegesis that reigned during the modern period and that still holds sway in some quarters. He can conceive of no independent or neutral standpoint from which to examine objectively the text of Scripture. Rather, he inevitably thinks of the interpretive task in theological terms, beginning with the church's confession of faith and moving on towards a fuller understanding of the Christological and Trinitarian mystery through an encounter with the inspired word. Through such an encounter, the believer participates in the Son and receives from him the divine life that sustains him unto eternity. This ongoing process of exegesis continues until the final vision of the divine in eternity, when the types, riddles, and parables of Scripture will no longer be needed, since there the Son will teach the church about the Father, when the infirmities of human existence and understanding are finally overcome. Until that Trinitarian vision, Scripture remains indispensable to the church's knowledge of and participation in the Triune life. In other words, Scripture and exegesis follow the pattern that characterizes Cyril's entire understanding of the redemptive economy, namely, that humanity ascends to the Father through the Son in the Spirit.

This situating of the practice of exegesis within a Trinitarian understanding of revelation and human redemption is Cyril's most significant contribution to the tradition of patristic exegesis. Throughout the thesis I have endeavored to show how specific elements of his theology were present within the prior tradition. In fact, nearly all of the features I have considered in the preceding chapters had been suggested by earlier authors. The most original aspect of Cyril's theology to emerge from this study is his argument for the centrality of the gospels. This basic point had long been a part of the tradition, at least as early as Origen, but no one had grounded this assertion in the incarnation as did Cyril. Broadly speaking, it was his unitive Christology of the hypostatic union that was Cyril's most significant achievement, so it is to be expected that the most original aspect of his theology of Scripture should be tied to his understanding of the incarnate Son. Even with this point, however, he was drawing upon and developing the insights of earlier authors like Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Apollinarian corpus, just as in his understanding of Trinitarian agency he was likely relying upon Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Didymus.

7. Conclusion:
'The Whirlwind is in the Thorn Tree'

In light of his indebtedness to the prior tradition, perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Cyril's theology is precisely the manner in which he takes up these disparate elements and systematizes them, applying them across all aspects of theological reflection, resulting in a profoundly integrated and coherent intellectual enterprise.¹² Cyril's robustly theological understanding of Scripture and exegesis is itself a contribution to the church's tradition. Others had offered similarly rich reflections on the nature and role of Scripture, most notably Origen two centuries prior to Cyril. However, it might not be overstating the case to suggest that no one in the east since Origen (at least in our extant sources) had offered such a richly theological and well-defined conception of Scripture and exegesis, and certainly no one with the possible exception of Augustine had so integrated pro-Nicene theology into an understanding of revelation, inspiration, and exegesis.¹³

Further avenues of research suggest themselves. In this thesis I have confined the investigation to the theological context within which Cyril carried out exegesis, and have largely ignored commenting on his actual exegetical methodology. To give just one example, a subsequent investigation might explore whether Cyril's actual reading practices, derived from late antique grammatical and rhetorical conventions, actually are in keeping with the theological context presented here. As such, I present this thesis as but the first stage to much work that remains to be done on his interpretation of the Bible. Nevertheless, I suggest that any attempt to account for Cyril's interpretation of Scripture will be impoverished to the degree that it neglects attention to his own properly theological understanding of Scripture and exegesis.

The renewed interest in patristic exegesis that emerged in a handful of authors in the mid-twentieth century, and that has grown considerably since then, is a promising sign. Christian exegetes and theologians across a range of confessional traditions are now engaged in a variety of *ressourcement*-like projects.¹⁴ I suggest that one contribution patristic exegetical theology might make to this ongoing discussion is its awareness that interpretation is always inherently

¹² Against Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis*, trans. John A. Hughes (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 82-3, who characterizes Cyril's Old Testament exegesis as lacking the 'wholeness and compactness typical of the best Alexandrian tradition', and who describes his New Testament exegesis as 'display[ing] something desultory and casual'.

¹³ Considering the continuities and discontinuities between the approach of Cyril and Augustine might be a promising project for future study.

¹⁴ For two recent proposals for contemporary appropriation of patristic exegesis, see Louth, *Discerning the Mystery*, 96-131; Robert L. Wilken, 'In Defense of Allegory', *Modern Theology* 14 (1998): 197-212.

7. Conclusion:
'The Whirlwind is in the Thorn Tree'

theological, and good interpretation should include self-conscious attention to theological presuppositions.¹⁵ As I have attempted to show in this study, Cyril's theology and exegesis hang together as a coherent whole, in that his exegesis of Scripture was in keeping with his understanding of what Scripture actually was. If I may be permitted for a moment to make a broad, sweeping generalization, biblical exegesis in the 'modern' period was undertaken often with little or no theological reflection on the nature of Scripture. Indeed, the idea of 'objective' or 'scientific' biblical exegesis almost demands such an approach, since it requires one to divest oneself of all prejudices and presuppositions. For Christians who still wish to lay claim to the pro-Nicene theological tradition, such fragmentation is unsustainable, since the pro-Nicene project was not simply to deduce a number of theological propositions from Scripture, but rather to envision a thoroughly Trinitarian account of the divine and of humanity's relationship to it. What Cyril presents, therefore, is an attempt to integrate pro-Nicene Trinitarianism with a theology of revelation and exegesis. Modern Nicene Christians may decide not to follow Cyril in some of the specifics of his approach, but some such integration is inescapable for those who wish to be heirs of Nicaea.

¹⁵ Cf. Lewis Ayres, 'On the Practice and Teaching of Christian Doctrine', *Gr 80* (1999): 54: 'The sort of methods which one thinks appropriate in the reading of canonical Scripture should be, for the sake of coherence, consonant with the sort of thing that one takes the canon to be'. Such coherence is to be preferred to the 'dissociation of sensibility' that marks much modern exegesis and theology (Louth, *Discerning the Mystery*, ch. 1).

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