Beyond 400
Exploring Baptist Futures

EDITED BY
David J. Cohen
and Michael Parsons

PICKWICK Publications · Eugene, Oregon
Cyprian and *The Pilgrim's Progress*

EDWINA MURPHY

Introduction

I would like to introduce or perhaps re-acquaint you with two prominent Christians in the history of the church. Cyprian was the bishop of Carthage in the mid-third century and is perhaps best known for his views on the unity of the church and the impossibility of salvation for those outside it. Born sometime between 200 and 210, he was a man of considerable property and wealth, most likely inherited.¹ He became a Christian in middle age under the influence of the aged presbyter Caecilianus.² Echoes of his prior career as a *rhetor* remained in his skillful use of words.³ Within few enough years to be still regarded a neophyte, and possibly not even previously appointed as a presbyter, Cyprian be-

1. The birth date is arrived at by working backwards from Pontius's assertion that he was well established in his profession by the time of his conversion, and that neither Cyprian nor Pontius felt it necessary to defend his age as inappropriate to his appointment. See Sage, *Cyprian*, 103–7; Clarke, *Letters*, 1:14–15.


3. One may note, however, a change in style from *Ad Donatum*, with its somewhat overblown language, to a more restrained elegance in his later works. See Bardy, *Christian Latin Literature*, 41–45.
came bishop of Carthage in 248 or 249. His election owed much to the support of the laity, and being opposed by a group of presbyters.

John Bunyan was a dissenting preacher in seventeenth-century England who repudiated the established church, identifying himself as a Baptist. Born in November 1628 in Elstow, Bedford, he became, as his father had been, a tinker or brazier. He had managed to gain but a rudimentary education. Despised both for his lowly status and for his religious views (which some feared were also seditious), his scoffing contemporaries could not have imagined that one of the classic works of English literature would come from his pen.

Thus far, the two men would seem to have nothing in common except the designation “Christian.” Yet for all the differences of time and

4. Pontius, *Vita Cypriana*. The dating of Cyprian’s baptism and whether or not he was appointed as a presbyter remains unclear. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 67, believes he was a presbyter, albeit briefly. In support for his belief that Cyprian was first ordained as a presbyter, Sage, in *Cyprian*, 135n3, quotes Pontius, *Vita Cypriana* 3.3: “presbyterium vel sacerdotium statim acceptit.” But see the discussion of this phrase by Bobertz (“Cyprian,” 97), who considers that Cyprian had an “immediate rise from novice to bishop.” Burns, *Cyprian*, 16, 189n49, depicts Cyprian as being chosen by the people as bishop “without his having passed through the lower clerical ranks,” making reference to Pontius, *Vita Cypriana*. Eusebius’s account is found in *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.29.2–4. The date for his appointment as bishop is based on Cyprian’s defense of his ministry in *Ep.* 59.6.1 (dated 252; see Clarke, *Letters*, 1:235–36). He states that “he has been held in esteem by his people for four years now as bishop.” As Sage (*Cyprian*, 138) notes, “The quadrennium in the Roman system of counting could signify any period from three years and a day to four years less a day.”

5. Pontius, *Vita Cypriana*.


7. See Wakefield, *Bunyan*, 6. He described his family’s background in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*: “For my descent then, it was, as is well known by many, of a low and incon siderable generation; my father’s house being of that rank that is meanest, and most despised of all the families in the land” (17). This had not always been the case, however, but was the result of the family’s decline from being landowners several generations earlier to living in one of the “humbler abodes in Elstow.” See Greaves, *Glimpses*, 3–4.


9. Hill, *Turbulent, Seditious and Factious People*, 107, writes, “For the Bedfordshire gentry Bunyan’s preaching, even if it did not directly incite to rebellion, fanned the discontent that many felt with the restored regime and church. Subjectively, Bunyan could honestly deny subversive intentions. Objectively, his refusal to promise not to preach was threatening. The very claim that preaching was his vocation was subversive; his vocation was being a tinker.” See also, Hill, “John Bunyan,” 13.
place, status and polity, Bunyan and Cyprian have a very strong, if at first glance unexpected, common understanding of what the Christian life entails. At the most fundamental level, this is because Bunyan and Cyprian were men of one and the same book. Despite his excellent education and prior career, Cyprian gave up almost all classical allusions and replaced them with the biblical text. Bunyan, perhaps with less opportunity to do otherwise, liked to boast that his learning came from the Bible rather than classical sources. Given that he was influenced by a number of authors, however, we should not take his claims of sola Scriptura to extremes. Galen correctly states the case: “Bunyan recognized the value of Christian tradition, though he refused to grant it equal authority alongside the Bible.” In terms of wealth there was again an arrival at a similar position from different directions. Bunyan was poor by birth, whereas Cyprian demonstrated his commitment to his new faith by selling his property and giving it to the poor, although Pontius tells us that his horti were restored to him by the indulgence of God and he remained a person of substantial means.

However, the factor that produces such harmony in the views of two such different men, and distinguishes them from any number of other faithful Christians with whom they share common ground on the first two points, is that both belonged to an essentially gathered church that was not looked upon with favor by the state. Greaves’s statement regarding Bunyan could equally be applied to Cyprian:

For Bunyan, as for his pilgrims, the world is the battleground between good and evil, light and darkness. Ostensibly, he restricted militancy to the spiritual realm, but his willingness to stand firm regardless of penal statutes and persecutory acts was by nature a political as well as a religious act in a society whose rulers claimed and exercised the power to compel obedience to their view of right religion.

10. As Clarke, Letters, 1:17, notes: “This can only be the result of conscious rejection and restriction.” For a detailed account of Cyprian’s use of Scripture, see Fahey, Cyprian.
14. Pontius, Vita Cypriana 2.7; 15.1. From his place of withdrawal he was able to send his own funds to assist those in need. See Epp. 7.2; 13.7.
15. Greaves, Glimpses, 250.
Both men knew what it was to live out faith in a hostile world, and they were alert to the dangers that must be faced and overcome in order to achieve the promised hope. The decade of Cyprian’s episcopacy in Carthage, which ended with his martyrdom in 258, was a turbulent period for the North African church. The Decian persecution, schisms, and plague raised questions regarding the identity of the community, its place within imperial society, and God’s control of history. As bishop, it was Cyprian’s responsibility to provide answers, thereby uniting his flock and keeping them on the path to salvation. Likewise, Bunyan was a preacher and pastor who lived in a time when those who desired to worship according to their conscience rather than the dictates of the established church were liable to be persecuted by the state. Whilst not imitating Cyprian’s martyrdom, Bunyan did suffer twelve years of imprisonment.

During his imprisonment, one means by which Bunyan sought to stimulate people to embark on the journey of faith, and having begun, to persevere, was through his most famous work, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. By examining the events in part 1 of the work and comparing them with Cyprian’s letters and treatises, the similarities between Bunyan and Cyprian in their understanding of the nature of this world, the trials and victories of Christian life, martyrdom, the dangers of wealth, death, and the hope of the life to come will become apparent. Their summary of the terrain may provide invaluable assistance for us in our own pilgrimages.

16. Hill, *Turbulent, Seditious*, 109. Bunyan did consider that he might be put to death, he and struggled for many weeks, questioning whether he could die with courage and whether in the end he would indeed be saved, until he came to a realization “that it was for the word and way of God that I was in this condition, wherefore I was engaged not to flinch an hair’s breadth from it. . . . I am for going on, and venturing my eternal state with Christ, whether I have comfort here or no” (Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, 177–79).


18. In restricting the discussion to a more manageable text, I am not intending to discount the unity of the two parts, nor the significant reinterpretation of some events in the first part in light of the second. For more on the relationship between the two, see Austin, “Figural Logic.”
Following Christ

Bunyan and Cyprian shared a conviction that following Christ means relinquishing this world, a world under judgment. Christian's birthplace is the City of Destruction, signifying, as Stranahan notes, "the realm in which all persons begin their earthly lives," a city that "will be burned with fire from Heaven." To leave, therefore, represents no enduring sacrifice, given that ahead lies "Life! Life! Eternal Life!" Understanding this, Christian responds to the concern of Obstinate for the loss of friends and comforts with the assurance that "all which you shall forsake is not worthy to be compared with a little of that, that I am seeking to enjoy." The Interpreter similarly shows a picture to Christian in which a man has "the World as cast behind him, and . . . a Crown hangs over his head" to demonstrate "that slighting and despising things that are present, for the love that he hath to his Master's service, he is sure in the World that comes next, to have Glory for his reward.

Whilst Cyprian makes use of pagan commonplaces regarding the old age of the world and its coming end in his apologetics, he sees God's action above all. He warns concerning the inexorable "day of judgment which Holy Scripture announces saying: 'Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is near: it shall come as a destruction from the Lord.'" Cyprian presents hope, as does Bunyan, in the context of a lack of hope in this world. In *Ad Donatum*, one of his earliest works, Cyprian demonstrates

22. Ibid., 5.
23. Ibid., 25–26. The Interpreter also shows Christian two children, Passion and Patience, with the lesson understood by Christian to be that "it is not best to covet things that are now, but to wait for things to come." The Interpreter affirms him, "For the things that are seen are Temporal; but the things that are not seen are Eternal," Ibid., 27–29.
24. Most fully in *Ad Demetrianum* 3–5. Daniélov, *History of Early Christian Doctrine*, 3.253, among others, has noted Cyprian's use of natural reasoning in this apologetic work rather than the scriptural argument which he employs when addressing Christians. Other references to the "decline" of the world are to be found in *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate* 16 and *Epp.* 58.2.1; 67.7. Cyprian is at variance with the ancient traditions in that, as Castagna, "Vecchiaia e morte," 252n23, notes, "in Cyprian, the old age of the world is laden with implications of hope, not of pessimism."
Edwina Murphy Cyprian and The Pilgrim’s Progress
to his friend the corruption of the world with the goal that he will “re-
joice with greater joy that [he has] escaped from it.”26 Even prior to the
threat of persecution, Cyprian emphasizes that the Christian hope lies
outside the natural realm. True security is to be “released from the snares
of the entangling world, to be purged of the dregs of earth for the light
of immortality.”27 The dichotomy between the temporal and the eternal
is never far from his thoughts.

However, one is not translated from this world to the world
to come, from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, in an in-
stant. The journey that must be undertaken forms the substance of The
Pilgrim’s Progress.28 There are many trials the pilgrim must overcome.29
Of the three figurative meanings of “the Way” that Stranahan identifies,
the one most similar to Cyprian’s understanding is that which represents
the “proper and necessary conduct of a Christian: those who leave it
for other roads, or who take short cuts to enter on it, never attain the
Christian's reward.”30

If the Christian life is a pilgrimage, it is one in which there are
many battles to be fought. Christian meets with the fiend Apollyon in
the Valley of Humiliation, from whom he is tempted to turn and flee, but
considering “he had no Armour for his back” engages in the contest.31
Despite almost being slain by his enemy’s accusations, he overcomes
him and quotes, “Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors,
through him that loved us.”32 So, too, he passes through the Valley of the
Shadow of Death in the dark, with a Ditch on one hand and a Mire on

26. It may be his first, as Jean Molager, Cyprien, 12, suggests: “[The] Quod idola is
probably not by him, and the Ad Quirinum does not appear to be prior to it. . . . [I]t is
the first of Cyprian’s truly original treatises.” It is usually dated to soon after his conver-
sion. See Sage, Cyprian, 380; Cyprian Don. 6. Estimates therefore vary from 246 to 248.
29. Hill, Turbulent, Seditious, 201–9, summarizes the discussion regarding possible
antecedents for The Pilgrim’s Progress. Stranahan, “Bunyan,” 280, believes that Bunyan’s
primary written source was Hebrews 11–12.
30. The other two are the span of a Christian’s life and the “unchanging sequence
of religious experiences that must be encountered by Christians in the present state of
things . . . though as individuals they may have different adventures along the Way”
(Stranahan, “Bunyan,” 289).
31. Bunyan, Pilgrim’s Progress, 58.
32. Ibid., 63, quoting Rom 8:37.
the other, emphasizing the narrowness of the Way. Fiends threaten to assault him, and it is only when he cries out, "I will walk in the Strength of the Lord God" that he is free from them.

When Evangelist again meets with Christian and Faithful on the road and hears the story of their travels so far, he is glad "not that you met with Trials, but that you have been Victors, and for that you have (notwithstanding many weaknesses) continued in the way to this very day." The overwhelming necessity of staying in the Way is again demonstrated when, finding it becoming rough, Christian disregards Hopeful's concern and decides to leave it for a more pleasant path that appears to be going in the same direction. This episode results in their imprisonment in Doubting Castle, owned by the giant Despair. Here they almost lose all hope until, after a night of prayer, Christian remembers that he has the key of Promise with which they gain their liberty. As Furlong notes,

Whatever [Christian's] weaknesses, however, he is a man armed with one important piece of knowledge; life as he used to live it is no longer tolerable, and the only remedy is to persevere in his difficult journey.

Throughout, Christ is both the entrance to the Way and the means by which the pilgrim gains victory. It is his promises that provide the pilgrim liberty and it is hope in him that sustains Christian in his quest for a glorious eternity in his presence.

This perseverance in hope is a central theme for Cyprian. The one who endures to the end will be saved. The bishop expounds upon Romans 8:24–25:

33. Ibid., 66.
34. Ibid., 67–68.
35. Ibid., 96.
36. "The Pilgrims now, to gratify the Flesh/Will seek its Ease; but, oh! how they afresh/Do thereby plunge themselves new Griefs into/Who seek to please the Flesh, themselves undo" (ibid., 128).
37. Ibid., 125–35.
38. Furlong, Puritan's Progress, 106.
40. Matt 10:22b, cited six times by Cyprian with slight variations in the wording (Farhey, Cyprian, 296–97).
We must endure and persevere, beloved brethren, so that, having been admitted to the hope of truth and liberty, we can finally attain that same truth and liberty, because the very fact that we are Christians is a source [res] of faith and hope. However, in order that hope and faith may reach their fruition, there is need of patience. For we do not strive for present glory, but for a future one, according to what Paul the Apostle teaches, saying, “For in hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is not hope. For how can a man hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” Patient waiting is necessary that we may fulfill what we have begun to be, and through God’s help, that we may attain what we hope for and believe.41

Here Cyprian’s strong orientation to the future, noted by Studer, is clearly discernable.42 Hope is reliant upon patience to bring it to its fulfillment, but that same hope of glory is what provides the Christian with the ongoing motivation to endure. This patience is not only a passive virtue, but an active one, as may be seen from the following.43

It is patience that both commends us to God and saves us for God. . . . It is this patience which strongly fortifies the foundations of our faith. It is this patience which sublimely promotes the growth of hope. It directs our action, so that we can keep to the way of Christ while we make progress because of his forbearance. It ensures our perseverance as sons of God while we imitate the patience of the Father.44

The importance of ecclesial discipline to Cyprian has been widely acknowledged, but the essential link between “keeping to the way of Christ” and hope has been frequently overlooked.45 He advises a fellow bishop,

Accordingly, our dearest brother, you must ensure that the unruly do not die or perish, by guiding the brethren, as best you

41. *De bono patientiae* 13; see also 21.
42. Studer, “Hoffnung,” 1211.
44. *Pat.* 20.
45. Clarke, “Two Mid-Third Century Bishops,” 321, says that “Disciplina is this man’s favoured word (collapsing doctrinal teaching, church regulation and order, and moral duty).” Dunn, “Infected Sheep,” 20, suggests that “The questions of discipline and of maintaining the integrity of the community in the face of both external and internal threats were the primary focus of Cyprian’s episcopal activities.”
can, with saving advice and by taking counsel for the salvation of each individually. Straight and narrow is the way by which we enter into life, but great, exceedingly great is our reward when we reach glory.46

The maintenance of discipline is not an end in itself, but is always presented as a means of achieving the glorious hope to which Christians have been called.

In the often threatening world in which Bunyan and Cyprian lived, the dangers faced were not only metaphorical; martyrdom was a real possibility. In seeking to motivate pilgrims to remain steadfast, their language is at times almost identical. When Evangelist meets with Christian and Faithful on the road, he encourages them,

The Crown is before you, and it is an incorruptible one; so run, that you may obtain it. . . . Hold fast therefore that you have, let no man take your Crown. . . . Let the Kingdom be always before you, and believe steadfastly concerning things that are invisible . . . set your faces like a flint; you have all power in Heaven and Earth on your side.47

He warns them that they are about to reach Vanity Fair, where

[One] or both of you must seal the testimony which you hold, with Blood; but be you faithful unto Death, and the King will give you a Crown of Life. He that shall die there, although his death will be unnatural, and his pains perhaps great, he will yet have the better of his fellow; not only because he will be arrived at the Celestial City soonest, but because he will escape many miseries that the other will meet with in the rest of his Journey.48

As predicted, Faithful is tried and sentenced to a cruel death, but is immediately taken by a waiting chariot “the clouds with Sound of Trumpet, the nearest way to the Celestial Gate.”49 Christian, however, is remanded back to prison and then escapes, the song on his lips honoring his companion’s profession and contrasting Faithful’s immortality with the punishment destined for his persecutors.50

46. Ep 4.5.1. See also De habitu virginum 1; De dominica oratione 1.
47. Bunyan, Pilgrim’s Progress, 96.
48. Ibid., 97.
49. Ibid., 109.
50. Ibid., 110.
As Bunyan used the term “crown” to designate what is the martyr’s due, so it is Cyprian’s favored way of describing the rewards awaiting those who confess their faith, drawing on Paul’s language of the arena.

This is the contest of our faith, wherein we do battle, wherein we conquer, wherein we are crowned. This is the contest which the blessed Apostle Paul has also revealed to us, the contest in which we are to run and to attain to a crown of glory. “Do you not know,” he says, “that of those who run in a race, all indeed run but only one receives the palm. So run that you may win it. In their case their object is to receive a corruptible crown, but ours an incorruptible.”

Martyrs are not alone in their struggles, however, for Christ wrestles within his servants. “He joins battle Himself, in the blows of our contest He Himself both gives and wins the crowns.”

In Epistle 58, his letter to the laity in Thibaris written around May 253, there is a heightened apocalyptic mood. There is a clear sense that the final battle is approaching, and Cyprian uses all his considerable powers to motivate his brethren to withstand the assault. At such a time “we should have no thoughts other than for the glories of eternal life and the crown that is won by confessing the Lord.” It is a matter for rejoicing “for it is when persecutions come that the crowns of faith are awarded, that the soldiers of God are tested, and that the heavens stand open for the martyred.” As Christian’s song suggested, a time is coming when the present order will be reversed. Martyrs will reign with Christ and judge those who are currently putting them to death.

51. Ep. 10.4.2–3, quoting 1 Cor 9:24–25, omitting verse 25a. See Epp. 6.1.2; 6.3.1; 6.4.

52. Ep. 10.4.4. Such rewards are, however, reserved for those who, like Abel, have “both the justice and peace of the Lord.” The “discordant and dissident” shall not gain entry into the kingdom of heaven, even if they have been slain for the name, reflecting Cyprian’s emphasis on the unity of the church, which is sustained by charity (Dom. or. 24, quoting 1 John 3:15).


54. Ep. 58.1.2.

55. Ep. 58.3.1. Such rewards are available to all those who have stood fast in their confession, regardless of the direct cause of their death (Ep. 58.4.2).

56. Ad Fortunatum 13. This element is also present in the words of the Shining Ones as they escort the pilgrims to the Celestial City. “When [the King of Glory] shall come with Sound of Trumpet in the Clouds, as upon the wings of the Wind, you shall come with him; and when he shall sit upon the Throne of Judgment, you shall sit by him; yea,
In another inversion of worldly values, *The Pilgrim's Progress* displays what we might call “God's preferential option for the poor”—wealth is depicted as an impediment to salvation. As Hill notes, “Undesirable characters in *The Pilgrim's Progress* . . . are almost obsessively labelled as lords and ladies, gentlemen and gentlewomen.” In one demonstration of this, Christian and Hopeful (converted by the witness of Christian and Faithful in *Vanity Fair*) are joined by By-ends of Fair Speech, who claims to

differ in Religion from those of a stricter sort, yet but in two small points: First, We never strive against Wind and Tide. Secondly, We are always most zealous when Religion goes in his Silver Slippers; we love much to walk with him in the street, if the Sun shines and the People applaud him.

This attitude is all the more stark for its juxtaposition with the pillorying of the pilgrims in *Vanity Fair*, where Faithful has given his life for his faith. Christian proclaims,

If you will go with us, you must go against Wind and Tide; the which, I perceive, is against your opinion: You must also own Religion in his Rags as well as when in his Silver Slippers; and stand by him too when bound in Irons, as well as when he walketh the streets with Applause.

Such a commitment is rejected by By-ends, and unsurprisingly it is not long before he and his companions are lured by Demas and the promise of riches and perish from the Way. Christian and Hopeful, having avoided the danger, then see the “Pillar of Salt into which Lot's wife was turned, for her looking back with a *covetous heart*, while she was going from Sodom for safety.”

and when he shall pass Sentence upon all the workers of Iniquity, let them be angels or men; you also shall have a voice in that Judgment, because they were his and your Enemies” (Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, 185).


60. “By-ends and Silver Demas both agree; One calls, the other runs, that he may be/ A Sharer in his Lucre, so these two/Take up in this World, and no further go” (ibid., 122). As Sharrock, *John Bunyan*, 85, notes, “Demas is chosen as the symbol of covetousness because of St. Paul's words about him (‘Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world; 2 Tim 4:10’).”

It is perhaps unsurprising that a man of humble circumstances such as Bunyan would believe wealth to be a danger to faith, but a similar attitude is held by Cyprian, one of the privileged few of his society. In *De lapsis* he identifies the attachment of the rich to their riches as the cause of their failure to confess, and declares that if they had followed the Lord’s admonition to “sell all thou hast and give to the poor” they would have been able to be overcome, since their treasure—and heart—would have been in heaven. He further elaborates on this theme, dwelling on the rich compensation that will be received in return for the “small, insignificant losses of this world.” Those who leave property or family for the sake of the kingdom of God will receive “seven times more in the present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.” Such losses are not to be feared, but rather desired, because of the great heavenly reward. Furthermore, these treasures are eternal and free from the potential of loss or damage which may be suffered by those on earth. Cyprian urges his flock not to increase their patrimony to the detriment of their standing before God, but to go into partnership with Christ in their earthly possessions, that they may be made co-heirs of his heavenly kingdom.

When Christian and Hopeful arrive at the River separating this world from the next, Death is presented as an unavoidable part of the journey. Christian suffers from the doubts that have plagued him at various times throughout his journey and is almost overcome, but as he is encouraged by Hopeful and, again, recalls the promises of God, he makes his way across.

Cyprian wrote *De mortalitate* in 252 or 253 to exhort his congregation during the plague that was ravaging Carthage. In it, as Scourfield
notes, he presents death as something “positive and advantageous.”\textsuperscript{71} Cyprian does not so much console those who have lost loved ones, as emphasize the advantages of death as a means whereby the Christian is freed from the devil, the storms of the world, and temptations of the flesh to join Christ and those who have gone before in the heavenly kingdom.\textsuperscript{72} To die is to “pass by death to immortality,”\textsuperscript{73} so one should not fear death but rather dwell on the immortality which follows.\textsuperscript{74} This is not true only in this work, but is a constant theme in all his writings. To be summoned from this world is to enter paradise and the kingdom.\textsuperscript{75} All the faithful will join the martyrs in living and reigning with Christ.\textsuperscript{76} To die is to be reunited with dear ones (parents, brothers, children) who await us, and to enter into “the highest possible and everlasting happiness,” celebrating eternity with all the faithful—apostles, prophets, martyrs, virgins, and the merciful.\textsuperscript{77}

The Shining Ones present a similar vision to the pilgrims as they ascend the hill beyond the River. In a fairly traditional account,\textsuperscript{78} a distinctive note is that “the joys of the city are a relief from suffering—both from the fear of death and judgment that causes the pilgrims to flee from the City of Destruction, and from the perils that they encounter along

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 15.
\textsuperscript{72} Mort. 3, 4, 22, 26.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 24. See also Don. 14. “[Now] the things of heaven are succeeding those of earth, and great things small, and eternal things, transitory. What place is there here for anxiety and worry? Who in the midst of these things is fearful and sad save he who lacks hope and faith? (Mort. 2).
\textsuperscript{75} Mort. 18, 26. See Hill, Regnum Caelorum, 145. In reflecting on the hours of prayer, Cyprian gives an insight into his vision of the future of the believers in the kingdom, in which there will be “day alone without the intervention of night.” He calls on those “who by the indulgence of God have been recreated spiritually and reborn” to imitate what they are destined to be, not ceasing here also to pray and to give thanks (Dom. or. 36). As Hamman, “Le rythme,” 172–73, says, by praying day and night “we repeat from here below our role in eternity. Vigilance gives prayer its eschatological dimension.”
\textsuperscript{76} Fort. 12. See also Mort. 2, 21. Daley, Hope of the Early Church, 42, correctly emphasizes the distinctiveness of Cyprian in this respect.
\textsuperscript{77} Mort. 26.
\textsuperscript{78} Angels, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Prophets all welcome the pilgrims to the Heavenly Jerusalem where they will wear Crowns of Gold and see the Holy One as he is. Bunyan, Pilgrim’s Progress, 184–88.
Edwina and

the way.” Further, Bunyan emphasizes “the reality of this transcendent community of the blessed who enjoy actual communion with God and express their joy in melodious praise.” As Greaves notes, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is predominately about sanctification.

This is not a period free of recurring struggle, doubt, and even despair. . . . From the moment of justification the believer does not experience perseverance as absolute certainty, but must resolve, as Evangelist tells Christian and Faithful, to run for the crown.

Temptations that may waylay the pilgrim seem to lie at every turn. One of the more subtle, and perhaps all the more dangerous for it, is that of conforming to “this world.” The Baptist ideal to which Bunyan bore witness was that of a holy community—men and women regenerated by grace and living in accordance with the hope to which they are called. Perhaps this is part of our heritage that needs to be reclaimed; to be distinguished by our growing conformity to Christ and alignment with his purposes for the world.

If for Bunyan the Christian life is a pilgrimage, for Cyprian it is a contest. This is not a matter for despair but a cause for rejoicing, as there is no crown without a victory, no victory without a preceding battle.

We may not confront the persecution that the North African church faced (and which is still a reality for many of our brothers and sisters around the world), but that does not mean we are not involved in a spiritual struggle. Every challenge of life is an opportunity for the Christian to respond in a way consistent with the gospel.

Peace also has its crown, by which we are crowned as the victor of many a varied combat, after the adversary has been laid low and subdued. To have overcome lust is the palm of continence. To have resisted wrath and injury is the crown of patience. Triumph over avarice is to spurn money. Praise of faith is to endure the adversities of the world by faith in the future. And he who is not

82. Ibid.
83. Mort. 12.
proud in prosperity obtains the glory of humility. And he who is inclined to the mercifulness of befriending the poor gains the retribution of a heavenly treasure. And he who knows not how to be jealous and, being of one mind and kind, loves his brethren, is honored with the reward of love and peace. We run daily in this contest of virtues; we arrive at these palms and crowns of justice without interruption of time.\textsuperscript{84}

We tend to be people who seek immediate gratification. Bunyan and Cyprian remind us that the Christian life is a matter of faith and hope. Following Christ and living in accordance with his commands will require us to make difficult decisions in everything—from how we spend our money to how we treat those who we feel have wronged us. The rewards are often not instantaneous, but if we persevere we will experience a reward far greater than we could hope for or imagine.

\textsuperscript{84} \textit{De zelo et livore} 16. Cf. \textit{Demetr.} 18: "But there is no grief from the attack of present evils for those who have confidence in future blessings."