

## Chapter Four: Working with God and the universe

### *Introduction*

We have discussed finding the true God of Otherness and Love by contemplation and through other persons who move us in a spiritual manner. As God is infinite relative to us, it is through the Spirit that we find God but it is also through the Spirit that we are able to work with God on the natural path and the direction and goal of that work must be in accordance with the divine Plan.

However, God does not force us to follow His Plan so working with God depends upon our own efforts but with the impediment of the lure of self-love. Working with God therefore requires a more detailed consideration.

### SECTION A. WORKING WITH GOD ACCORDING TO THE PATRISTIC TRADITION

#### *Acquiring the Spirit and the divine love*

We cannot work with God unless it is with the power of God's Spirit in our hearts. We would then become intimate with God and would share God's love. However, acquiring the Spirit would not be easy if neither the God of Otherness nor the God of Love have been found by contemplation. Nevertheless, St Pseudo-Macarius regarded anyone who 'lacks the divine and heavenly garment which is the power of the Spirit' as 'naked' and compares that person with Adam.<sup>1</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius also stated that, in that case, the human person 'struggles with great patience (so that) then the work of grace works perfectly in him.'<sup>2</sup> We should also 'beg God in order to seek the treasure of the Spirit.'<sup>3</sup> If the Spirit is found through prayer and a change of heart, He would then lead the person to the Truth. St Pseudo-Macarius therefore stated that 'the believer should beg God to be transformed ... by a change of heart.'<sup>4</sup> The Spirit is however the Spirit of Love and if we think we have acquired the Spirit but have no love, that 'spirit' would be false.

St Maximus stated that 'the one who ... always has humility as his companion ... is led to divine love.'<sup>5</sup> 'If someone (possesses) a humble reverence toward God because of the overpowering excellence of His limitless power ... he has become perfect in love.'<sup>6</sup> Prayer has many aspects but, according to St Pseudo-Macarius, the prayer that brings possession of the Spirit is the prayer of repentance (*metanoia*, *μετάνοια*) as he stated that those who 'immerse themselves in weeping' become 'enflamed by the Spirit.'<sup>7</sup> St Isaac stated that 'a perfectly humble (person is) deemed a sinner in his own eyes, (receives a) mysterious strength (that) the apostles received (in) fire.'<sup>8</sup> When the true God and true love is found, the soul of a person 'who loves God ... becomes the dwelling place of God in the Spirit.'<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 20; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 9; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 18.2; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 31; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 194.

<sup>5</sup> St Maximus, *Char* 1.48; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> St Maximus, *Thal* 10; PG 90, col. 289BC; trans. VB-CL, p. 329.

<sup>7</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 18.8; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 144.

<sup>8</sup> St Isaac of Nineveh, *Tract Myst* 82; trans. IN-TM, p. 387-88. Also Acts 2.1-4.

<sup>9</sup> St Maximus, *Gnost* 1.12; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 131.

Acquiring possession of the Spirit is the critical point because the Spirit will give power to work with God as we shall discuss.

Also important to the acquisition of the Spirit is the abandonment of will. St Pseudo-Macarius stated that ‘when a person surrenders to God... his mind and thoughts, ... the Lord makes him a sharer in his mysteries ... and (God) gives Himself as heavenly food and spiritual drink.’ He then described such food and drink as ‘heavenly fire.’<sup>10</sup> This abandonment of will is a form of self-emptying (*kenosis*, κένωσις),<sup>11</sup> a sacrifice of the whole self. Human persons may not be actual victims, although this may also result, but make a sacrifice in order to open their hearts towards God so His work can be done.

### *The spiritual life*

The ascent and descent:

Human persons have often regarded God as being above the universe<sup>12</sup> so that the natural path towards union with God is an ascent (*anabasis*, ανάβασις) just as Elijah and Christ ascended to heaven.<sup>13</sup> Descent (*katabasis*, κατάβασις) is associated with divine gifts.<sup>14</sup> The Incarnation can also be regarded as a descent from heaven. All our communications with God can be regarded in terms of ascent and descent as when we turn to God, He responds with His Spirit.

The defensive approach:

Working with God helps to develop a personal relationship with God and the universe but that relationship has to be maintained in order to overcome the difficulties of carrying out God’s will in a sometimes hostile world. Although the natural path is the norm, it is also the ideal and if we ‘violate (our) *logoi* ... out of negligence,’<sup>15</sup> we could fall into the unnatural state based on self-love. Therefore, because of human weakness, we also need a defensive approach to protect our relationship with both God and the universe.

The defensive approach is principally to continue all the measures taken to acquire possession of the Spirit. These measures will therefore include humility, repentance, and an abandonment of will as we have noted. St Pseudo-Macarius is realistic regarding the dangers of losing the Spirit and stated that ‘from time to time (we) bear ... diminishment in ... love for the Lord’<sup>16</sup> and ‘having received the grace of the Spirit (some) forget the need ... for humility of spirit (and) become complacent.’<sup>17</sup> He also stated that ‘at ... times, grace subsides and is clouded over.’<sup>18</sup> It is therefore paramount that we maintain possession of the Spirit. Ideally, one is ‘armed with the Spirit, quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one (with) the armour of the Spirit, (and will) advance to the battle line’<sup>19</sup> according to St Pseudo-Macarius.

Regarding maintenance of humility to God, St Antony of Egypt gives a stern warning by

<sup>10</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 14.3; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 106.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Rom 12.1: ‘Present your bodies as a living sacrifice’.

<sup>12</sup> E.g., Ps 122/123.1, Ps 138/139.8.

<sup>13</sup> 2 Kings 2.11, Acts 1.9-11.

<sup>14</sup> Acts 2.2-4. Also, Mt 3.16, Mk 1.10, Jn 1.32.

<sup>15</sup> St Maximus, *Amb* 7.26; PG 91, col. 1088B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 111.

<sup>16</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 10.1; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 88.

<sup>17</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 10.3; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 89.

<sup>18</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 8.5; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 82.

<sup>19</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 23.2; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 156.

stating that ‘if you do not have great humility throughout your heart, your soul (and) body, you cannot inherit the kingdom of God.’<sup>20</sup> Regarding the maintenance of continual prayer and repentance, St Maximus stated that ‘the one who prays ought never to halt his movement of sublime ascent towards God.’<sup>21</sup> St Maximus regarded repentance as a ‘foundation’<sup>22</sup> and stated that the ‘removal (of) sin comes about ... through repentance.’<sup>23</sup> He coupled it with unceasing prayer by stating that ‘continual prayer with tears (with a) constant calling upon God for help does not allow us ... to be arrogant toward others’<sup>24</sup> which would be the sin of self-love. St Isaac of Nineveh, a contemporary of St Maximus, also stated that ‘during every moment of the ... day, we stand in need of penitence.’<sup>25</sup> It is clear from the above that Saints Maximus and Isaac both propose continual repentance as opposed to occasional repentance for particular sins. Continual repentance is an enhanced form of humility to God which recognizes the infinite quality of the God of Otherness.

In the defensive approach, the person assumes that he or she has no merit thus recognizing his or her utter dependence upon God. St Pseudo-Macarius expresses this by stating that the one who ‘humbles himself before God (must) regard himself as unworthy.’<sup>26</sup> He also stated that ‘even though he may perform a thousand good works ... the person ... who loves God ... considers himself as having done nothing.’<sup>27</sup> St Maximus expressed this principle by stating that

for anyone who is arrogant to think he has reached the fulness of virtue would no longer seek the ultimate source from which beauty flows; he would limit the force of his longing to himself and exclude himself from reaching the final stage of salvation: God. But anyone who remains conscious of his own natural powerlessness in the good will not tire of running, with eyes fixed on the goal.<sup>28</sup>

Working with God in the progressive approach:

While the defensive approach is to retain possession of the Spirit, we acquire the Spirit so that we ‘may be *empowered* to walk in all His commands’<sup>29</sup> as we cannot move towards union with God without the power of the Spirit. When the Spirit is acquired, according to St Pseudo-Macarius, ‘one who has found and possesses within himself the heavenly treasure of the Spirit fulfills all (God’s) commands with a certain ease.’<sup>30</sup>

We would then be working with God as ‘instruments of the divine nature’<sup>31</sup> according to St Maximus. God and those with love would then be co-workers in the universe.<sup>32</sup> This is compatible with Pauline scriptures which state that ‘it is God who is at work in you, enabling

<sup>20</sup> St Antony of Egypt, *Ep.* 6; trans. Rubenson, p. 224.

<sup>21</sup> St Maximus, *Gnost* 2.18; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 151.

<sup>22</sup> St Maximus, *Char* 3.55; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 68.

<sup>23</sup> St Maximus, *Char* 2.41; PG 90; CWS-MC, p. 53.

<sup>24</sup> St Maximus, *Char* 3.87; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 73.

<sup>25</sup> St Isaac of Nineveh, *Tract Myst* 73; trans. IN-TM, p. 337.

<sup>26</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 41.3; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 217.

<sup>27</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 10; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 89.

<sup>28</sup> St Maximus, *Thal* 52; PG 90, col. 493D; trans. VB-CL, p. 151

<sup>29</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 18.2; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 142.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> St Maximus, *Amb* 7.26; PG 91, col. 1088B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 113 after 2 Pet 1.3-4.

<sup>32</sup> 1 Cor 3.9.

you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.<sup>33</sup> Movement along the natural path would be by God working *through* parts of the universe so they ‘participate in God.’<sup>34</sup> This is compatible with fact that God is infinitely greater than the human person.

*Kenosis* as the linking element of the defensive and progressive approaches:

According to scripture, in everyday life we offer ourselves ‘as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God’<sup>35</sup> so we can work with God in His task to bring all things into union with Him. While *kenosis* is defensive because it is a negation of self, it also looks towards what will be accomplished for God in a progressive manner. One purpose of the abandonment of will in the progressive approach is that by ‘eliminating any wish that might contravene His will,’<sup>36</sup> we can work with Him. St Pseudo-Macarius stated that ‘he who ... gives up ... all earthly glory ... and looks to heavenly honour ... must deny his ... will (in order to be) in harmony (with) God’s will.’<sup>37</sup> St Maximus warned that we should not therefore be in a state of ‘trusting foolishly in our own strength.’<sup>38</sup> Therefore for God to work through a person, it has be God’s power which has priority over that of the person so that the person effectively becomes a slave to God.

St Maximus also stated that ‘those who can say “look, we have left everything and followed You” ... receive *power* to imitate Him and to do well in all His commandments.’<sup>39</sup> The aim of the abandonment of will is therefore not just to remove impediments to working with God but to receive power from God’s Spirit to do His will.

Coupling the defensive and progressive approaches:

It is important to discuss how the defensive and progressive approaches are combined in practice. Following scripture, St Maximus stated that the Apostle prayed without ceasing<sup>40</sup> but this does not mean praying while doing nothing else. The openness to God while working with Him, St Maximus terms ‘natural contemplation.’ St Maximus described ‘spiritual contemplation’ as an ‘active way’ which maintains ‘liberation from the passions.’<sup>41</sup> Sherwood in discussing St Maximus takes the view that ‘natural contemplation’<sup>42</sup> is an everyday contemplation as it is turned not merely to God but ‘turned towards things.’<sup>43</sup> This is in contrast to a contemplation to discover the God of Otherness and the God of Love. As ‘natural contemplation’ is coupled with regard for earthly things, it is more kataphatic than its deeper counterpart.

St Maximus often addressed fellow monks in his writings but the openness to God at all times mentioned above is applicable to everyone. St Pseudo-Macarius confirmed this by stating that ‘all we do (should) be to God’s glory ... whether eating, drinking, resting, talking or anything else.’<sup>44</sup> St Maximus stated that ‘one ... should look to God in *everything* (one)

<sup>33</sup> Phil 2.13.

<sup>34</sup> St Maximus, *Amb* 7.16; PG 91, col. 1080B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 97.

<sup>35</sup> After Rom 12.1. Also, 1 Pet 2.5.

<sup>36</sup> St Maximus, *Amb* 7.11; PG 91, col. 1076B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 89.

<sup>37</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *The Great Letter*, Detachment; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 260.

<sup>38</sup> St Maximus, *Char* 3.87; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 73.

<sup>39</sup> St Maximus, *Lib Asc* 3; PG 90; trans. ACW-MC, p. 105 and Mt 19.27.

<sup>40</sup> 1 Thess 5.17, quoted by St Maximus, *Lib Asc* 25, 26; PG 90; trans. ACW-MC, p. 117.

<sup>41</sup> St Maximus, *Char* 2.5; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 47.

<sup>42</sup> St Maximus, *Myst* 23; PG 91; trans. CWS-MC, p. 204; Also *Myst* 24; CWS-MC, p. 210.

<sup>43</sup> Polycarp Sherwood, *St Maximus the Confessor* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1955), p. 89.

<sup>44</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *The Great Letter*; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 264.

does.<sup>45</sup> The openness to God at all times therefore applies during both good works and the mundane. When a younger monk asks St Maximus how can one pray without ceasing,<sup>46</sup> St Maximus made it clear to him that continuous prayer is not interrupted by ‘activity’ nor ‘tribulations’ and states that ‘unceasing prayer (is) to keep the mind in great reverence and attached to God by desire ... in our activity.’<sup>47</sup> This implies that when God is in mind when engaged in an activity, God becomes involved in that activity. Similarly, St Isaac of Nineveh stated:

When the Spirit takes its dwelling place in a man he does not cease to pray, because the Spirit will constantly pray in him. Then, neither when he sleeps, nor when he is awake, will prayer be cut off from his soul; but when he eats and when he drinks, when he lies down or when he does any work, even when he is immersed in sleep, the perfumes of prayer will breathe in his soul spontaneously. And henceforth he will not possess prayer at limited times, but always; and when he has had outward rest, even then prayer is ministered unto him secretly.<sup>48</sup>

We conclude that God cannot work through a human person unless that person has an openness to God which acknowledges that God is infinitely greater than a human person because of His otherness and that He relates to the universe with infinite love.

### *The cosmic aspect of the spiritual life*

The defensive approach:

The defensive approach safeguards the position of a human person on the natural path through humility and repentance to God. While humility and repentance to God is personal, it also has a cosmic aspect. We cannot show humility to God but turn our backs on creatures and things which God loves. Accordingly, St Maximus stated that one should ‘through humility regard ... the envious person ... as above yourself (in order) to check your own envy’<sup>49</sup> showing that humility to *all things* helps with one’s self-control. St Pseudo-Macarius stated that ‘let him strive to show humility before every person and to consider himself the least and the worst.’<sup>50</sup> St Pseudo-Dionysius also stated that the person should assume that not only is there always sin to be repented but he or she is also the worst sinner in the universe.<sup>51</sup>

Human persons should therefore ‘mourn for (not only) for themselves (but for) the whole race because (humankind) is one’ according to St Pseudo-Macarius.<sup>52</sup> This implies that a person working with God regards all sin as his own. This approach thus takes humility to a higher level than merely towards God and is sacrificial as when he stated that the human person ‘voluntarily dies to the world,’<sup>53</sup> it is a ‘libation for everyone ... as sheep of the

<sup>45</sup> St Maximus, *Char* 1.46; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 40.

<sup>46</sup> St Maximus, *Lib Asc* 24, PG 90; trans. ACW-MC, p. 116.

<sup>47</sup> St Maximus, *Lib Asc* 25; PG 90; trans. ACW-MC, p. 117. Cf. Prov 12.18.

<sup>48</sup> St Isaac of Nineveh, *Tract Myst* 35.259; trans. Wensinck, p. 174.

<sup>49</sup> St Maximus, *Char* 3.91; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 74.

<sup>50</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 19.1; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 146. See also Phil 2.3.

<sup>51</sup> St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 19.1; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 146, as previously quoted.

<sup>52</sup> St Pseudo Macarius, *Spir Hom* 15.36; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 122.

<sup>53</sup> St Maximus, *Or Dom* 4; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 116 after Rom 8.36 and Ps 43/44.22.

slaughterhouse.’

One obligation is to help others to find the natural path and defend it. St Maximus stated that ‘let us show sympathy for one another and by humility heal one another ... for we are members of one another.’<sup>54</sup> Similarly, St Antony of Egypt stated that ‘if one man sins against another man, one prays for him to God.’<sup>55</sup>

The progressive approach:

If we are to assist God to achieve the divine Plan, we cannot work with Him only in a solitary manner. Although St Maximus stated that, in imitation of God, it is impossible to possess ... perfect love unless (one) loves all men equally,<sup>56</sup> that love must be cosmic because working with God necessitates possessing divine love which is a love of all things. That common love would generate works with God in the universe.<sup>57</sup>

To be in tune with God, we must love everything that God loves and do everything to follow God’s will in order to bring all things into union with Him. One is therefore obliged to assist others and work with others to obtain that goal. Furthermore, a relationship with God does not entail ‘dissolving or destroying’ other relationships but ‘transcending them.’<sup>58</sup> When a person begins to truly relate to God, relationships with other persons do not then cease but are transformed. Accordingly, St Maximus stated that the person who works with God has ‘one will with God and with one another (without) discord.’<sup>59</sup> Working with God must therefore be not only be in cooperation with other persons on the natural path but on behalf of and for all.

### *Glimpses of the Parousia*

As noted in Chapter Three, the state of deification is usually associated with the *Parousia* as union with God is powered by His Spirit of Love. However, we can gain possession of the Spirit and therefore, according to St Maximus, deification can occur in this life. For example, St Maximus confirmed this by saying that ‘the grace of divinization ... to those who love the Lord ... had already (been) received (by) Abraham ... in advance’<sup>60</sup> of the *Parousia*. Similarly, ‘when the soul is moved ... to make progress, it becomes united with God.’<sup>61</sup> In this paper, we term a union with God in this life as a glimpse of the *Parousia* because that union would usually lack the permanence of the divine act of the *Parousia*.

We have discussed that an important stage in eschatological movement is when human persons abandoned their wills in favour of those of God and that this leads to possession of the Spirit. To this St Maximus added that ‘the Spirit ... converts the willing will towards deification.’<sup>62</sup> He thus coupled deification and the acquisition of the Spirit. Accordingly, St Maximus coupled deification with relationship with God as ‘what deifies and what is deified

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<sup>54</sup> St Maximus, *Lib Asc* 41; PG 90, after Eph 4.25.

<sup>55</sup> St Antony of Egypt, *Ep.* 4; trans. Rubenson, p. 211.

<sup>56</sup> St Maximus, *Char* 1.61; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 41.

<sup>57</sup> After Jas 2.14.

<sup>58</sup> St Maximus, *Myst* 1; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 186.

<sup>59</sup> St Maximus, *Ep* 2; PG 91, col. 396C; trans. LOU-MC, p. 87. See also Mt 25.35-40.

<sup>60</sup> St Maximus, *Amb* 10.112; PG 91, col. 1200AB; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 331.

<sup>61</sup> St Maximus, *Myst* 5; PG 91; trans. CWS-MC, p. 191.

<sup>62</sup> St Maximus, *Thal* 6; PG 90; trans. BL-CM, pp. 105-06.

are then related ... each ... together with the other'.<sup>63</sup>

The association of deification in this world with light from God has been experienced by many. For example, the light of the burning bush,<sup>64</sup> Mount Tabor,<sup>65</sup> around the apostles at Pentecost,<sup>66</sup> Abba Arsenius<sup>67</sup> and Seraphim of Sarov. However, possessions of the Spirit in this life may be partial and fleeting. They can also be lost and are therefore insecure and . We shall therefore term deification in this life as glimpses of the *Parousia* in this study.

### *Summary and conclusions*

We have ascertained that defending relationships with God and working with Him according to the divine Plan are essential to the spiritual life. The key to both of these aspects of the spiritual life appeared to be the abandonment of will in favour of that of God. This is because it wards off the temptation of self-love and clears impediments to working with God. However, it is necessary to have an openness to God at all times even when performing common material tasks. The spiritual life is therefore not restricted to monastics.

Also important was that both aspects of the spiritual life essentially involve working with and for the universe as well as God. This would be in true imitation of God who loves all things.

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<sup>63</sup> St Maximus *Th Pol* 3; PG 91; trans. LOU-MC, p. 193-94.

<sup>64</sup> Ex 3.2.

<sup>65</sup> Mt 17.2, Mk 9.3.

<sup>66</sup> Acts 2.3.

<sup>67</sup> St Isaac of Nineveh, *Tract Myst* 80; trans. Wensinck, p. 377; 'Abba Arsenius appeared as "burning fire".'

## SECTION B. WORKING WITH GOD ACCORDING TO TEILHARD

### *Divine love and earthly love*

Regarding love, Teilhard stated that ‘alone of all the world’s energies, love displays the power of carrying cosmic personalization ... right to its term’<sup>68</sup> which is union with God. Teilhard thus gave the impression that love is essentially an earthly energy rather than a divine one from the Spirit. He presumably wished to stress the distinction between God and the universe. Although divine love comes from God according to St Maximus and St Pseudo-Macarius, when it is held by a human person, it is also within the world of time.

Nevertheless, Teilhard appears to acknowledge that there is connection between God’s love and human love even though he regards them as distinct. He stated that ‘divine love uses human love as the door through which it forces its way into a being.’<sup>69</sup> This reference nevertheless implies that God works through the human person.

### *The spiritual life*

Humility to God and the universe:

We have ascertained that working with God has two aspects, the defensive and the progressive. However, Teilhard emphasized humility to both God and the universe. He stated that God ‘demands our cooperation of ... our actions’ and ‘we give Him this essential collaboration ... by lovingly submitting our own autonomy to His ... in humility.’<sup>70</sup> Teilhard extended his humility to God to the universe also by stating that it is ‘in subordination to the universe.’<sup>71</sup>

Teilhard also stated that ‘the law of purity and Christian Charity hides an operation of pure fire.’<sup>72</sup> We could regard ‘purity’ as a result of a defensive approach to the spiritual life while ‘Christian charity’ could be construed as working with God progressively according to the divine Plan. St Maximus would argue that it is the Spirit who gathers together the intellectual and vital parts of the soul and Teilhard’s ‘pure fire’ could possibly indicate the presence of the Spirit.

Continual prayer with repentance:

Teilhard stated that ‘our work ... to deify the world ... will have to be tested, pursued ... and maintained by prayer’<sup>73</sup> indicating a defensive approach. Teilhard advocated ‘continual prayer’<sup>74</sup> in connection with an illumination of God indicating a defensive approach which could possibly be an acquisition of the Spirit. He also couples prayer with weeping.<sup>75</sup> Regarding the need for repentance, Teilhard acknowledged that we should repent our faults or sins<sup>76</sup> but states that ‘sin only interests us here to the extent that it is a weakening, a

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<sup>68</sup> Teilhard, *Centrolgy*, 1944; 7AE, p. 119-20.

<sup>69</sup> Teilhard, *The Mystical Milieu*, 1917; 12WW, p. 121n.

<sup>70</sup> Teilhard, *Cosmic Life*, 1916; 12WW, p. 51.

<sup>71</sup> Teilhard, *The Sense of Man*, 1929; 11TF, p. 33.

<sup>72</sup> Teilhard, *The Struggle Against the Multitude*, 1917; 12WW, p. 107.

<sup>73</sup> Teilhard, *The Soul of the World*, 1918; 12WW, p. 189.

<sup>74</sup> Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 94.

<sup>75</sup> Teilhard, *Cosmic Life*, 1916; 12WW, p. 69.

<sup>76</sup> Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, pp. 47 and 53n.

deviation.<sup>77</sup> In other words, if we do not maintain a true relationship with God, we will not be able to work with Him and could fall into the unnatural state.

Abandonment of will to that of God:

Regarding the abandonment of will towards God, Teilhard stated that ‘my whole spiritual life consists more and more in abandoning myself ... to the presence and action of God.’<sup>78</sup> He also stated that ‘our journey into God’ requires our ‘annihilation in the Other ... who is greater than ourselves.’<sup>79</sup> He also compared the scriptural ‘my food is to do the will of the Father’<sup>80</sup> with carrying out the will of God by stating that ‘through fidelity we open ourselves so intimately and *continuously* to the wishes and good pleasure of God, that His life penetrates and assimilates ours like a fortifying bread.’<sup>81</sup> Gerry Hughes, another Jesuit, proposed the same approach to God by stating that we must ‘offer ourselves as a sacrifice to God.’<sup>82</sup> If we ceased to be open to God, our work with Him would cease. Perhaps the most important aspect of working with God is that it focusses upon the future goal of union with God.

Teilhard himself often offered himself to God with such examples as ‘my life as an oblation ... to the Power which is higher than life’<sup>83</sup> but also towards the universe as he stated that ‘I want from now on to be the first to become conscious of everything the world loves, pursues and suffers; first to seek, to sympathize, and to suffer; the first to open myself out and sacrifice myself – to become more widely human and more nobly of the earth than of any servant of the world.’<sup>84</sup> This implies that Teilhard believed that renunciation is relative to both God and the universe, so that the resulting progress is both personal and universal. If he only subordinated himself to God but not to what God loves, he would be inconsistent with the love of God. Teilhard also stated that there is an ‘inseparable alliance between ... renunciation in God (and) personal progress’<sup>85</sup> so that both the defensive and progressive approaches are essential.

God ... is not distanced from us (but) rather He awaits us every instant in our action, in the work of the moment. There is a sense in which He is at the tip of my pen, my spade, my brush, my needle – of my heart and of my mind. By pressing the stroke, the line, or the stitch, on which I am engaged, to its ultimate natural finish, I shall lay hold of this last end towards my most interior will tends.<sup>86</sup>

Moreover, he stated that ‘we should never lift a finger to do the smallest task unless we are moved, however obscurely, by the conviction that we are contributing infinitesimally to the building of something definitive.’<sup>87</sup> Teilhard’s view was supported by Gerry Hughes who stated that and that ‘prayer is about letting God be God to us and through us in every detail of

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<sup>77</sup> Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 41n.

<sup>78</sup> Teilhard, Letter of 19 May 1941; *Letters from a Traveller*, p. 283.

<sup>79</sup> Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 49.

<sup>80</sup> Jn 4.34.

<sup>81</sup> Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu* (Part 3), 1927; 4DM, p. 101.

<sup>82</sup> Gerard W. Hughes, *Cry of Wonder* (London, etc: Bloomsbury, 2014) p. 223.

<sup>83</sup> Teilhard, *Reflections on Happiness*, 1943; 11TF, p. 122 n.

<sup>84</sup> Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 65 n.

<sup>85</sup> Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 61.

<sup>86</sup> Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, pp. 22-23. Cf. 1 Cor 10.31 and Deut 6.5.

<sup>87</sup> Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 13.

our lives.’<sup>88</sup> In this way, the human person is always open to God and also works with Him. We conclude from the above that Teilhard shares the approach of St Maximus and St Pseudo-Macarius that we should have an openness to God in all our actions so that God works through us.

### *The eschatological movement of humankind*

Dependence upon love:

Teilhard stated that ‘progress ... can only be realized in a universal mutual love’<sup>89</sup> and ‘it is through love ... that we must look for ... the life-giving coming together of’ humankind.<sup>90</sup> He also stated that ‘with love omitted, there is truly nothing ahead of us except the forbidding prospect of standardization.’<sup>91</sup>

Authoritarianism is incompatible with true love and Teilhard therefore opposed authoritarianism by stating that ‘the massing together of individualities should not be enforced’<sup>92</sup> thus showing the principle of free will. Teilhard dismissed ‘standardization and enslavement’ by saying that they would result in ‘the doom of ants and termites.’<sup>93</sup>

In any case, Teilhard is critical of atheism which he termed ‘unsatisfied theism’.<sup>94</sup> This is consistent with Teilhard’s belief in *both* ‘God’ and the ‘World’.<sup>95</sup> He also stressed the importance of a communal effort is ‘to find salvation for all’<sup>96</sup> implying that the goal of humankind should be the *Parousia*.

Delfgaauw explains the difference between totalitarian systems and Teilhardian development by stating that ‘the great danger of totalitarian systems is that they seek to bring about a larger unity among men by immolating the person, but in fact it is only out of freedom and responsibility of the person that real unity can grow.’<sup>97</sup>

Teilhard stated that humankind ‘can progress only by uniting ... in ... freedom.’<sup>98</sup> Teilhard also appears to connect love and freedom by stating that ‘to say “love” is to say “liberty”’.<sup>99</sup> The movement towards union ‘must have the effect of increasing the variety of choice and the wealth of spontaneity.’<sup>100</sup> The free will of human persons was discussed in Chapter Two.

### *Working with humankind*

The capability of human persons for social awareness:

While supporting eschatological movement in its strict sense, Teilhard concentrated his

<sup>88</sup> Gerry Hughes, p. 254.

<sup>89</sup> Teilhard, *Some Reflections on Progress*, 1941; 5FM, p. 75.

<sup>90</sup> Teilhard, *The Grand Option*, 1939; 5FM, p. 55.

<sup>91</sup> Teilhard, *The Grand Option*, 1939; 5FM, p. 54.

<sup>92</sup> Teilhard, *The Grand Option*, 1939; 5FM, p. 54.

<sup>93</sup> Teilhard, *The Grand Option*, 1939; 5FM, pp. 54-55.

<sup>94</sup> Teilhard, *The Heart of the Problem*, 1949; 5FM, p. 260.

Teilhard, *The Zest for Living*, 1950; 7AE, pp. 239-40.

<sup>95</sup> Teilhard, *How I believe*, 1934; 10CE, p. 97: ‘Today I believe probably more profoundly than ever in God, and certainly more than ever in the world’.

<sup>96</sup> Teilhard, *The Soul of the World*, 1918; 12WW, p. 187.

<sup>97</sup> Bernard Delfgaauw, *Evolution: The Theory of Teilhard de Chardin* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1969) p. 98.

<sup>98</sup> Teilhard, *Some Reflections on Progress*, 1941; 5FM, p. 74; also, p. 72.

<sup>99</sup> Teilhard, *The Planetization of Mankind*, 1945; 5FM, p. 135.

<sup>100</sup> Teilhard, *The Grand Option*, 1939; 5FM, p. 54.

attention on the social and reflective development of humankind as a whole which at first sight appears to be an innovation. Teilhard noted that humankind is capable of 'reflection, that psychological quality found in a being which not only knows but knows that it knows, (which is) the power it gives us of intellectually embracing the world (and) foreseeing the future.'<sup>101</sup> Humankind would achieve 'a higher degree of self-awareness' which would become 'at once more complex and more centred upon itself.'<sup>102</sup> Humankind has thus entered the stage when the human being not only relates to other beings but to the whole. Human beings have therefore become accustomed to look beyond themselves so that, in the development of humankind, 'the social element enters to take the place of the anatomical.'<sup>103</sup> The anatomical stage would presumably be the period when the brains of the ancestors of humankind grew rapidly in size. It is notable that Teilhard understood the new social awareness would not supersede the importance of the individual as he stated that the 'individual and the collectivity never ceases to reinforce and compete (with) one another.'<sup>104</sup> We conclude that Teilhard understood that the social development of humankind arose from the development of consciousness which continued from the anatomical evolution but was distinct from it.

The increasing socialization of humankind:

Teilhard observed that humankind 'is irresistibly involved (in) the phenomenon of socialization.'<sup>105</sup> Moreover, 'the socialization of (humankind is) becoming daily more manifest'.<sup>106</sup> It began 'first through families and then between tribes (and then) on a territorial basis'<sup>107</sup> 'from a starting point in a number of centres and under only a moderate pressure ... coincided with the gradual occupation of the globe.'<sup>108</sup> He noted that there is an explosion of social development owing to an 'ethnic compression' which has come about because 'the world population has already filled the continents to saturation point.'<sup>109</sup> He stated that humankind can only 'survive this increasing compression ... by developing an ever higher degree of ... self-organization.'<sup>110</sup> Human beings therefore 'do not merely multiply in numbers at an increasing rate but through contact with one another automatically develop around themselves an ever denser tangle of economic and social relationships.'<sup>111</sup> Therefore 'it is impossible for the smallest peasant in the remotest countryside to live without being in some way affected by what is going on in New York or Moscow or China.'<sup>112</sup> This process is obviously aided by the increased communication on the planet as 'the entire mass of (humankind) owing to (its) prodigious growth and speeding up of the world of communication has found itself seized in the mould of a communal existence.'<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Teilhard, *The Reflection of Energy*, 1952; 7AE, p. 323.

<sup>102</sup> Teilhard, *Some Reflections on Progress*, 1941; 5FM, p. 70.

<sup>103</sup> Teilhard, *On the Probable Coming of an 'Ultra-Humanity'*, 1950; 5FM, pp. 275, 273.

<sup>104</sup> Teilhard; *The Atomism of Spirit*, 1941; 7AE, p. 51.

<sup>105</sup> Teilhard, *The Grand Option*, 1939; 5FM, p. 49.

<sup>106</sup> Teilhard, *The Planetization of Mankind*, 1945; 5FM, p. 124.

<sup>107</sup> Teilhard, *The Grand Option*, 1939; 5FM, p. 39.

<sup>108</sup> Teilhard, *My Fundamental Vision*, 1948; 11TF, p. 177.

<sup>109</sup> Teilhard, *Human Unanimization*, 1950; 5FM, p. 282.

<sup>110</sup> Teilhard, *My Fundamental Vision*, 1948; 11TF, p. 182.

<sup>111</sup> Teilhard, *The Planetization of Mankind*, 1945; 5FM, p. 127.

<sup>112</sup> Teilhard, *Does Mankind Move Biologically Upon Itself?*, 1949; 5FM, p. 247.

<sup>113</sup> Teilhard, *The Planetization of Mankind*, 1945; 5FM, p. 127; *Life and the Planets*, 1945; 5FM, p. 114.

The natural convergence of humankind with a common vision:

Humankind thus tends to act more and more as a thinking entity and Teilhard accordingly stated that ‘within us and around us ... is to be found ... a continual heightening of consciousness’.<sup>114</sup> This trend would lead to a ‘social convergence’<sup>115</sup> of ‘all the separate consciousnesses of the world.’<sup>116</sup> Also he stated that humankind ‘has been converging upon itself ... since its origins’<sup>117</sup> and ‘the world of man is ... converging upon itself.’<sup>118</sup> Also, ‘with the coming of man, a new law of nature has come into force – that of convergence.’<sup>119</sup> It is presumably this convergence that prompted Teilhard to state that ‘there is only one way in which the tide will flow: the way of *ever-increasing unification*.’<sup>120</sup> We would expect that such a convergence would lead to a greater unity and Teilhard stated that ‘it is a matter of common experience that within restricted groups ... unity, far from diminishing the individual, enhances, enriches and liberates him or her in terms of self. True union, the union of heart and spirit, does not enslave, nor does neutralize the individuals which it brings together. It super-personalizes them.’<sup>121</sup>

This ‘growth of consciousness’ and presumably convergence would lead to the unification of ‘the earth’s energies,’ ‘knowledge’ and ‘the human mass as a thinking whole’<sup>122</sup> with a ‘*common vision*’<sup>123</sup> and ‘*hope for the future*.’<sup>124</sup> He also considered that ‘thought, once it is let loose, displays an extraordinary power of self-protraction and extension.’<sup>125</sup> Clearly, if humankind could acquire such a common consciousness, it would bring the social development of humankind to a high level. However, it would have to do so in opposition of those remaining in the unnatural state.

It is notable that there is natural convergence and also eschatological convergence implying a similarity between them. However, the natural convergence does so upon itself and eschatological convergence depends upon God.

Social development and eschatological movement:

The *Parousia* involves transformation so that movement towards it must involve change. We must therefore expect humankind itself would change during its eschatological movement towards the *Parousia*. The nature of the change would probably have been beyond the grasp of St Maximus and his circle. It is therefore left to modern writers such as Teilhard with knowledge of the many societies in an ever expanding world population to attempt to answer the question. We need to consider the relationship between the social development of humankind according to Teilhard and eschatological movement.

The two movements both feature a convergence of humankind. However, much of Teilhard’s argument in favour of human social development appears to be because of the

<sup>114</sup> Teilhard, *Some Reflections on Progress*, 1941; 5FM, p. 78.

<sup>115</sup> Teilhard, *Man’s Place in Nature*, 1949 (pub. 1956); 8MN, p. 40.

<sup>116</sup> Teilhard, *Life and the Planets*, 1945; 5FM, p. 120.

<sup>117</sup> Teilhard, *The Reflection of Energy*, 1952; 7AE, p. 327.

<sup>118</sup> Teilhard, *The Reflection of Energy*, 1952; 7AE, p. 321.

<sup>119</sup> Teilhard, *The Formation of the Noosphere*, 1947; 5FM, p. 165.

<sup>120</sup> Teilhard, *The Planetization of Mankind*, 1945; 5FM, p. 128.

<sup>121</sup> Teilhard, *Life and the Planets*, 1945; 5FM, p. 119.

Also, *The Grand Option*, 1939; 5FM, p. 53: ‘True union ... differentiates’.

<sup>122</sup> Teilhard, *Some Reflections on Progress*, 1941; 5FM, p. 69.

<sup>123</sup> Teilhard, *Some Reflections on Progress*, 1941; 5FM, p. 74; also p. 72.

<sup>124</sup> Teilhard, *Some Reflections on Progress*, 1941; 5FM, p. 72.

<sup>125</sup> Teilhard, *Human Unamization*, 1950; 5FM, p. 283.

nature of human persons as social beings rather than any eschatological principle. We therefore need to consider how love would feature in such a social development. If cooperation was based upon love rather than expedience, one would expect that an awareness of humankind as a whole would be more likely. Without love the peak of social development would be at a lower level. We must also expect the peak to be at a lower level if there was no common goal. Furthermore, the eschatological goal is universal and a social peak of humankind could not be any more than a glimpse of the *Parousia*.

We conclude that, although a social development must be compatible with eschatological progress because convergence is a common factor, the peak of social development would probably fall short unless it was based upon at least the principles of love and a common goal. Furthermore, such principles would not necessarily arise from the social development itself but one could argue that they could arise from a natural tendency of human persons to believe in them. There is also the problem of those in the unnatural state. Teilhard clearly accepts both eschatological movement and the social development of humankind and their compatibility and the problems of self-love. However, because most of his references justifying the development of humankind do not feature love or a goal, he lays himself open to criticism that it is independent of God who is both love and a goal.

*Teilhard's concept of eschatological movement and the future progress of humankind as a continuing creation*

Teilhard regarded eschatological movement as a new evolution of humankind. He links the work of God with evolution by stating that '*God creates ... through the process of evolution.*'<sup>126</sup> His use of the term 'creates' rather than 'completes' or 'unites' is perhaps an indirect way of demonstrating such an association.

Nevertheless, creating is only one aspect of the divine energies from a within-time point of view as discussed further in Chapter Two. Teilhard also linked evolution with convergence, an attribute of eschatological movement, as he states that 'there is only one evolution – the evolution of convergence, because it alone is positive and creative.'<sup>127</sup> Teilhard's also applied the term 'convergence' to his approach to the social development of humankind so the compatibility of eschatological movement and that development is implied.

The success of such a development depends on a collective consciousness of humankind. For example, he stated that with humankind, 'evolution has taken reflective consciousness of itself (so) it can to some degree recognize its position in the world (and) choose its direction'.<sup>128</sup> He also stated that humankind is in 'a vast *evolutionary process*' in the sphere of consciousness.<sup>129</sup> Such an evolution he described as ongoing by stating that 'a vast evolutionary process is in ceaseless operation around us ... situated within the sphere of consciousness and collective consciousness.'<sup>130</sup>

While Teilhard's 'evolution' describes eschatological movement and his social development if it succeeds, the term 'evolution' is however usually used as a scientific term. While, it is clearly not Teilhard's intention, the use of the term could give the impression that

<sup>126</sup> Teilhard, *Some Reflections on Progress*, 1941; 5FM, p. 79.

<sup>127</sup> Teilhard, *Christology and Evolution*, 1933; 10CE, p. 87.

<sup>128</sup> Teilhard, *The Spirit of the Earth*, 1931; 6HE, p. 29.

<sup>129</sup> Teilhard, *A Note on Progress*, 1920; 5FM, p. 15.

<sup>130</sup> Teilhard, *A Note on Progress*, 1920; 5FM, p. 15.

God is not involved in the future development of humankind.

### *Teilhard's Maturation Point*

The maturation point of Teilhard is a 'peak' of evolution,<sup>131</sup> a 'critical point (as) traversed by consciousness when, by force of concentration, it ends by reflecting upon itself.'<sup>132</sup> It would be a 'general awakening of our consciousness to the vast and extreme organicity of the universe as a whole.'<sup>133</sup> There may be a possibility that humankind will develop socially and spiritually so that its prime purpose would be the welfare of humankind as a whole rather than some parts against others.

This maturation point would not be authoritarian but would respect the individual and its contribution. It would be 'a supreme pole of consciousness, upon which all the separate consciousnesses of the world may converge' so there is a 'consciousness of becoming one ... without losing themselves.'<sup>134</sup> It will be a 'climax of ... human consciousness (with) a maximum of complexity, and, as a result of concentration by *total reflection* or planetization.'<sup>135</sup> The 'complexity' may also indicate the retention of individuality.

Teilhard stated that the maturation point is 'the peak of human faith.'<sup>136</sup> He did not always note that the social development of humankind is also eschatological but, if it is his intention, the maturation point would be an important stage in eschatological progress. We can conclude from the above that the maturation point is an event within time as it is dependent on the development of humankind.

However, Teilhard described the maturation point as an extreme one. He states that 'we must recognize the rapidly increasing probability that we are approaching a *critical point of maturity*, at which (humankind) now completely reflecting upon itself not only individually but collectively, will have reached ... the *extreme* limit of the world.'<sup>137</sup> He also defined the 'maturation point' as 'an *ultimate* and self-subsistent pole of consciousness, so involved in the world as to be able to gather into itself, by union, the cosmic elements that have been brought by technical arrangement to the *extreme limit* of their centration.'<sup>138</sup> There is an implication here that the maturation point is one which cannot be bettered. This is also implied by Teilhard as he described the peak as a 'climax',<sup>139</sup> which in another more literal translation, it is termed a 'paroxysm'<sup>140</sup> giving the impression that the maturation point is at a sharp peak.

He also stated that 'sooner or later ... convergence (will) become the *common choice* of the mass of humankind.'<sup>141</sup> Teilhard should have developed this statement. He did not discuss the position of the unnatural state at the maturation point. It would appear unlikely that the unnatural state would ever disappear because of the imperfection of humankind. While the common good could well capture the general public mood, the lure of self-love could remain.

<sup>131</sup> Teilhard, *Outline of a Dialectic of a Spirit*, 1946; 7AE, p. 144.

<sup>132</sup> Teilhard, *Some Reflections on Progress*, 1941; 5FM, p. 67.

<sup>133</sup> Teilhard, *Human Unanimization*, 1950; 5FM, p. 285.

<sup>134</sup> Teilhard, *Life and the Planets*, 1945; 5FM, p. 120.

<sup>135</sup> Teilhard, *The Planetization of Mankind*, 1946; 5FM, p. 124.

<sup>136</sup> Teilhard, *Two Principles and a Corollary*, 1948; 11TF, pp. 157.

<sup>137</sup> Teilhard, *My Fundamental Vision*, 1948; 11TF, p. 185.

<sup>138</sup> Teilhard, *My Fundamental Vision*, 1948; 11TF, p. 185.

<sup>139</sup> Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924; 9SC, p. 84.

<sup>140</sup> Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924 (extract); 5FM, p. 307.

<sup>141</sup> Teilhard, *The Grand Option*, 1939; 5FM, p. 57; Teilhard's italics.

It appears doubtful if what is merely a stage of development ‘at some *finite distance ahead of us in time*’<sup>142</sup> would ever become absolute but would be a worthy ideal to aim for. It could however be a beginning of a utopian situation as implied by scripture.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Teilhard, *The Energy of Evolution*, 1953; 7AE, p. 372.

<sup>143</sup> Rev 20.4.

## PART C. NOTIONS CONTRARY TO WORKING WITH GOD

*The loss of love of the universe*

Teilhard stated that ‘Thou shalt love God (and) thou shalt love thy neighbour for the love of God’ implying that this was the norm but then proposed that ‘thou shalt love God in and through the genesis of the universe and of mankind.’<sup>144</sup> Teilhard also regarded himself as a testing ground for the marvellous alliance of the love of heaven and the love of earth.<sup>145</sup> It appears that he proposed that not only should one love not only God and our neighbour but also the whole universe but regarded his proposal as an innovation. Nevertheless, Teilhard appears to have thought that, at some time, others held his view as he implied that the loss of love of the universe was the basis of a schism. For example, he stated that ‘we can (then) *reconcile* and provide mutual nourishment for a love of God *and* a healthy love for the world.’<sup>146</sup> We can conclude that the common view at the time of Teilhard, loving God was the norm and perhaps also our neighbours but not the universe.

If it was assumed that God had infinite love and therefore loved all things without partiality and God’s followers showed partiality by withholding love for the universe, they would not be true followers of God. More likely, they would assume that God only loves human person and therefore they did not need to extend their love to other things. This would deny the God of Infinite Love. However, this would be consistent with the notion of the flawed universe and its parts. We conclude that the neglect of love of the universe was a development of the notion of the flawed universe. As the flawed universe would include human bodies, a human person would comprise only a soul. As eschatological movement of the universe and its parts towards union with God is fundamental to the patristic tradition, we conclude that the lack of love of the universe is a schismatic notion.

*Denial of the eschatological movement of humankind*

Teilhard considered his ideas regarding the development of humankind as ‘revolutionary’ as, in a letter to his cousin Mlle Teillard-Chambon, he stated that ‘the concept of human convergence on itself seems to me as revolutionary a step as ever.’<sup>147</sup> Furthermore, a denial of the movement of humankind would be inconsistent with the movement of the universe according to St Maximus. Teilhard was therefore mistaken in assuming that the concept of human convergence is revolutionary as it is a patristic principle. Teilhard stated that ‘I am more convinced than ever that our generation understands Christianity in a way that is too extrinsic and too individualistic’ (and that) it has ‘no connection ... with ... the universe (and) seems to impinge upon only an insignificant part of cosmic reality.’<sup>148</sup> It is clear from the above that Teilhard did not deny individual eschatological movement as he stated that ‘if its members are to group themselves (by) loving one another, that love must include all individuals simultaneously and *all as a whole*.’<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Teilhard, *Suggestions for a New Theology*, 1945; 10CE, p. 184.

<sup>145</sup> Teilhard, *Letters to Léontine Zanta* (London: Collins, 1969), Letter to Zanta dated 28 Aug 26, p. 70.

<sup>146</sup> Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 10.

<sup>147</sup> Teilhard, Letter dated 4 December 1951, *Letters from a Traveller* (London: Collins, 1962) p. 321.

<sup>148</sup> Teilhard, *Forma Christi*, 1918; 12WW, p. 250.

<sup>149</sup> Teilhard, *My Fundamental Vision*, 1948; 11TF, p. 187. Paraphrased.

## PART D: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the spiritual life, St Maximus and Teilhard agreed that the essence of the eschatological movement towards union with God was humility, repentance and the abandonment of will in favour of that of God but must include not only the love of God but the love of all things. This approach necessitated an openness to God at all times regardless of activity. However, St Maximus gave greater emphasis on the Spirit. Eschatological progress also requires working with others so that humankind as a whole also progresses so it becomes more united in itself.

While working with God is fundamentally a matter of the heart, we need to be on our guard that sin does not cause us to fall from the natural path. We ascertained in Chapter Two that the common view at the time of Teilhard that union with God depended on actual deeds even though working with God depends on an openness of heart. Deeds can be carried out for the sake of merit without an open heart but the person would not then share the divine love with God.

It is significant that both the defensive and progressive approaches to the spiritual life are cosmic. Also, they both depend upon self-offering. These offerings are to both God and the universe and what is offered is both the offerers and the universe but the offerers were only the few in the universe who together allow God to work through them.

Teilhard took the personal progress with God to the level of humankind by considering its social and reflective development. What was disconcerting from a theological point of view was that, when Teilhard described the progress of humankind, there is often a lack of mention of God. The reason for the absence of God in his writings on progress may be to emphasise that eschatological movement is a *natural* phenomenon. Teilhard's approach therefore needs to be developed in a manner which better integrates the social and religious arguments. This would achieve greater acceptance of eschatological movement of humankind. Nevertheless, in principle, Teilhard's concept of a developing humankind was compatible with the converging universe of St Maximus.

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