

Chapter Three: The works of God

Introduction

Having ascertained that God affects the universe so that it converges upon union with Him, we need to understand God's influence in more detail in order to understand its affect upon the universe in temporal terms.

A: THE WORKS OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE PATRISTIC TRADITION

The divinity of the Logos and Spirit

We have ascertained in Chapter Two that there is a divine Plan or *Logos* for the goal of the universe and the movement towards it. The attainment of that goal and movement depends on the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Power and Love. As both *Logos* and Spirit are of God, they are beyond the gulf between God and the universe and they and their work have no limit. However we have not ascertained how God, *Logos* and Spirit relate to each other.

There are some similarities between the *Logos* and the Old Testament. It featured many angels and messengers and also prophets who discovered God by contemplation. An angel in Exodus¹ appears to be on a par with God and the messenger of Malachi² appears to be one who separates good from evil which only God can do. Scripture also stated that the *Memra* (Word) was sent from God.³ However, it was unclear what was the *Logos* relative to God. For example, the *Logos* could be an aspect of God or even an intermediary as favoured by Philo of Alexandria.

Regarding the Spirit, the Old Testament quoted several incidences when people become filled with the Spirit (*Ruach* = breath).⁴ These citations gave the impression that God worked through these people. Samuel suggests that it is the Spirit that causes people to become prophets.⁵ If however the Spirit was a true universal, He would work not only through human persons but generally throughout the universe. The Wisdom of Solomon confirmed that the 'Spirit of the Lord has filled the world.'⁶ and the psalms confirmed that He is involved in the initiation of at least the Creation aspect of the divine energies is they state that 'when You send forth Your Spirit, they are created.'⁷ Also, according to Genesis the 'wind from God swept over the face of the waters'⁸ at Creation, wind being usually associated with the Spirit. The Spirit is also associated with power.⁹

In the New Testament, the prologue of the gospel of St John explicitly stated that the *Logos* is divine. It states that 'in the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with God, and the *Logos* was God.' Such a *Logos* must therefore share the mystery of God Himself and

¹ Exodus 23.20.

² Chapter 3. See also Ezek 36.25-26.

³ Ps 106/107. 20 and Isa 55.11.

⁴ For example, Ex 35.31; Judg 3.10, 6.34; Job 27.3, 33.4; Isa 11.2.

⁵ 1 Sam 10.6: 'Then the Spirit of the Lord will possess you, and you will be in a prophetic frenzy.'

⁶ Wis 1.7.

⁷ Ps 103/104. 30.

⁸ Gen 1.2.

⁹ Wis 7.25.

must have originated ‘before the beginning of the earth’¹⁰ and ‘before the mountains were shaped.’¹¹ The patristic tradition also confirmed that the Spirit brings the power of God to the universe. For example, St Basil of Caesarea stated that the Spirit ‘fills all things with His power’¹² and St Maximus states that God’s ‘power (is) through all things.’¹³ The patristic tradition also confirms that God, *Logos* and Spirit have a common essence (οὐσία) or nature (φύσις), an essence based upon love.¹⁴

Also, St Maximus emphasised the unity of the Trinity by stating that ‘the Holy Trinity ... is an unconfused unity in essence and in its simple nature’ and St Gregory Nazianzus stated that the Trinity is ‘united in essence.’¹⁵ Assuming that God’s work in the universe depends on both the *Logos* and the Spirit, if the *Logos* is divine so also must be the Spirit and vice versa. As God is unrestrained by the attributes of the universe such as time, space and number, He has no partiality¹⁶ and the Spirit must therefore be in all things and over all time.¹⁷

The works of the Spirit and Logos are interdependent

The divine energies in the universe depend upon the *Logos* as He provides the goal for the universe but also the Spirit as He provides the power. St Basil stated that all ‘good things’ (presumably the divine energies) have ‘their origin in the Spirit (of God).’¹⁸ and the Spirit ‘is always invisibly present.’¹⁹

Also, St Irenaeus of Lyons stated that ‘God did not stand in need of any other beings to accomplish what He had Himself determined ... as if He did not possess His own hands ... for with Him were always present the *Logos* and the Spirit.’²⁰ There is therefore an implication that the *Logos* and the Spirit work as a pair according to ‘approval of the Father.’ If there was no Spirit, there would be no divine power behind the movement and without the *Logos*, there would be no direction or goal to that movement. It therefore appears that the *Logos* and Spirit work interdependently in the *economia* (οἰκονομία). Therefore when considering the *Logos* and Spirit we must not exaggerate the relative importance of either the *Logos* or Spirit at the expense of the other.

God unaffected by the origin of the Logos and Spirit: The Father as the Source of the Trinity

If the *Logos* and Spirit were divine, we would need to ascertain their relationship with God. The patristic tradition holds that God (Father) is the source (*arche*, ἀρχή) of the divinity of the *Logos* and Spirit. St Gregory Nazianzus took this view by stating that there is ‘One God

¹⁰ Prov 8.23.

¹¹ Prov 8.25.

¹² St Basil of Caesarea, *Spirit* 9.22; PG 32; trans. SVP-BG, p. 43.

¹³ St Maximus, *Amb* 42.26; PG 91, col. 1344A; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 175.

¹⁴ Jn 16.27; Jn 15.9; Rom 5,5; 1 Jn 4.8, 16.

¹⁵ St Gregory Nazianzus, *Ep* 101.5; trans. P3, p. 252,

¹⁶ Acts 10.34: ‘God shows no partiality.’ Also, Rom 2.11, Gal 2.6.

¹⁷ Wis 1.7.

¹⁸ St Basil of Caesarea, *Ep* 38.4; PG 32; trans. NPNF 2, Vol 8, p 138. Cf. 1 Cor 12.11.

¹⁹ St Maximus, *Myst* 24; PG 91; trans. CWS-MC, p. 206. Cf. Wis 1.7.

Also, *Gnost* 2.33; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 154: ‘Illuminating grace of the Spirit’.

Myst 20; PG 91; trans. CWS-MC, p. 203: ‘The gift and grace of the Holy Spirit’.

²⁰ St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Haer* 4, 20, 1; PG 7/1, 1032; trans. ANF, Vol 1, p 487.

because of the Monachia.²¹ The Monarchia makes God distinct from the *Logos* and Spirit even though they are all divine. Accordingly, God as Source is termed ‘Father’ following the New Testament but occasionally in the Old Testament.²² The early Church defined God as the source of divinity, ‘the originating source of the Godhead.’²³ Consistently, Council of Constantinople of 381, stated that the *Logos* is ‘from the Father.’²⁴ The Council of Nicaea of 325 previously stated that the *Logos* is ‘from the essence of the Father’²⁵ which unnecessarily complicated the situation. Moreover, if the divinity flowed from an essence, the Father would be left without a role.

In Christian tradition, the *Logos* is *generated* from the Father while the Spirit *proceeds* from Him. This was unfortunate as it is impossible for anything in the world of time to differentiate between that generation and procession. St John of Damascus stated that ‘we have learned there is a difference between that generation and procession, but the nature of that difference we in no wise understand.’²⁶ Similarly, St Pseudo-Dionysius stated that ‘we learn from the sacred scriptures that the Father is the originating Source of the Godhead and that the Son and the Spirit are, so to speak, divine offshoots ... but we can neither say nor understand how this could be so.’²⁷ Because of the interdependence of the *Logos* and Spirit, we would expect their origins in the Father would be closely linked.

As God is distinct from the universe, His essence or nature is also distinct. As He is the Source, the single divine essence must originate from Him. St Maximus emphasised their unity of the Trinity by stating that ‘the Holy Trinity ... is an unconfused unity in essence and in its simple nature’ and St Gregory Nazianzus states that the Trinity is ‘united in essence.’²⁸

In the context of the divine essence and energies, division in God was avoided in by describing both as fully God. Avoiding a division of God in the context of the Trinity is not dissimilar. It is clear however that St Maximus supported both God’s oneness and His threeness. For example, he described the Trinity as ‘one Godhead that in essence is a Monad and in subsistence as a Trinity’²⁹ so that the three are united in their essence. He also stated that ‘God (is) entirely Monad and entirely Triad’³⁰ and that ‘it is necessary both to preserve the One God and to confess the three persons, each one in his individuality.’³¹ He showed how God’s oneness and threeness can co-exist as follows:

The whole is in the whole Father and the whole Father is in the whole of it; the whole is in the Son and the whole Son is the whole of it. And the whole is in the Holy Spirit and the whole Holy Spirit is in the whole of it ...

Also, the whole Father is entirely in the whole Son and Holy Spirit, and the whole Son is entirely in the Father and Holy Spirit, and the whole Holy Spirit is entirely in the whole Father and Son.³²

²¹ St Gregory Nazianzus, *Orat* 40: *In Sanct bapt*; PG 36, col. 419B, trans. NPNF2, Vol 17, p. 375.

²² For example, Ps 88/89.27; Isa 9.6.

²³ St Pseudo-Dionysius, *Div Nom* 2.7; PG 3, trans. CWS-PD, p. 64.

²⁴ First Council of Constantinople, 381; trans. DEC, p. 24. (‘ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς’).

²⁵ First Council of Nicaea, 325; trans. DEC, p. 5, (‘ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς’).

²⁶ St. John of Damascus, *Fid Orth*, 1, 8; PG 94; trans. NPNF2, Vol 9, Part 2, p 10.

²⁷ St Pseudo-Dionysius, *Div Nom* 2.7; PG 3, col. 645B; trans. CWS-PD, p. 64.

²⁸ St Gregory Nazianzus, *Ep* 101.5; trans. P3, p. 252,

²⁹ St Maximus, *Amb* 1.3; PG 91, col. 1036C; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 11.

³⁰ St Maximus, *Gnost* 2.1; PG 90, col. 1125A; trans. CWS-MC, p. 147.

³¹ St Maximus, *Char* 2.29; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 50.

³² St. Maximus, *Gnost* 2.1; PG 90, col. 1125A; trans. CWS-MC, p. 147-8.

In this way, the ‘Unity (would not be) divided by the Persons, (and they would be not be) confused in unity (so that) polytheism (would) not (be) introduced by division, nor atheism by confusion.’³³ ‘Atheism by confusion’ would imply that if God was divided, it would be a negation of God. St Maximus’ solution could be described by stating that God’s oneness is preserved because the Trinity comprises three persons interpenetrating each other.

While successfully maintaining and explaining the divine Oneness and Threeness, St Maximus did not allow his ‘solution’ to compromise his view that God is ‘Other.’ He accordingly took the view that ‘the Godhead is above and beyond ... every concept that defines it in terms of how it exists.’³⁴ We conclude that St Maximus made a contribution to the problem of preserving the roles of the *Logos* and Spirit while maintaining the oneness of God. Moreover, the origin of the *Logos* and Spirit from the Father would not add anything to the Father neither would it divide Him.

As God is the Source of the *Logos* and Spirit and they are distinct from each other because of their distinctive roles in the universe, all members of the Trinity were considered distinct from each other. For this reason, it is not possible to regard the *Logos* and Spirit as mere aspects of God the Father.

Accordingly, the first Council of Constantinople decreed that each member of the Trinity should be termed a ‘person’ (*hypostasis*)³⁵ as opposed to an ‘appearance’ (*prosopon*, *πρόσωπον*), the latter solution becoming known as the Sabellian heresy.³⁶ The Council also stated that ‘there is no place for (the) theory in which the *hypostases* are confused.’³⁷ Their personhood depends on the relationship between each member with the other members. As ‘person’ is a stronger term than ‘appearance’, it is therefore important to understand the balance between the Father and the *Logos* and Spirit together. If the *Logos* and Spirit were absent, the Father would be only ‘Other’. If the Father was absent, the divinity of the *Logos* and Spirit would be lost and they would become phenomena of the universe.

The divine act

We have ascertained that, in the patristic tradition, as God is unrestricted by number and both his essence and energies are divine, they must both be indivisible. St Maximus states that God ‘by being ... shared *without division* reflects the simplicity and indivisibility of the divine activity.’³⁸ Furthermore, he states that ‘there is only one sole energy ... of God.’³⁹ Also, as He cannot act with partiality, He does not therefore act in one manner on one part of the universe and differently upon another. Furthermore, He must act over all time. As there is only one fundamental divine energy and we therefore expect that all the members of the Trinity are involved in that energy rather than being attributed to a particular member. Accordingly, St Gregory of Nyssa and St Basil of Caesarea state that the members of the

³³ St Maximus, *Or Dom* 4; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 111.

³⁴ St Maximus, *Amb* 10.98; PG 91, col. 1185D; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 307.

³⁵ First Council of Constantinople, 381.

³⁶ Sabellism or Modalistic Monarchism was developed about 217-220 by a Roman priest named Sabellius. He maintained that the Father, Spirit and Son were three aspects of the single person and was excommunicated by Pope Callistus c. 220.

³⁷ First Council of Constantinople, 381; trans. DEC, p. 28.

³⁸ St Maximus, *Myst* 5; PG 91; trans. CWS-MC, p. 193.

³⁹ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.12; PG 91, col. 1076C; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 91.

Trinity have an ‘identity of operations.’⁴⁰

Also, according to St Maximus, divine operations are not only one but have a single origin in the Father. For example, he stated that ‘the Father approves the work, the Son properly carries it out, and the Holy Spirit essentially completes.’⁴¹ Similarly, St Athanasius stated that ‘the Father does all things through the Word in the Holy Spirit.’⁴²

As St Maximus and others imply that operations originate in God the Father, we can state that the monarchical principle applies to both the Trinity itself and to their operations. It should be noted that this principle does not affect the inter-dependence of the *Logos* and Spirit in the divine operations. From a point of view within time, if the divine energies are essentially one, they depend upon a single divine will as confirmed by St Maximus.⁴³

The act of God viewed from within time

Although there is a single energy of God, when we regard His operations in the universe, we term that energy in the plural. We have already noted that such energies are ‘gifts’ from God. The one energy of God and what we regard as the divine energies in the universe suggest an inconsistency. This is because we tend to view the divine act from within time, we tend to consider the energy in terms of movement and its beginning and end. Also, we tend to regard the divine energies as affecting not only the universe as a whole but also individual things over all time. Such an approach would be consistent with the fact that God loves all things and relates particularly with things with *logoi*. The divine act therefore appears to be continuous over all time so that God is always ‘at work.’⁴⁴ St Antony of Egypt stated that God ‘does not cease to do good to us always.’⁴⁵ The divine energies therefore drive a multitude of acts over all time.

St Maximus described the divine energies by stating that God ‘leads ... all things ... to ... movement,’⁴⁶ ‘God created *all things* by His will,’⁴⁷ and ‘God will be ... encompassing all things’⁴⁸ However, as these several divine acts are in fact one divine act beyond the gulf between God and the universe, they remain a mystery to those within time. The divine acts must all be free gifts from God and cannot be forcing upon the universe as, otherwise, they would become acts within time and no longer be divine acts.

The divine and natural energies

Individual persons within the universe are weaker than God and are subject to influences within the universe which are contrary to the natural path. They therefore require assistance from God in order to move eschatologically towards union with God. This divine assistance is therefore not merely towards the universe as a whole but to those parts with *logoi*.

⁴⁰ St Gregory of Nyssa, *Adv Eun* 2.15; NPNF2, Vol 5, p. 132.

St Basil of Caesarea, *Ep* 189.6; PG 32; trans. NPNF2, Vol 8, p. 231.

⁴¹ St Maximus, *Thal* 2; PG 90; trans. BL-CM, p. 100.

⁴² St Athanasius of Alexandria, *Ep Serap* 1.28; PG 26; trans. ATH-HS, p. 135

⁴³ St Maximus, *Amb* 24.4; PG 91, col. 1264B; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 15.

⁴⁴ St Maximus, *Thal* 2; PG 90; trans. BL-CM, p. 99.

⁴⁵ St Antony of Egypt, *Ep*. 6; trans. Rubenson, p. 223. Jn 5.17.

⁴⁶ St Maximus, *Myst* 1; PG 91; trans. CWS-MC, p. 186.

⁴⁷ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.24; PG 91, col. 1085B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 109.

⁴⁸ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.31; PG 91, col. 1092C; NC-AMB2, p. 121. Cf. 1 Cor 15.28.

Eschatological movement is therefore achieved as a result by a partnership between God and parts of the universe.

Because the divine energies appear so numerous, they are not often regarded as a single act but with respect to eschatological movement. Furthermore, to be effective, they are coupled with energies within time. St Maximus stated that ‘we must not ... conceive any movement in ... God.’⁴⁹ so that the divine energies cannot *directly* result in movement within time. To be effective in the universe, the divine energies therefore have to be transformed into energies within time. As an individual cannot change the divine energies, the power to transform them must come from God.

In this study, the energies within time arising from the divine energies are termed ‘natural energies’ because of the extensive use of the term ‘natural’ by St Maximus. For example, he used the phrase ‘natural power’ because it ‘is impelled towards its proper end’⁵⁰ and uses the term ‘natural motion’ because it is ‘inclined to the end established by the Creator.’⁵¹ Similarly, those who contemplate God have ‘natural strivings.’⁵² He also used the term ‘natural energies’ in a more general sense as it has to be ‘purged’ by the Spirit⁵³ or used ‘in a manner contrary to nature.’⁵⁴ The use of ‘natural energies’ would be consistent with the natural path which the energies follow. As the divine energies fill all things, the natural energies would potentially do the same.

St Maximus confirmed the affinity between the two energies by stating that God ‘rests when each being, having obtained the divine energy in due measure will determine its own natural energy with respect with God.’⁵⁵ This implies that God works through ‘beings’ to produce natural energies. Accordingly, St Maximus stated that God’s ‘power (is) *through* all things’⁵⁶ which confirms that it is the power of the Spirit that transforms the divine energies into natural energies and that God works through not merely through the universe as a whole but through its parts.

It was not until the eastern Council of Constantinople of 1351, that the relationship between the divine and natural energies were formally defined but it is not generally accepted by the west. Instead of the term ‘natural energies’, the Council used the term *energimai* (ἐνεργίμαι).

The Creation of the universe

St Maximus stated that God ‘created ... by His *Logos* and His Wisdom (Spirit).’⁵⁷ and ‘God creates ... by His substantial Word (*Logos*) and Spirit out of infinite goodness.’⁵⁸ Earlier fathers make similar statements. For example, St Basil of Caesarea stated that the ‘One ... creates through the Son and perfects (and) completes through the Spirit.’⁵⁹ Athanasius of Alexandria stated that ‘through the Word in the Holy Spirit, ... the Father ... creates and

⁴⁹ St Maximus, *Thal* 60; PG 90; trans. BL-CM, p. 124.

⁵⁰ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.7; PG 91, col. 1072B; NC-AMB1, p. 81.

⁵¹ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.26; PG 91, col. 1088B; NC-AMB1, p. 111.

⁵² St Maximus, *Amb* 7.27; PG 91, col. 1088D; NC-AMB1, p. 115.

⁵³ St Maximus, *Amb* 42.7; PG 91, col. 1321B; NC-AMB2, p. 135.

⁵⁴ St Maximus, *Amb* 10.12; PG 91, col. 1116C; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 169.

⁵⁵ St Maximus, *Gnost* 1.47; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 136.

⁵⁶ St Maximus, *Amb* 42.26; PG 91, col. 1344A; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 175.

⁵⁷ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.16; PG 91, col. 1080A; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 95-97. Cf. Ps 32/33.6.

⁵⁸ St Maximus, *Char* 4.3; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 75.

⁵⁹ St Basil of Caesarea, *Spirit* 16.38; PG 32, col. 136B; trans. SVP-BG, p. 62.

renews all things.’⁶⁰ All members of the Trinity are therefore involved with Creation.

If God exists, He has to be involved with the creation of the universe because it would be not merely the material world but the universe-related-with-God. There are two options in scripture regarding the Creation of the universe by God. These are ‘God made ... heaven and earth ... out of things that did not exist’⁶¹ and ‘Your all-powerful hand ... created the world out of formless matter.’⁶² There could therefore be creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) and from pre-existent matter, the latter being favoured by Origen. St Maximus took the *ex nihilo* option by stating that ‘God brought beings into existence out of nothing.’⁶³ With the other option, matter existing before Creation would still be loved by God and would therefore have the potential to move eschatologically towards God. It is therefore difficult to differentiate between unformed and formed matter in the context of creation. For this reason, St Maximus appears to have taken the more logical option. Moreover, he stated that ‘God created *all things* by His will’⁶⁴ implying that He creates all things regardless of form or lack of it.

The universe of St Maximus is moving towards union with God with His assistance. Such a universe would therefore have to be of a type which would enable that movement to take place but also allow it to discover God and relate to Him. The involvement of God in Creation therefore depends upon the divine *Logos*, the Plan of the goal of the universe and movement towards it. If the universe was nothing to do with God, it would be created solely according to physical criteria. As the spiritual and physical creation are essentially connected, it would be not unreasonable to assume that the material creation is God working *through* the universe and is a making present of an act of God.

The creation of humankind:

God works through parts of the universe but not all parts are able to respond to God but human persons have this capability. Scripture implied that the Spirit is able to influence such persons.⁶⁵

The creation of individuals:

St Maximus described the Creation in terms of individuals by stating that God ‘created and continues to create all things ... at the appropriate time.’⁶⁶ He therefore supported the view that the divine act of Creation drives a multitude of creations within time. The creation of *logoi* must be a divine act and therefore distinct from material beginnings but these two beginnings are connected because, if not, there would be no eschatological movement resulting from the *Logos*. St Maximus explained the connection by stating that ‘individual things were created at the appropriate moment in time, in a manner consistent with their *logoi*, and thus they received in themselves actual existence as beings (so that) creatures exist first in potential, and only later in actuality.’⁶⁷ Also, ‘all creation admits the same ... principle that its existence is preceded by nonexistence’⁶⁸ and therefore came from no existence.

⁶⁰ St Athanasius, *Ep Serap* 1.24; PG 26; trans. ATH-HS, p. 127.

⁶¹ 2 Macc 7.28.

⁶² Wis 11.17.

⁶³ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.16; PG 91, col. 1080A; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 95-97.

⁶⁴ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.24; PG 91, col. 1085B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 109.

⁶⁵ Gen 2.7

⁶⁶ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.16; PG 91, col. 1080A; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 95-97. Cf. Ps 32/33.6.

⁶⁷ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.19; PG 91, col. 1081A; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 101.

⁶⁸ St Maximus, *Amb* 41.9; PG 91, col. 1312B; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 115.

Beginning as *logoi*, all things have the potential for fulfilment when they acquire actual existence.

We found that God influenced eschatological movement by working through the universe. Consistently, God would create the universe through the divine energies but also in conjunction with the natural energies. The distinction between the two apparent creations would therefore be maintained but with full compatibility.

We can summarize the above by stating that as creation of individual things occurs over the whole of time, Creation is continuous from a within time point of view and coincidentally with eschatological movement. This principle adds credibility to the above assumption that God works through the universe.

The Parousia

Union between God and the universe:

Because God is infinite relative to an individual, the *Parousia* must be a divine act. God achieves this by means of His Spirit as ‘it is the Spirit who sanctifies’⁶⁹ Nevertheless, without the previous eschatological movement, there would be no *Parousia*.

Unions between God and individuals:

As ‘nothing created is by its nature capable of inducing deification’⁷⁰ according to St Maximus because God is infinitely greater than them but even those with love are subject to influences contrary to the natural path and therefore dependent upon God’s great mercy. Consistently, St Maximus stated that ‘for mortals ... salvation ... is impossible but for God all things are possible’⁷¹ salvation being an aspect of union. The *Parousia* is the act of God which drives all unions with God in accordance with God’s Plan or *Logos* so that all unions with individuals make the *Parousia* present. St Maximus stated that there is ‘eternal life (for) those who love Him’⁷² and ‘those who abide in love abide in God.’⁷³ Unions with God therefore depend on the acceptance or rejection of love by individuals.

We have ascertained that the distinction between God and the universe is fundamental to theology so that the distinction must remain at union with God. According to St Maximus, the human person ‘will remain wholly man in soul and body, owing to his nature, but will become wholly God in soul and body owing to the *grace* and the splendour of the blessed glory of God, which is wholly appropriate to him.’⁷⁴ Human persons are therefore not transformed by *nature* at the *Parousia* but by *grace* or a gift of God so that at deification there is no ‘violating or ... altering (of) our nature (*physeos*, φύσεως).’⁷⁵ As there is no change of nature as noted above, the transformation must be merely a change of mode (*tropos*, τρόπος).⁷⁶

Gregory the Great thought that souls entered heaven at the death of a person but the body

⁶⁹ St Basil of Caesarea, *Ep* 159.2; PG 32, col. 621AB; trans. NPNF2, Vol 8, P. 212, after Rom 15.16.

⁷⁰ St Maximus, *Thal* 22; PG 90, col. 324A; trans. BL-CM, p. 118.

⁷¹ St Maximus, *Lib Asc* 40; PG 90; trans. ACW-MC, p. 129.

⁷² St Maximus, *Or Dom* 6; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 118. Cf. Jas 1.12.

⁷³ 1 Jn 4.16.

⁷⁴ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.26; PG 91, col. 1088C; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 113.

⁷⁵ St Maximus, *Amb* 31.8; PG 91, col. 1280B; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 49.

⁷⁶ E.g. St Maximus, *Amb* 10.2; PG 91, col. 1305B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 105.

had to await the *Parousia*.⁷⁷ Eriugena took a similar view.⁷⁸ However, it is difficult to reconcile an event within time with an act of God with no particular time. Death ends all impediments to union leaving all future action regarding the individual to God so that from our point of view, death makes the union present. Accordingly, the patristic tradition associates union with death. St Maximus stated that a human person ‘becomes God ... by ceasing from all activities of mind ... and ... body ...’⁷⁹ which must be at death. St John Chrysostom stated that ‘it is true that we die as before but we do not remain in death.’⁸⁰ Also, according to St Athanasius, believers ‘know that when they die, they are not destroyed, but actually (begin to) *live*, and become incorruptible through the resurrection.’⁸¹ St Maximus stated that at the *Parousia*, a human person ‘will die to its life of appearances and rise again renewed.’⁸² In scripture also there is also a close link between the death and resurrection of human persons as illustrated by the accounts of the poor man, Lazarus,⁸³ and the thief on the cross⁸⁴ and resurrection is equivalent to union as discussed below.

Union with the God of Love must be with what is akin to Him to His love of all things. That person may sometimes have acted to the contrary to the divine Plan but someone who really loves God would repent to God for any failing.⁸⁵ The power of the Spirit which unites must therefore also burn up anything incompatible with divine love. Accordingly, St Maximus stated that ‘the works of sin will pass into inexistence ... by fire,’⁸⁶ a ‘fire which overcomes sin.’⁸⁷ This would be consistent with the principle that ‘evil has no real existence.’⁸⁸ The eradication of sin would be welcome by those who truly love God as they would wish that any impediment between God and those persons would be removed. As sin counts for nothing, it could not offset good acts. This is compatible with the forgiveness of sin against (the) righteous⁸⁹ because of His infinite mercy.⁹⁰

Our *logoi* are in the *Logos* so that our individuality cannot be destroyed by union with God. St Maximus therefore stated that the unity with God ‘is achieved through the preservation (of differences), guaranteed by guaranteeing them.’⁹¹ He also stated that ‘things’ are gathered ‘not by dissolving ... them’ but by being ‘separated from each other.’⁹² In their unity they thus retain their *logoi* and individuality. By stressing the preservation of differences, St Maximus confirmed that the union of God and the universe does not negate individual unions between God and parts of the universe.

Separation from God of those without love:

⁷⁷ Rik van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to Medieval Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) p. 41. From Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum Libri IV* 4.26; *Moralia in Iob* 4.56; 13.48.

⁷⁸ John Scottus Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, PL122, col. 996C.

⁷⁹ St Maximus, *Gnost* 2.89; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 167.

⁸⁰ St John Chrysostom, *In Hebr Hom* 17.2; PG 63, col. 129; trans. JM-BT, p. 162. Cf. 1 Cor 15.22.

⁸¹ St Athanasius, *De Incarn* 27; PG 25; trans. NPNF2, Vol 4, p. 51.

⁸² St Maximus, *Myst* 7; PG 91; trans. CWS-MC, p. 197.

⁸³ Lk 16.19-31.

⁸⁴ Lk 23.43.

⁸⁵ After 2 Cor 7.10.

⁸⁶ St Maximus, *Qu Dub*; PG 90, col. 845C; trans. PS-EA, p. 217.

⁸⁷ St Maximus, *Qu Dub*; PG 90, col.845C; trans. PS-EA, p. 217. Cf. Ps 102/103. 10,12.

⁸⁸ St Maximus, *Thal* pro.; PG 90; trans. TH-MC, p. 57.

⁸⁹ Cf. Ps 31/32.1. Lev 19.22.

⁹⁰ 1 Chr 21.13; Ps 118/119.156; Sir 17.29.

⁹¹ St Maximus, *Th Pol*; PG 91, col. 96D-97A; trans. VB-CL, p. 257.

⁹² St Maximus, *Amb* 7.31; PG 91, col. 1092C; NC-AMB1, p. 121.

We need to consider the *Parousia* in the context of the division of the universe. We would expect that those who moved in love towards union with God in accordance with the triadic series of St Maximus to unite with God. What is burned up by the Spirit of Love would be in a universe-without-God, a universe formed by those who rejected the divine Plan. This would be consistent with the scriptural principle that there will be a separation between the sheep and the goats.⁹³ Those without union with God would have ‘separation from God’⁹⁴ as confirmed by St Maximus who also regards it as a ‘punishment’ presumably for turning away from the divine Plan. We have ascertained that St Maximus describes the ultimate state of those in the unnatural state as ‘eternal ill-being’ but he sometimes used the term nonbeing instead of ‘ill-being’.⁹⁵ He regards those with nonbeing as having no existence⁹⁶ so that, in a sense, those who fall into the unnatural state leave the universe as intended by God even though they retain the opportunity to return to the natural path. If those with eternal existence fell, it would be similar to the Origenist theory condemned by St Maximus. There is therefore no such thing as post-existence.⁹⁷

We conclude that those who separate themselves from God do so through the lack of love for Him and all things and being trapped by their own self-love,⁹⁸ as the ‘hard-hearted will fall into calamity.’⁹⁹ No great change would occur at the *Parousia* because, if there was love, it would be preserved and returned and, if there was no love, lovelessness would continue. While separation from God appears as a punishment for deviating from the natural path, God would not be inflicting anything that is not already in place as the losers would have already turned from the natural path.¹⁰⁰ For something that does not love, the removal of sin would be of no consequence.

We would expect that those in the unnatural state would tend to sin more than those on the natural path. We would expect that generally those on the natural path would become united with God and those in the unnatural state would remain separate from God, it would be reasonable to say that the wages of sin would be death. However, the number of sins can only be an approximate guide to whether or not an individual acquires union. No one in the universe is able to determine the extent of God’s mercy and, in any case, the God of Love is immeasurable.

Apokatastasis:

One might conclude from statements by St Maximus that the universe as a whole and things with *logoi* within it will unite with God at the *Parousia* according to the divine Plan. For example, He stated that ‘God will ... completely fulfil the goal of ... deifying humanity.’¹⁰¹ If the Plan was completely fulfilled, there would be universal salvation or *apokatastasis* (ἀποκατάστασις) but we have ascertained that St Maximus maintains that eternal ill-being and separation from God occur. *Apokatastasis* was condemned in the ninth anathema of

⁹³ Mt 25.32.

⁹⁴ St Maximus, *Ep* 1; PG 91, col. 388D-389C; trans. PS-EA, p. 208.

⁹⁵ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.23; PG 91, col. 1084D; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 107 (nonbeing).

St Maximus, *Amb* 65.3; PG 91, col. 1392D; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 281 (ill-being).

⁹⁶ St Maximus, *Amb* 10.74; PG 91, col. 1164D; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 265.

⁹⁷ St Maximus, *Amb* 42.13; PG 91, col. 1325D; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 145.

⁹⁸ Cf. Ps 7.16.

⁹⁹ Prov 28.14.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Ezek 33.11.

¹⁰¹ St Maximus, *Thal* 22, 630-33; PG 90; trans. BL-CM, p. 116.

Justinian against Origenism in 543: ‘If anyone thinks that punishment ... of impious men is only temporary ... and that a restoration (*apokatastasis*) will take place ... let him be anathema.’¹⁰² We have stated that those in the unnatural state are not truly part of the universe and humankind as individual beings.

The dynamic Pleroma

The *Pleroma* (Πλήρωμα) is the ‘new age’¹⁰³ and St Maximus described it as ‘the eighth and the first, or rather, the one and perpetual day (which) is the unalloyed, all-shining presence of God, which comes about after things in motion have come to rest’¹⁰⁴ presumably following the scriptural ‘eighth day (which) might be the first, the first-created of my week (and so it) might be in the beginning of a time not reckoned and unending, neither years, nor months, nor weeks, nor days, nor hours.’¹⁰⁵ According to St Basil of Caesarea, the *Pleroma* is ‘the eighth day (is) without sunset, nightfall ... an age which does not grow old or come to an end.’¹⁰⁶ It is therefore an ‘eternity with God.’¹⁰⁷ St Maximus also expressed the eternal aspect of the age as the ‘perfect end which devoid of all quantity.’¹⁰⁸

The reference to life and immortality of the body implies movement. In the context of human persons, St Maximus described the *Pleroma* as involving ‘God’s activity’¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, he stated that ‘in (the) future ... state, human nature (is) in harmony with the powers on high through the identity of an inflexible eternal movement around God.’¹¹⁰ The term ‘inflexible’ may imply that movement is restricted to that of the natural path without any deviation towards the unnatural state. It is therefore reasonable for St Maximus to state that all ‘dead (and) living (would be) alive’¹¹¹ and therefore in movement.

We have ascertained that St Maximus described the end of eschatological movement as ‘rest’ in his triadic series but he qualified it as ‘*ever-moving* rest and steadfast *movement* at the same time.’¹¹² This implies that, although all temporal activity is complete, the *Pleroma* of St Maximus is not static but *dynamic*. From a point of view unrestricted by time, the universe always exists with its history as an attribute. God has no such history as His activity is not temporal so that He and the universe remain distinct even though they become united. This can be difficult to envisage. If the *Parousia* had no particular time but is the beginning of the *Pleroma* which also has no particular time, there cannot be any practical difference between the attributes of the two terms from a view within time as they can both be made present at any time by unions of God and parts of the universe. Hieromonk Gregorios appears to have come to the same conclusion by stating that ‘the eighth day of the kingdom ... existed before all ages, it exists now and it will exist to the endless ages.’¹¹³ One possible explanation

¹⁰² Trans. NPNF2, Vol. 14, p. 320.

¹⁰³ Eph 1.21: ‘The age to come’; also Heb 6.5.

¹⁰⁴ St Maximus, *Amb* 65.3; PG 91, col. 1392CD; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 279.

¹⁰⁵ 2 Enoch 33, trans. James Charlesworth, ed., *Pseudepigrapha* 1 (New York, etc: Doubleday, 1983) p. 33.

¹⁰⁶ St Basil of Caesarea, *Spirit* 27.66; PG 32; trans. SVP-BG, p. 101.

¹⁰⁷ Ps 22/23.6; Isa 45.22; Ezek 18.28; Wis 5.15.

¹⁰⁸ St. Maximus, *Amb* 7.9; PG 91, col. 1073B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 87.

¹⁰⁹ St Maximus, *Gnost* 1.60; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 138.

¹¹⁰ St Maximus, *Myst* 19; PG 91; trans. CWS-MC, p. 202.

¹¹¹ Lk 20.38.

¹¹² St. Maximus, *Thal* 65; PG 90, col. 700A; trans. VB-CL, p. 351-2.

See also *Myst* 5, col. 677A and *Myst* 19, col. 696BC.

¹¹³ Hieromonk Gregorios, *The Divine Liturgy* (Mount Athos: Koutloumousiou Monastery, 2009) p. 34.

of this would be that the *Pleroma* contains the sum of all events over time but shorn of their imperfection. In other words, time would turn back on itself at the *Parousia*. The *Pleroma* would therefore be related to the movement of the universe along the natural path towards its goal.

The state of those in the Pleroma

According to St Maximus, the fundamental state of the *Pleroma* is union with God by the power of the Spirit. This state is described in many ways such as completion, deification and salvation. Because the *Pleroma* is related to this life, it will experience glimpses of the attributes of the *Pleroma*.

The *Pleroma* comprises that whose creation is complete over the life of the universe. The *Pleroma* is therefore the result of Creation. That completion is the goal of the universe and all its parts with *logoi*. St Maximus stated that ‘whatever does not have a goal (*telos*, τέλος) of its *natural* activities (*physike energeia*, φυσικὴ ἐνέργεια) is not complete.’¹¹⁴ ‘Completion’ at the end of ‘natural activity’ is therefore ‘with God.’ We conclude that St Maximus did not envisage any other ‘rest’ other than with God. Completion can be described as ‘true existence’. St Maximus reminded us that this existence is a result of relationships with God and what God loves. Accordingly, he stated that ‘all things ... exist by the relationship which unites them to each other rather than to themselves’¹¹⁵ and that ‘*relationship* to (God) leads ... all things (to a) existence.’¹¹⁶

Because of unity with God, those in the *Pleroma* must be totally and eternally aligned with God and His Plan for the universe. God must therefore act through them without deviation. One attribute of this state is termed *deification* or *divinization*. St Maximus confirmed the active participation in God by stating that ‘in the future state (there is) a participation (*methesis*, μέθεσις) by grace (in an) unceasing ... deification’ again implying the dynamic *Pleroma*. Maximus coupled union with God with ‘deification’ and immortality. He states that ‘in this state ... of deification ... only God shines forth through body and soul when their features are transcended in overwhelming glory.’¹¹⁷ He quoted St Gregory Nazianzus by stating that ‘they will be received by the ineffable light and vision of the holy and majestic Trinity, shining upon them with greater brilliance and purity, and which will be wholly mingled with the whole of the intellect, and this alone I take to be the kingdom of heaven.’¹¹⁸ St Maximus added the following:

The life that God will give does not consist in the breathing of air, or in the flow of blood from the liver, but in the fact that God will be wholly participated by whole human beings, so that He will be in the soul, as it were, what the soul is to the body, and through the soul He will be likewise be present in the body ... so that the soul will receive immutability and the body immortality. In this way, man as a whole will be divinized, being made God by the grace of God who became man.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ St. Maximus, *Amb* 15.7; PG 91, col. 1220A; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 371.

¹¹⁵ St Maximus, *Myst* 7; PG 91; trans. CWS-MC, p. 197.

¹¹⁶ St Maximus, *Myst* 1; PG 91; trans. CWS-MC, p. 186.

¹¹⁷ St Maximus, *Gnost* 2.88; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 167.

¹¹⁸ St Gregory Nazianzus, *Orat* 16.9, *In patrem tacentum*, quoted by St Maximus, *Amb* 7; PG 91, col. 1088A; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 111.

¹¹⁹ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.26; PG 91, col. 1088C; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 113.

It should be noted that a person becomes God by grace and not by nature so that the distinction between God and a person remains.

As deification derives from a union which makes present the divine act of the *Parousia*, deification is acquired by the power of God's Spirit. Accordingly, St Maximus stated that 'the grace of God (is) effective to deify the universe.'¹²⁰ Regarding humankind, he stated that 'man as a whole will be divinized, being made God by (His) grace ... Man will remain wholly man in soul and body, owing to his nature, but will become wholly God in soul and body owing to the grace and the splendour of the blessed glory of God.'¹²¹ According to St Maximus, deification can begin in this present life ...

Another term supporting the concept of participation in God in the *Pleroma* is permeation (*perichoresis*, *περιχωρήσις*) by God. St Maximus stated that 'God ... lavishly bestowed the gift of (eternal) divinization (and) interpenetrating ... in an unconfused union'¹²² so that 'His goodness wholly interpenetrates all who are worthy'¹²³ by 'the grace of the Spirit.'¹²⁴ The use of the term 'permeation' implies that the union is between an infinite being with a creature of the earth open to His power. Similarly, St Maximus stated that those 'deemed worthy (will) be totally intermingled through the Spirit with the whole of God.'¹²⁵

Salvation is a victory over death and the imperfections of the universe and the human person. St Maximus coupled salvation with union with God by stating that 'what has been united with God is saved.'¹²⁶ St Maximus also coupled salvation with deification by stating that 'salvation (as) the fullest grace of deification.'¹²⁷

The aspect of salvation which is victory over death is also termed resurrection and St Maximus couples it with deification by stating that 'deification ... is in the mystical resurrection' on the 'eighth day (of) God's activity.'¹²⁸ St Pseudo-Macarius described resurrection as follows: 'In the resurrection of bodies ... heavenly fire of the Godhead (is) interiorly directs ... hearts, bursts forth upon the dissolution of the body ... pulls (its members ... together (bringing) about a resurrection.'¹²⁹

Closely coupled with salvation is redemption which is freedom from imperfections such as the tyranny of self-love. St Maximus stated that in permeation, God makes members of the *Pleroma* 'completely free' of the weaknesses of the material world so that they would no longer 'marred by corruption.'¹³⁰

Summary and conclusions

The patristic tradition shows that it is possible to regard the *Logos* and Spirit as divine

¹²⁰ St Maximus, *Thal* 2; PG 90; trans. BL-CM, p. 100.

¹²¹ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.26; PG 91, col. 1088C; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 113. St Maximus, *Thal* 22; PG 90, col. 324A; trans. BL-CM, p. 118: God (has) unlimited power to deify humanity'.

¹²² St Maximus, *Amb* 42.5; PG 91, col. 1320AB; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 131.

¹²³ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.12; PG 91, col. 1076C; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 91.

¹²⁴ St Maximus, *Th Pol* 28; PG 91, col. 320BC; trans. ACW-MC, p. 75.

¹²⁵ St Maximus, *Amb* 10.9; PG 91, col. 1113B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 165.

¹²⁶ St. Maximus, *Amb* 42.20; PG 91, col. 1336A; trans. AMB2, p. 159.

Also, St Gregory Nazianzus, *Ep* 101 to Cledonius; PG 37, col. 181C-184A; trans. NPNF2, p. 440: 'that which is united to ... God ... is also saved.'

¹²⁷ St Maximus, *Thal* 61; PG 90; trans. BL-CM, p. 141.

¹²⁸ St Maximus, *Gnost* 1.60; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 138.

¹²⁹ St Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom Spir* 11.1; PG 34; trans. CWS-PM, p. 90. See also Lk 3.16; Acts 2.3-4.

¹³⁰ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.26; PG 91, col. 1088B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 113.

without undermining the Oneness of not only God but the whole Trinity. We concluded that God must have influenced Creation of the universe, as otherwise it would not be able to move towards union with Him. What is striking about the effect of the *Parousia* on a living being is how little change occurs at death for those uniting with God. The distinction between God and the person remains, God's presence continues in death and even movement in God continues. As those without love remain separate from Him, the division within humankind remains beyond the *Parousia*.

B. THE WORKS OF GOD ACCORDING TO TEILHARD

The Trinity according to Teilhard

It is clear that, according to St Maximus, the Trinity comprises three equal members. However, the God of Teilhard is difficult to compare with that of St Maximus. Following his mother, the God to whom Teilhard related was ‘the incarnate Word.’¹³¹ This approach is reflected in Teilhard’s collective works where Teilhard gives little emphasis of the Spirit relative to the Son. At first sight, it appears that, in the mind of Teilhard, God the Father and the Spirit were superseded. However, God the Father was not entirely neglected by Teilhard as he was aware of a ‘God of Above,’¹³² presumably God the Father, as well as the ‘God of Ahead,’¹³³ presumably the *Logos* as the goal, in the context of reconciling the two. Teilhard stated that ‘we can no longer worship fully unless we superimpose’ these two images so that ‘they form one.’¹³⁴ Therefore, although Teilhard is often unclear whether he is referring to the Father or the Son, he succeeded in differentiating between Father and Son in principle. However, as he excluded the God of Within, the Spirit, his God became binitarian instead of a Trinity.

We have ascertained that the Spirit is necessary to power the union of God and the universe and its parts. Teilhard seldom uses the term Spirit with the initial capital but, even then, this does not always appear to be the Spirit of God. Teilhard defined the Spirit as the ‘essence of the universe (and the) opposite pole to the physicist’s energy.’¹³⁵ The opposite pole to earthly energy is the divine energy so it is possible that Teilhard’s ‘Spirit’ means the divine energies. Teilhard also stated that ‘God is ... present everywhere,’¹³⁶ Teilhard agreed that ‘the world is full of God’¹³⁷ and that the ‘Spirit of God ... is at work everywhere.’¹³⁸ These statements could refer to the Spirit or the divine energies or both.

However, when he quoted scripture stating ‘You (God) send forth Your Spirit, they are created’,¹³⁹ he is clearly means the Spirit and that He is involved in Creation. Also, his statement that ‘all consistence comes from Spirit’¹⁴⁰ could be compatible with the Spirit leading to the Truth. Nevertheless, the use of the patristic meaning of the Spirit was rare for both Teilhard and his circle but Rideau expressed surprise that the ‘Spirit is not mentioned in Teilhard’s writings.’¹⁴¹

It is clear that Teilhard’s concept of God was strongly Christo-centric and he did not understand the role of the members of the Trinity according to the patristic tradition.

The divine and natural energies

One would doubt that Teilhard would not therefore be able to discuss God’s influence upon

¹³¹ Teilhard, *The Heart of Matter*, 1950; 13HM, p. 42.

¹³² Teilhard, *The Heart of Matter*, 1950; 13HM, pp. 45, 52, 53.

¹³³ Teilhard, *The Heart of Matter*, 1950; 13HM, pp. 45, 53, 55, 99.

¹³⁴ Teilhard, *The Heart of Matter*, 1950; 13HM, p. 53.

¹³⁵ Teilhard, *The Heart of Matter*, 1950; 13HM, p. 29.

¹³⁶ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 75.

¹³⁷ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 4.

¹³⁸ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 69.

¹³⁹ Gen 1.2, Ps 103/104.30; Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 94.

¹⁴⁰ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924; 9SC, p. 49.

¹⁴¹ Emile Rideau, *Teilhard de Chardin: A Guide to His Thought* (London: Collins, 1967) p. 169.

the universe but this omission was compensated by his understanding of the divine energies and their temporal equivalents, the natural energies.

We have ascertained that, according to St Maximus particularly, the divine energies are transformed into natural energies by power of the Spirit but Teilhard did not affirm this. Regarding the distinction and relationship between the divine energies and the natural energies, Teilhard appears to understand the superiority of the divine energies over natural energy by stating that the former can ‘penetrate our creaturely energies,’¹⁴² so that God ‘underlies all natural energy.’¹⁴³ Here he used the same term as St Maximus. Similarly he states that ‘where God is operating (we) see only the work of nature.’¹⁴⁴ These citations appear to confirm that the divine energies generate natural energies through parts of the universe. Teilhard did not neglect the affinity of the divine and natural energies as he states that ‘God’s love for the (universe) and for each of its elements, and the elements’ love for one another and for God, are not therefore merely a secondary effect added to the creative process, (but) are an expression both of its operative factor and of its fundamental dynamism.’¹⁴⁵ Presumably ‘its operative factor’ is intended to mean ‘the divine energies.’

We conclude that, despite ignoring the role of the Spirit, Teilhard appears to understand both the distinction and affinity between the divine energies and the natural energies and that the divine energies operate universally. His understanding therefore appears to be similar to that of St Maximus and other church fathers.

Divine activity from a temporal viewpoint

As noted above, St Maximus held that God has a single activity which can be expressed from a temporal point of view in terms of beginning, end and movement. St Maximus therefore showed the unity of such acts by giving them a Trinitarian source, but Teilhard did not do this directly. We therefore need to ascertain whether or not he acknowledges their underlying unity.

Teilhard discussed events similar to the divine acts according to St Maximus but terms them Universal Events. He listed them as ‘Creation, Fall, Incarnation and Redemption.’¹⁴⁶ Similar lists omitted the Fall. Also, in one instance, the list was ‘Creation, Incarnation, Redemption, and Salvation.’¹⁴⁷ However, Teilhard’s usual list was Creation, Incarnation and Redemption.¹⁴⁸ Teilhard also implied that the Resurrection is a Universal Event as he states that ‘the Resurrection (is not) an isolated event in time (but a) tremendous cosmic event.’¹⁴⁹

We have ascertained from St Maximus, that the *Parousia* is an act of the Trinity but Teilhard omits the *Parousia* in his usual list of Universal Events. However, he stated that ‘Creation, Incarnation, Redemption (are) three aspects of one and the same fundamental

¹⁴² Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 21; Also, *Struggle against the Multitude*, 12WW, p. 101 n. (permeate).

¹⁴³ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1918; 13HM, p. 204.

¹⁴⁴ Teilhard, *The Modes of Divine Action in the Universe*, 1920; 10CE, p. 27.

¹⁴⁵ Teilhard, *Introduction to the Christian Life*, 1944; 10CE, p. 152

¹⁴⁶ Teilhard, *Historical Representations of Original Sin*; 1922; 10CE, p. 53.

¹⁴⁷ Teilhard, *Letter to E. Meunier dated 2 Nov 47*; 9SC, p. 223.

¹⁴⁸ Teilhard, *The Soul of the World*, 1918; 12WW, p. 189.

Teilhard, *Some General Views on the Essence of Christianity*, 1939; 10CE, p. 134, 135.

Teilhard, *Suggestions for a New Theology*, 1945; 10CE, p. 183.

Teilhard, *My Fundamental Vision*, 1948; 11TF, p. 198.

¹⁴⁹ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924; 9SC, p. 63.

process: they are aspects of a fourth mystery, (which is) the mystery of the creative union of the world in God, or Pleromization.¹⁵⁰ The act of union between God and the universe is the *Parousia*. We conclude that Teilhard did not omit the *Parousia* from his Universal Events but linked the *Parousia* to three of them.

In addition to stating that all three of his Universal Events are in the *Parousia*, Teilhard showed their unity by stating that they are ‘*indissolubly linked*,¹⁵¹ and are ‘aspects of the same fundamental process’¹⁵² He also stated that they are ‘*one and the same operation*’¹⁵³ but in that case, his list included the Fall. He also stated that ‘the whole process which from first to last activates and directs the elements of the universe ... forms a single whole.’¹⁵⁴ We therefore find that there is little doubt that the Universal Events reflect the single divine activity according to St Maximus.

Teilhard showed the unity of the divine acts or Universal Events by stating that their effects are all continuous. Teilhard describes his three Universal Events collectively by as ‘not ... localized at a given point in time and space,’¹⁵⁵ nor ‘a local or instantaneous act.’¹⁵⁶ He also states that these Universal Events are ‘co-extensive with the duration and totality of the world.’¹⁵⁷ We conclude that the Universal Events of Teilhard do not have a particular time but are effective over all time thus showing their unity. This is what we would expect as God is undivided as He would not relate to the universe for only a particular period of time and not at other times.

While the principle of the divine act or Universal Event as expressed by Teilhard is extremely useful in understanding the divine energies, in my opinion, we should have some misgivings regarding how he developed this principle. Three of his Universal Events, namely, the Incarnation, Redemption and Resurrection, are aspects of the *Parousia* and need not be regarded separately. This leaves the Universal Event of Creation which he regards as an aspect of the *Parousia*. However, Universal Events must be distinct from a point of view within time. It would therefore have been preferable if Teilhard has expressed Creation and the *Parousia* as distinct without giving precedence to either.

Creation

Having ascertained that the divine act of Creation drives continuous movement, Teilhard stated that ‘Creation is not a periodic intrusion of the First Cause.’¹⁵⁸ Instead, Creation results in ‘a limitless number of phases’¹⁵⁹ with ‘each individual (being) a small creation in itself’¹⁶⁰ so that there are a multitude of creations. Also, by stating that ‘God makes things make

¹⁵⁰ Teilhard, *Suggestions for a New Theology*, 1945; 10CE, p. 183.

¹⁵¹ Teilhard, *The Soul of the World*, 1918; 12WW, pp. 189-190.

¹⁵² Teilhard, *Suggestions for a New Theology*, 1945; 10CE, p. 183;

Also: Teilhard, *Some General Views on the Essence of Christianity*, 1939; 10CE, p. 134: ‘Same fundamental process’.

Teilhard, *Reflections on Original Sin*, 1947; 10CE, p. 198: ‘Aspects of one and the same process’.

¹⁵³ Teilhard, *Historical Representation of Original Sin*, 1922; 10CE, p. 53.

¹⁵⁴ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 19.

¹⁵⁵ Teilhard, *Some General Views on the Essence of Christianity*, 1939; 10CE, p. 135.

¹⁵⁶ Teilhard, *Catholicism and Science*, 1946; 9SC, p. 190.

¹⁵⁷ Teilhard, *Historical Representation of Original Sin*, 1922; 10CE, p. 53.

¹⁵⁸ Teilhard, *On the Notion of Creative Transformation*, 1920; 10CE, p. 23.

¹⁵⁹ Teilhard, *My Fundamental Vision*, 1948; 11TF, p. 196.

¹⁶⁰ Teilhard, *The Transformist Paradox*, 1925; 3VP, p. 91.

themselves,¹⁶¹ Teilhard thus implied that God works *through* the universe without interfering with time and the result of the divine acts is over all time. Teilhard would therefore approve the view of a fellow scientist that ‘it is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going.’¹⁶² Neither scientist would therefore reduce God to a quantum of energy.

Teilhard also implied that there are two phases of creation, the historical and the ontological. He stated that ‘the ontological order of creation has nothing in common with the historical order of evolution.’¹⁶³ The ontological evolution presumably refers to the future eschatological evolution of humankind. (Ursula?)

Teilhard also hinted that God created the universe in such a manner that it would accommodate the Incarnation and therefore the *Parousia* when he stated that ‘every kind of universe might not be compatible with the ... Incarnation.’ Our universe would therefore be one which could unite with God according to *Logos* theology.

We however need to consider how we can express the general work of God in the universe in terms of divine events. As the effect of the Creation is continuous until the *Parousia*, Creation must therefore have a dual role of driving both beginnings and development.

The Parousia

The union between God and the universe and its parts:

The fundamental principle of the divine Plan is that God will unite with the universe and its parts as supported by St Maximus. In the context of the death of a human person, Teilhard stated that there will be a ‘loving fire to consummate our *completion in union*.’¹⁶⁴ This implies that union is by the power of the Spirit and is therefore a making present of a divine act. He also stated that ‘death ... can become a marvellous instrument of spiritual fulfilment and *union*.’¹⁶⁵ Moreover, Teilhard coupled death with the other attributes of the *Parousia* such as deification, eternal life and resurrection discussed below. For example, in the context of death, he stated that God will ‘finally penetrate us’¹⁶⁶ implying deification. He also stated that ‘death becomes a resurrection’¹⁶⁷ and that ‘death is turned into life’¹⁶⁸ thus linking the two. He also regarded death as a victory¹⁶⁹ which implies more strongly that death and completion are coincidental. We conclude that the above showed compatibility with the concepts of St Athanasius and St Maximus regarding union. Completion and deification as aspects of the *Pleroma* will be discussed below.

However, some scriptural passages imply that there will be a catastrophic end to the

¹⁶¹ Teilhard, *The Modes of Divine Action in the Universe*, 1920; 10CE, p. 28.

¹⁶² Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (London: Bantam Press, 2010) p. 180.

¹⁶³ Teilhard, *Creative Union*, 1917; 12WW, p. 162.

¹⁶⁴ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 59.

¹⁶⁵ Teilhard, *The Sense of Man*, 1929; 11TF, p. 32.

¹⁶⁶ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 50: ‘God must ... make room for Himself ... emptying us, if he is finally to penetrate us ... It will put us into the state needed if the divine fire is to descend upon us.’

¹⁶⁷ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 75.

¹⁶⁸ Teilhard, *The Priest*, 1918; 12WW, p. 213.

¹⁶⁹ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 46: ‘We are like soldiers who fall during an assault which leads to peace. We are therefore part of the victory’.

world. For example, it states that ‘the heavens will be set ablaze,¹⁷⁰ ‘the sun darkened’¹⁷¹ and ‘the elements will melt with fire.’¹⁷² These passages appear to describe a situation similar to that when the sun has finally run out of its fuel and expands. However, conditions for life are likely to cease long before such an end. The end of humankind has been estimated at 1.75 billion years¹⁷³ but this would not be a sudden catastrophe. The writers of scripture would not have been able to substantiate this scientifically.

If God terminated humankind unilaterally, He would be interfering with time and would therefore not be God. In any case, a catastrophe within the earth would be incompatible with a *Parousia* unless it made it present in a union.

Individuality in union:

We have ascertained that, according to St Maximus, parts of the universe with *logoi* retain their individuality at the *Parousia* and in the *Pleroma*. It is necessary to ascertain whether or not Teilhard is in agreement with this principle. He stated that ‘at the centre of the Divine Milieu, all the sounds of creation are *fused* together, without being confused.’¹⁷⁴ This implied that parts of the universe do not retain their individuality. His use of ‘fusion’ could imply a loss of individuality and monism. If the individual ‘sounds’ were not ‘confused’, it would be better if Teilhard had not used the term ‘fused’ and used ‘united’ or ‘gathered together’ instead. However, his references such as ‘union differentiates,’¹⁷⁵ ‘true union ... differentiates’¹⁷⁶ and ‘personalizing unification’¹⁷⁷ make clear that, while Teilhard’s terminology sometimes lacks precision, he was in agreement with St Maximus that the *Parousia* drives the union of individuals with God.

He also stated that ‘the essential aspiration of all mysticism (is) to be united ... while remaining ourselves. God ... pushes to its furthest possible limit the differentiation amongst the creatures He concentrates within Himself.’¹⁷⁸ While the phrase ‘concentrates within Himself’ might suggest that we would become absorbed by God, his statement ‘united (with God) while remaining ourselves’ more than compensates for this. The latter implies that there is not only a distinction between God and the human person at the *Parousia* but also between persons.

The separation at the *Parousia*; *apokatastasis*:

Teilhard did not emphasise judgement much in his collective works but he stated that ‘the fires of hell and the fires of heaven are not two different forces, but are contrary manifestations of the same energy.’¹⁷⁹ He regarded the same fire as bringing about ‘our completion in union’¹⁸⁰ and therefore also associates the fire with ‘joy.’¹⁸¹ He thus recognized

¹⁷⁰ 2 Pet 3.12.

¹⁷¹ Acts 2.20.

¹⁷² 2 Pet 3.10.

¹⁷³ *The Times*, 19 Sep 13.

¹⁷⁴ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 81.

¹⁷⁵ Teilhard, *The Grand Option*, 1945; 5FM, p. 55.

¹⁷⁶ Teilhard, *The Grand Option*, 1939; 5FM, p. 53.

¹⁷⁷ Teilhard, *Hominization and Speciation*, 1952; 3VP, p. 266.

¹⁷⁸ Both references: Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 77.

¹⁷⁹ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 112.

¹⁸⁰ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 59: ‘... a loving fire to consummate our completion in union’.

¹⁸¹ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 108: ‘Welcome the fire’.

Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 110: ‘Fire that kindles joy’.

that the operation of the ‘fire’ of God is equivalent to the divine energies. We conclude that scripture, St Maximus and Teilhard agree that union and separation are essentially one action. Teilhard also appears to support purification from sin and presumably the tendency to sin as from the *Parousia* ‘sin alone is excluded’¹⁸² If it was not so, God would be acting differently towards more than one category of people and would thus be divided in Himself and not God.

Teilhard did not support *apokatastasis*, as he stated that some ‘wander aimlessly, indecisive and without unity, towards ... outer darkness’ and he therefore presumably also accepted *gehenna* although he did not have ‘absolute certainty that any single person has been damned.’¹⁸³ Because of the gulf between God and human persons, it is impossible for them to understand the depth of God’s mercy. Teilhard therefore has a healthy regard for the unknowable and does not claim to know God’s judgement.

The dynamic Pleroma

We ascertained above that St Maximus considered that the *Pleroma* has a dynamic quality. Teilhard appears to agree by stating that the *Pleroma* is a ‘living structure,¹⁸⁴ a ‘living whole’ and a ‘collective act’.¹⁸⁵ In the context of humankind, he stated that ‘we can live and act.’¹⁸⁶ This would be consistent with the *ever-moving* rest of St Maximus. The dynamic quality of the *Pleroma* suggests that it has a connection with the universe in its present movement. Jeannière states that ‘the term of history is not the last event in the series of events; Omega Point is, more truly, the plenitude of reflection, the totality of the spirit’s folding back upon itself ... the making total of history.’¹⁸⁷ Perhaps Jeannière, like Hieromonk Gregorius, is trying to say that, at the *Parousia*, time turns back on itself but the universe of the *Pleroma* must be free of evil as it would be united with God.

The state of those in the Pleroma

The attributes of the *Parousia* and *Pleroma*:

We have also ascertained that the *Parousia* is a Universal Event which can be made present over all time as natural energies but if the *Pleroma* is the gathering of natural energies in the context of the universe over all time there can be no difference between the attributes of the *Parousia* and the *Pleroma* as noted above.

Completion:

Like St Maximus, Teilhard regarded the *Parousia* as a completion so it must encompass all the completions of individuals. However, he essentially linked completion with union with God by using the phrase ‘completion in union.’¹⁸⁸ He also stated that ‘as the elements lose

¹⁸² Teilhard, *The Priest*, 1918; 12WW, p. 214.

¹⁸³ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 111.

¹⁸⁴ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 114.

¹⁸⁵ Teilhard, *The Humanity of Christ and the Faithful*, 1920; 10CE, p. 16.

¹⁸⁶ Teilhard, *The Universal Element*, 1919; 12WW, p. 297.

¹⁸⁷ Père Abel Jeannière, *Approches christologiques*, in *Essais sur Teilhard de Chardin, Recherches et débats du C.C.I.F.*, cahier No. 40 (Paris: Fayard, 1962) p. 95; trans. Emile Rideau, *Teilhard de Chardin: A Guide to His Thought* (London: Collins, 1967) p. 185.

¹⁸⁸ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 59. See also 11TF, p. 68.

themselves in God (they) complete themselves.’¹⁸⁹ Although the expression ‘lose themselves in God’ is expressed in a general manner, Teilhard presumably referred to human or similar beings with a relationship with God. Akin to ‘completion’ is the acquisition of true self as it is this true self that God intended under the divine Plan.

As with St Maximus, he coupled completion of the human person with that of the completion of all others. For example, Teilhard stated that ‘every individual ... will find completion through union with all the *others*.’¹⁹⁰ He also coupled union of persons with God with that of the universe at the *Parousia* by stating that ‘we complete ourselves with the world.’¹⁹¹

Similar to completion is the acquisition of true self because the true self of something is that self united with God. Accordingly, Teilhard stated that ‘the I subsists ... in becoming ... more and more itself’¹⁹² and couples ‘forging ahead’ with ‘attaining the fullness and finality of his own self.’¹⁹³ He stated that ‘I cannot take full possession of my own self except by extending my self into a certain perfection which runs through all things, so that my own fulfilment must be in, and with, the universality of Creation.’¹⁹⁴ This again coupled true self of a person with that of the universe. This follows from *Logos* theology as developed by St Maximus as, if the *logoi* of human persons are in the *Logos*, their unions are also in the union of God and the universe. Another term similar to completion is fulfilment, but Teilhard used the term ‘collective fulfilment’¹⁹⁵ so that fulfilment is not merely personal but coupled with the fulfilment of all things.

St Maximus stated that parts of the universe are deified in the context of human persons. According to Teilhard, the *Pleroma* is the ‘divinized’ (deified) cosmos¹⁹⁶ implying it comprises all things united with God. However, he associated ‘divinization’ with ‘convergence’¹⁹⁷ so that divinization is not merely an attribute of the *Pleroma* but a part of the process towards it.

Also in the context of human persons, St Maximus and others used the terms salvation, resurrection and redemption. Teilhard also linked ‘resurrection’ with ‘completion’ by stating that ‘resurrection benefits the soul (by) contributing ... to its completion.’¹⁹⁸ As completion is essentially coupled to union with God, resurrection is another aspect of union. Teilhard stated that ‘salvation ... is ... divinization’¹⁹⁹ so that he regarded them as one and the same.

Like other aspects of the *Parousia* and the *Pleroma*, salvation is in conjunction with that of all things. For example he stated that ‘our salvation is not ... achieved except in solidarity

¹⁸⁹ Teilhard, *Action and Activation*, 1945; 9SC, p. 184.

¹⁹⁰ Teilhard, *The Moment of Choice*, 1939; 7AE, p. 18.

Also, *The Phenomenon of Spirituality*, 1937; 6HE, p. 104: ‘They are completed by joining together,’

The Human Phenomenon, 1940; 1HP, p. 189: ‘Love alone is capable of completing our beings in themselves as it unites.’

¹⁹¹ Teilhard, *Human Energy*, 1937; 6HE, p. 139.

¹⁹² Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 1940; 1HP, p. 116.

¹⁹³ Teilhard, *Reflections on Happiness*, 1943; 11TF, p. 113.

Also, 11TF, p. 117: ‘Being is in the first place making and finding one’s own self.’

¹⁹⁴ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1918; 13HM, p. 199.

¹⁹⁵ Teilhard, *Pantheism and Christianity*, 1923; 10CE, p. 67.

¹⁹⁶ Teilhard, *The Eternal Feminine*, 1918; 12WW, p. 201: ‘The cosmos, when divinized’.

¹⁹⁷ Teilhard, *Action and Activation*, 1945; 9SC, p. 184.

¹⁹⁸ Teilhard, *Forma Christi*, 1918; 12WW, p. 268?

¹⁹⁹ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 14.

with the justification of the whole body of the elect.²⁰⁰ On the other hand, Teilhard does not deny ‘personal salvation’ but it ‘is important not so much because it will bring about our own beautification as because it makes us effect in ourselves the salvation of the world.’²⁰¹ We conclude that personal salvation is connected to the salvation of humankind. The above implies that if all things united with God must also be united in themselves and therefore also redeemed.

Acquisition of personhood:

Teilhard used the term ‘personality’ which would usually indicate an individual with distinctive qualities. The term appears rather unsuitable as it is not usually used in connection with the qualities of a person in a theological sense. The closest term with theological meaning in UK English is ‘personhood’ when it would usually be something which relates to God and others with individuality. However, Teilhard regarded personhood as something acquired at the *Parousia* rather than leading towards it.

Regarding the universe as a whole, Teilhard stated that ‘the universe *becomes* personalized’²⁰² and ‘is *acquiring* a personality’²⁰³ and that ‘the final divine term of universal convergence must ... possess the quality of a person’²⁰⁴ and, more specifically, the ‘universe (will) *ultimately* become transformed into (a) person.’²⁰⁵

He also stated that ‘the world’s units are continually and increasingly personalizing by approaching a goal of unification.’²⁰⁶ It therefore appears that Teilhard links ‘personhood’ with ‘union’ and ‘completion’ and presumably all the other aspects of the *Pleroma*. He also coupled personhood with ‘perfection’²⁰⁷ and immortality the latter expressed by linking ‘personalizing’ with ‘immortalizing.’²⁰⁸

Regarding human persons, he stated that ‘the only way we can find our person is by uniting with one another’²⁰⁹ so that Teilhard again emphasized the union of humankind as a whole. The personhood of a human person is thus linked with that of humankind as a whole. Teilhard therefore regarded the *Pleroma* as the ‘communion of persons (or) saints.’²¹⁰ He also stated that ‘personalization of the whole and the elementary personalization reaching their maximum simultaneously and without blending’ indicating personhood is maintained by not only uniting with God but the universe also.²¹¹

Conclusions:

It is clear that Teilhard accepts all the various aspects of the goal of the human person according to St Maximus with the addition of ‘personhood.’ He particularly emphasized that the union between God and the human person is linked with that of humankind and the universe. In other words, as a part of the universe moves towards God it would also unite

²⁰⁰ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 106.

²⁰¹ Teilhard, *Some Reflections on the Conversion of the World*, 1936; 9SC, p. 123.

²⁰² Teilhard, *The Atomism of Spirit*, 1941; 7AE, p. 56. Also, 13HM, pp. 44, 48, 51.

²⁰³ Teilhard, *Some Reflections on Progress*, 1941; 5FM, p. 79.

²⁰⁴ Teilhard, *The Spirit of the Earth*, 1931; 6HE, p. 45.

²⁰⁵ Teilhard, *The Heart of Matter*, 1950; 13HM, p. 16.

²⁰⁶ Teilhard, *Human Energy*, 1937; 6HE, p. 145.

²⁰⁷ Teilhard, *Some Reflections on the Rights of Man*, 1947; 5FM, p. 194.

²⁰⁸ Teilhard, *The Human Rebound of Evolution*, 1947; 5FM, p. 208.

²⁰⁹ Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 1940, Rev 1948; 1HP, p. 187.

²¹⁰ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 15.

²¹¹ Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 1940; 1HP, p. 187.

with other parts of the universe.

The effect of the Universal Events prior to humankind

Teilhard stated that ‘love, namely the affinity of one being for another, is not unique to the human being. It represents a general property of all life, and as such it embraces all the varieties and degrees of every form successively taken by organized matter’²¹² and ‘driven by forces of love, the fragments of the world are seeking one another so the world may come to be.’²¹³ Furthermore, ‘there can be no doubt that it is something in the way of love that is adumbrated and grows as a result of the mutual affinity which causes the particles to adhere to one another and maintains their unity during their convergent *advance*.’²¹⁴ It should be noted that a ‘seeking one another’ anticipates union.

For Teilhard, the tendency for the ‘original’ elements ‘almost without form’ (*plasma*) to be attracted ‘into ... atoms’ is an ‘embryo of love’ is due to what he termed ‘the Universal Feminine.’²¹⁵ In more conventional theological terms, this tendency could be regarded as the Spirit of God working through the universe. We could include in this tendency the formation of stars, galaxies and galactic clusters. In other words, we could say that God is the ‘God of Evolution’ in a broad sense. Teilhard uses this phrase on a number of occasions.²¹⁶

Teilhard pointed out that cooperation arose amongst the ‘leading shoots’ of evolution such as the ancestors of humankind, in hunting groups²¹⁷ and agriculture²¹⁸ and this cooperation could be construed as embryonic love without belief in God. In this way, cooperation rather than self-love supports survival. Also, mother-child relationships in particular must be a form of love rather than instinct as they are definitely not self-love and because they place others before self. The same applies to altruism in several animals more primitive than human beings.

The existence of embryonic love implies that God works through the universe from its origin rather than turning His back on it after its initial creation. Such an influence exerted by God would particularly apply to the parts of the universe rather than to the universe as a whole. This would be consistent with the Spirit being in all things and the energies of God penetrating the whole universe as discussed in Chapter One. Teilhard’s description of how God might act upon the universe prior to the advent of humankind would be consistent with the notion that God loves all things at all times and that love is transformed into the world of time at all times albeit in a primitive form. Teilhard thus applied the principles of God’s relationship with the universe to the early life of the universe unknown to the patristic tradition.

The effect of the Universal Events after the end of life

²¹² Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 1940; 1HP, p. 188.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ Teilhard, *Centrology*, 1944; 7AE, p. 119.

²¹⁵ Teilhard, *The Eternal Feminine*, 1918; 12WW, p. 193.

²¹⁶ Teilhard, *Sketch of a Personalistic Universe*, 1936; 6HE, p. 70;
What the World is Looking for from the Church, 1952; 10CE, pp. 212 and 218;
The God of Evolution, 1953; 10CE, p. 237f.

²¹⁷ About 200,000 years ago; *New Scientist*, 19 Mar 2011.

²¹⁸ About 10,000 years ago; *New Scientist*, 19 Mar 2011.

After 13.8 billion years of the development of the universe, the advent of humankind is a relatively recent event although it could continue to exist until the sun's warmth begins to decline in a few billion years time discounting any effect of the coming together of the Milky Way and Andromeda galaxies. St Maximus was unaware of the dying phase of the universe so he did not consider the effect of God during this period.

We should also consider the action of God when all stars have run out of hydrogen fuel and the universe begins its final phase of decay without life. We would expect Teilhard to address the problem but he showed little interest in the subject.

C. THE WORKS OF GOD CONTRARY TO THE PATRISTIC TRADITION

The Origenist creation

In Chapter Two, we discussed the Origenist version of the Fall which was linked to Creation. Such a creation arose as punishment for the actions of errant beings in heaven. This is a very different creation from the one by God with the potential of victory over imperfection rather than one begun by an unfortunate error.

We must doubt whether such a creation caused by an ‘impious rebellion’ against God could really have originated by Him. If it began in rebellion, surely it must continue in rebellion rather than to relate to God. It would lack the input from God to give the universe any chance of overcoming its opposition to God.

Confusion between the divine and natural energies

Introduction:

We have ascertained that, according to the patristic tradition, the divine energies are distinct from the universe even though operate in the universe. If the divine and natural energies were considered as a *single* energy, either God would act *directly* within time and not be God or there would be no result from the divine energies. Also, the divine influence could perhaps be regarded as a built-in tendency of the universe to move towards God but without the active assistance from God to achieve that end. The prevalent view appears to have been that God acts within time.

This confusion may have partly due to the fact there has been no tradition in the west regarding the distinction between the divine and the natural energies or *energima* according to the local Council of Constantinople in 1351 as discussed above.

In the context of divine acts or Universal Events generally, Teilhard stated that they have become ‘fleeting accidents occurring sporadically in time.’²¹⁹ This would be a serious error. Similarly, Teilhard states that some ‘continue to imagine that (there will be) localized intrusions’ by God²²⁰ thus making God a creature of time. The above would imply that the universe and its parts were playthings of God. Teilhard stated that ‘we used to accept, at least implicitly, that God was free and had the power to raise up participated being in any state of perfection and association he chose. He could position it, as he pleased, at the level of any point whatsoever between zero and infinity.’²²¹ This appears to be a denial of the divine energies which could be transformed into natural energies by the Spirit enabling divine love to be distributed within the world of time by those with hearts open to God. This would basically negate the role of the Spirit. This implies that many did not understand the distinction between God and the universe and how He acts in the universe.

The instantaneous creation:

Also, regarding Creation, Teilhard complained that his circle believed that, before the Fall, there was an ‘instantaneous’²²² creation so that the universe was ‘fully formed from the hand

²¹⁹ Teilhard, *Historical Representations of Original Sin*, 1922; 10CE, p. 53.

²²⁰ Teilhard, *Basis and Foundation of the Idea of Evolution*, 1926; 3VP, p. 134.

²²¹ Teilhard, *Christology and Evolution*, 1933; 10CE, p. 82.

²²² Teilhard, *Christology and Evolution*, 1933; 10CE, p. 82-83: To create ... must no longer be understood as an instantaneous act.

of God²²³ again implying that Creation was a direct action by God within time rather than working through the universe throughout its life. There would therefore be no movement prior to the origin of sin. We conclude that many in Teilhard's time either denied or ignored evolution when considering the Fall and Creation.

The catastrophic *Parousia*:

The scriptural accounts of the Second Coming suggested a catastrophic end to the earth or the universe and Teilhard maintained that those on his circle tended to expect a catastrophic end for humankind. If the end was catastrophic and within time, it could not be due to God. For example, he stated that 'we continue from force of habit to think of the *Parousia*, whereby the Kingdom of God is to be consummated on Earth, as an event of a purely catastrophic nature – that is to say, liable to come about at any moment in history, irrespective of any definite state of Mankind.'²²⁴ However, if the *Parousia* was merely a catastrophic event within time, it would be nothing to do with God. Such a catastrophe appears to be not just a physical phenomenon such as the decline of the sun's energy but connected with the Fall as 'the *Parousia* floats on the horizon in an atmosphere of coming catastrophe (in connection with) our world's initial miscarriage ... rather than of fulfilment.'²²⁵ If the catastrophic end was nothing to do with God, it would imply that the universe was also nothing to do with God and therefore flawed. For humankind, the *Parousia* would be 'a mere juridical justification.'²²⁶ Presumably, souls would be able to escape from the flawed universe.

In any case, the *Pleroma* and therefore the *Parousia* and movement towards it, had been reduced to obscurity²²⁷ implying that there was no divine Plan for the universe and therefore no Universal Christ. Nevertheless, belief in the *Parousia* remained but only as the return of Christ presumably in diminished form.

²²³ Teilhard, *Christology and Evolution*, 1933; 10CE, p. 80.

²²⁴ Teilhard, *The Heart of the Problem*, 1949; 5FM, p. 267.

²²⁵ Teilhard, *The Christic*, 1955; 13FM, p. 98.

²²⁶ Teilhard, *Introduction to the Christian Life*, 1944; 10CE, p. 152.

²²⁷ Letter to Solages, *Lettres intimes de Teilhard de Chardin à Auguste Valensin, Bruno de Solages, Henri de Lubac, André Ravier*, 1919-55, pbk (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1972) (and 1974?) p. 450. (check)

D. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

St Maximus supported the concept of the Trinity and understood the particular roles of its members while Teilhard was unable to do so because of his Christcentricity. This could have made his understanding of the relationship between God and the universe more difficult but Teilhard did so because of his understanding of the concept of the divine and natural energies despite its neglect in the west and was able to contribute to its understanding. We ascertained that divine acts are unrestricted by time but can be transformed into equivalent temporal acts. Both St Maximus and Teilhard agreed that Creation is a divine act which gives rise to the many beginnings throughout the universe. Both also agreed that the *Parousia* is not only the union between God and the universe but drives the union between God and its parts including individual persons.

If Creation was caused by an action against God, the action would have been caused by a power which would be greater than God so God would not exist as what is unrestricted by time. Creation by God cannot be restricted to the physical creation of the universe as a single event but the Big Bang could be one of many events within time which make Creation present.

Unfortunately, Teilhard found that the common view at his time was that these divine acts were considered as only sporadic events within time reducing God to a phenomenon of the universe. Such a God was a very different God from the God whose energies apply to the whole universe and enable Him to work through parts of the universe at all times. There was therefore a considerable difference between the patristic view including that of Teilhard and the common view of his time. This indicated a schism.

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