

INITIAL CHRISTOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS

The Christological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor

OPUSCULE 7

Translation and introduction in Louth, 180-191

Written in 642 to Marinus the Deacon in Cyprus

Against Monoenergism

Themes

- The holiness that Marinus has attained is due to his voluntary poverty and his combat with impure passions. This has been done not by his sole effort but through the “warmth of the Spirit” who is the “fire of the Word”. It is through him that we can overcome sinful habits. (69C)
- This power of the Spirit burns within him because he shares in divine knowledge (72A).
- The desire of the blessed has led them to be transformed by the object of their desire (72A).
- The Word “implanted in us” gives us the ability to achieve the tasks set for us by God (72B).
- The Word keeps us on the path if we let ourselves be guided by him. It is important to keep to the path set forth by the dogmas taught by the Fathers (72C). Only this allows us to arrive at the vision of the face of God (73A).
- “For it is treason to distort the reverent glory that is his and surrounds him, betraying him by the introduction of the confession and teaching of heterodoxy, so as to deprive him of the all-holy flesh that he took from us, or rather overthrow the whole economy.” (73A, Louth 182)
 - To deny a human activity to Christ is to deny his very humanity. This perspective completely subverts salvation and places the understanding of God’s interaction with humanity—the economy—at risk.
- Knowledge of the Word brings us knowledge of humanity, when the one is corrupted, so is the other. (73B)
- He gives an elaborated restatement of Chalcedon (with language from the Pact of Union and from the *Ecthesis*) in order to emphasize that the hypostasis of Jesus includes perfect humanity united seamlessly to his divinity. The difference between the two natures is overcome in the very perfection of his humanity. There is no need to deny some aspect of his humanity in order to assert the unity of Jesus.
 - “Those who irreverently think that there is a natural diminishment in what has come together present him as imperfect and as suffering the lack of what is naturally his.” (73C, Louth 183)
 - If he cannot take up the whole of human nature, then he is, Maximus says, a “defective God” (73D, Louth 183)
- The monoenergetic or monothelite move is unnecessary: “It is not then necessary, on the pretext of a union that harms neither of the elements, but only binds them hypostatically into one, to destroy their existence by the denial of the natural will and the essential energy.” (73D, Louth 183).
 - Two energies and two wills do not mean that the human and divine wills are melded together in composition. They are one.
 - Nor does the unity of Christ demand that one energy or will has to be set aside to effect the union, because then there would not be a true union of natures.
- Monoenergism means that Jesus has only partial humanity. And a partial human nature is not a nature at all. This suggests that the Son created a new sort of humanity that he was joined with (76D).

- “The whole thing is an unreal delusion, a mere form deceiving the senses, and not the substance of flesh, nor the first-fruits of our race, unifying by grace the whole lump, and dissolving all the divisions introduced by the transgression of the old Adam, through which nature has been condemned to death.”
- The arguments advanced for a single will of Christ are engaged in with no reason. They only serve to provoke argument.
 - Will is said to arise from the energy, as if it did not exist before.
- Human acts require a human will.
 - “For if it is only as God that he wills these things, and not as himself being a human being, then either the body has become divine by nature, or the Word has changed its nature and become flesh by loss of its own Godhead, or the flesh is not at all in itself endowed with a rational soul, but is in itself completely lifeless and irrational.” (77B, Louth 184)
- Rational things have a will; Christ’s soul had a human will.
 - “Therefore, as God by nature, he willed what is divine by nature and belongs to the Father. For he was one who willed together with his own begetter. And again the same, as man, he willed those things that are naturally human.” (79C-80A, Louth 185)
- A pure human will would never act differently than the divine will.
 - “He kept the economy pure of every delusion, not at all resisting the will of the Father. For nothing that is natural, and certainly no nature itself, would ever resist the cause of nature, nor would the intention, or anything that belongs to the intention, if it agreed with the *logos* of nature. For if anyone said that something natural had resisted God, this would be rather a charge against God than against nature, for introducing war naturally to the realm of being and raising up insurrection against himself and strife among all that exists.” (80A, Louth 185)
- Our nature is in perfect accord with God as created; it is against God now because of sin.
- The agony in the garden shows his human will. It shows how the human will shies away from death but also shows that the deification effected in Christ’s person brings the human will in full accord with the divine will. (80D)
- The will arises from nature. A difference in nature means a difference in will. (81A)
- The human will does not need to be deliberative because it is deified (80D).
 - “But this will is not at all deliberative, but properly natural, eternally formed and moved by its essential Godhead to the fulfilment of the economy. And it is wholly and thoroughly deified by its agreement and concord with the Father’s will, and can properly be said to have truly become divine in virtue of the union, but not by nature. For nothing at all changes its nature by being deified.”
- Jesus’s actions are simultaneously human and divine by virtue of the two natures.
- In consideration of Dionysius’s “theandric energy”, this shows the simultaneous action of the two natures. The composite word shows the dual action.
 - If theandric refers to the nature, that means his nature is neither ours nor the Father’s.
 - If the energy belongs to the hypostasis, then still it is an energy foreign to us and to the Father.
 - The energy is one as the one united energy of humanity and divinity.
 - “Those who will not accept this, and think of one energy having kingship with both the Word and the flesh, are affirming a Eutychian or Apollinarian confusion of essences.”
- While certain phrases in the Fathers may suggest a single energy, even though they refer to the dual energy acting as one, there are no phrases in the Fathers that suggest a single will, only those that attest to a dual natural will.

OPUSCULE 3

Translation and introduction in Louth, 192-198

Written in 645/646. Addressed to Marinus the Priest in Cypress, from *On Energies and Wills*, chapter 51, which is no longer existent.

In Christ, there are two natural wills, not two inclinations (*gnômai*).

- The Fathers speak of two natural wills in Christ. There cannot be two deliberative (*gnomic*) wills.
 - “For they think that it is the natural appetency of the flesh endowed with a rational soul, and not the longing of the mind of a particular man moved by an opinion, that possesses the natural power of the desire for being, and is naturally moved and shaped by the Word towards the fulfilment of the economy.” (45C-D, Louth 193)
- The natural will desires what is natural.
 - “To be disposed by nature to will and to will are not the same thing, as it is not the same thing to be disposed by nature to speak and to speak.” (48A, Louth 193)
 - The natural will is shaped by the intention. Thus the will springs from nature and the intention from the hypostasis (48A, Louth 193)
 - The human will of Jesus is moved and shaped by his divine will. [This, however, does not amount to a restriction or diminution of the human will by being shaped by the divine. It is in fact the fulfilment and enrichment of the human will by making it even more human, so to say. The human will in Christ can be said to not only always act humanly but to act better than humanly in a way that complements and enriches rather than changes or redirects the human.]
- The human will of Jesus acts with the divine spontaneously except when it must go against nature and die. Here there is the hesitation in the face of death but nonetheless the continued submission to the divine will. The human will can thus choose death because of the divine power to be exercised through it.
 - “And again he shows his eager desire, putting death to death in the flesh, in order that he might show as a human being that what is natural is saved in himself...” (48B, Louth 194)
- The will is reinstated afresh, as suggested by a homily by Gregory of Nazianzus.
- The will is essential to human nature and therefore must be part of the hypostasis of the Son.
 - “For if he was truly, as man, lacking a natural will, he would not truly have become perfect man. And if he did not truly become perfect man, he did not become man at all.” (49B, Louth 195)
- If the will springs from the hypostasis, then the Trinity would have three wills; conversely, the one will of the Trinity would mean there were only one person in God.
- If the one will of Christ is *gnomic* then it will not be in union with the Father and Spirit. If the one will is only the divine will, then the Father and Spirit will be said to hunger and thirst.
- Evil is the difference of *gnomic* will from God.
- Nestorius suggests agreement in Christ, Severus an amalgamation.

“The Doctrine of the Person of Christ”, in Louth, 48-62

“Cosmic Theology”, in Louth, 63-77